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HAPPY HOMECOMING

Family members embrace at Ben-Gurion Airport last week as they reunite at a ceremony for new olim to Israel. The final charter aliyah flight for 2009 – organized by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Jewish Agency, in co-operation with Israel's Ministry of Immigrant Absorption – brought 210 new immigrants to Israel from the United States and Canada. The flight capped off a record year for North American aliyah, in which some 3,800 new immigrants moved to Israel from North America. (Please see the related story on page 3.) Canadian philanthropist Nathan Jacobson, who was recently appointed Canadian chair of Nefesh B'Nefesh, sponsored the final aliyah charter flight of 2009.
[Rachael Cerrotti/FLASH90 photo]

Israel energizes Michigan's batteries

By KARIN KLOOSTERMAN
ISRAEL 21c

TEL AVIV — U.S. government incentives are looking to transform America's battered auto industry and Israel could play a part.

Israel is already a supplier of parts to the Big Three car companies – General Motors, Chrysler and Ford.

The executive director of the three-year-old Michigan Israel Business Bridge, Ron Perry, says that with the new focus on electric and hybrid cars, Michigan could benefit from collaboration with Israeli battery researchers.

"The history of Michigan and Israel in the automotive industry has been one in which several kibbutz companies in Israel that produce automotive supplies, and lower-level companies, sold to the Big Three and new companies, such as automotive tech companies," Perry said, adding that General Motors has a research and development facility in Israel.

As they restructure and build more focused and leaner brands, the Big Three in Michigan are looking to build smaller cars, as well as plug-in hybrids and electric cars.

Continued on page 29

Cotler urges world action against Iran

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — Liberal MP Irwin Cotler released a petition calling on the United States, the United Nations, the European Union and the International Court of Justice to impose sanctions on Iran

Some 25 foreign and local journalists, dignitaries and human rights activists gathered at the King David Hotel on Dec. 30 for the release of the petition, which was drafted by the former justice minister.

The petition was timed one day before U.S. President Barack Obama's deadline for Iran to show progress in meeting international requirements that it end its nuclear weapons program.

Cotler's petition is not only a call to action to respond to the Iran's nuclear program. It is also a call to respond to Iran's state-sanctioned incitement to genocide, its support of international terrorism and its massive domestic human rights violations.

"The evidence is clear. Iran has defied and mocked the international community. Iran is in standing violation of international legal prohibitions against the development and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Iran has already committed the crime of incitement to genocide, and Iran is engaged in widespread and systematic violations of the rights of its own people," Cotler said.

"This petition is the sounding alarm, a wake-up call to the international community. The time to act is now."

Attending the release were the executive director of the Palestine Human Rights Monitoring Group Bassem Eid and, via teleconference, Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz and British MP Denis MacShane.

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Shmot
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Pope's plan for Pius XII troubles Jewish world – see page 27

The News in Brief

CANADA

JCC Gets $1M Grant

EDMONTON — The Jewish Community Centre of Edmonton will get a $1-million federal infrastructure grant to help it demolish and rebuild its current facility, the *Edmonton Journal* reported. A spokesperson said the Jewish Federation of Edmonton is finalizing construction and financial details for the multimillion-dollar centre and hopes to "move ahead" in the spring. The economic stimulus grant will come from the $500-million Recreational Infrastructure Canada program, which will invest in facilities across Canada over two years.

Protesters Square Off

TORONTO — Some 200 pro-Israel ralliers faced off Dec. 27 against a similar number of anti-Israel protesters in noisy but peaceful gatherings outside the Israeli Consulate in Toronto. The two sides stood on opposite sides of Bloor Street, separated by police, Sun Media reported. The anti-Israel protesters were there to support a "Gaza Freedom March" on Dec. 31 in Cairo, as well as to mark the one-year anniversary of the start of the war in Gaza.

WORLD

Madoff Hospitalized

BUTNER, N.C. — Bernard Madoff was back in his cell last week after being hospitalized for injuries consistent with an assault. A North Carolina TV station reported Dec. 24 that Madoff was hospitalized at Duke University Hospital the previous week with facial fractures, broken ribs and a collapsed lung. A Bureau of Prisons spokesperson later said he was being treated in his Butner, N.C., prison's hospital for hypertension and dizziness. The financier is serving 150 years for a multibillion-dollar Ponzi scheme.

Teacher Reassigned

LAS VEGAS — A Las Vegas teacher who reportedly denied the Holocaust in front of students in November won't lose her job. Lori Sublette, a gym teacher at the Northwest Career and Technical Academy, has been reassigned to work at home, with salary and benefits, during a school district probe. But a Nevada law prohibits teachers from being fired for "unprofessional conduct" unless they've been cited previously for a similar offence, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported. Sublette denied the Shoah during a discussion in a class that prepares students for life after high school, including saying the Nazis didn't have the technology to kill millions of Jews. Students also said she told them information on the Holocaust in history books was doctored or distorted. She reportedly apologized to a parent, but only for giving her opinion in class.

Apology To Jews Genuine, Carter Says

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Jimmy Carter is asking Jews for forgiveness, but he insists it's not simply because his grandson is launching a political career with a run for the Georgia state senate.

Jimmy Carter

In a letter released to JTA, the former U.S. president sent a seasonal message wishing for peace between Israel and its neighbours. He concluded: "We must recognize Israel's achievements under difficult circumstances, even as we strive in a positive way to help Israel continue to improve its relations with its Arab populations, but we must not permit criticisms for improvement to stigmatize Israel. As I would have noted at Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but which is appropriate at any time of the year, I offer an *Al Chet* for any words or deeds of mine that may have done so."

Al Chet refers to the Yom Kippur prayer asking God for forgiveness for sins against Him. In modern Hebrew, it refers to any plea for forgiveness.

Carter outraged Jewish leaders with his 2006 book *Palestine: Peace not Apartheid*. They strongly criticized him for what appeared to be his likening of Israeli settlement practices to apartheid and placing the brunt of blame for a lack of peace on Israel. On a book tour, he hinted the pro-Israel lobby inhibited an even-handed U.S. policy.

Jason Carter, 34, an Atlanta-area lawyer, is considering a run to fill a seat in suburban DeKalb County if incumbent David Adelman is confirmed as President Barack Obama's ambassador to Singapore. The area has a number of universities and a substantial Jewish community.

Carter told JTA that ethnic electoral factors weren't reason enough to reach out, although he didn't outright deny it was a factor. "The number of Jewish voters in [the district] is only two per cent," he said, chuckling.

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loving wife of Henry Waks, beloved mother and mother-in-law of Freddie and Linda Waks, Jay and Debbie Waks, sister of Sophie Dymont, devoted grandmother and great-grandmother. As University Guardians, the Waks family established a scholarship for Toronto's needy students at Yeshiva University. May these students emulate the noble life of Sylvia Waks, embody the Jewish values exemplified by her children, and be a source of blessing for our community.

May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yeshiva University

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President of Yeshiva University
Robert Eli Rubenstein
National President, CFYU

Dr. Herbert C. Dobrinsky
Vice-President of University Affairs
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The Canadian Jewish news

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Israel 'unrivalled' in clean technology, smart agriculture

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Sheldon Potter and Jonathan Moneta, co-chairs of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's aliyah committee, are trying to promote an image of Israel that goes beyond the Mideast conflict.

"Israel is a world leader, and there are opportunities there that are unequalled anywhere in the world," said Potter.

Israel is "unrivalled" in clean technology, smart agriculture, fresh water production and renewable energy, and it has one of the wealthiest economies in the industrialized world, he said. "There are incredible opportunities for new olim."

He added that Tel Aviv University has a higher commercialization rate than the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "It has some [wonderful] success stories."

Liane Sela, the Jewish Agency's aliyah shlichah for Canada, said that Israel's economic strength "puts it on the map. It is a tremendous place to raise a family and make a living."

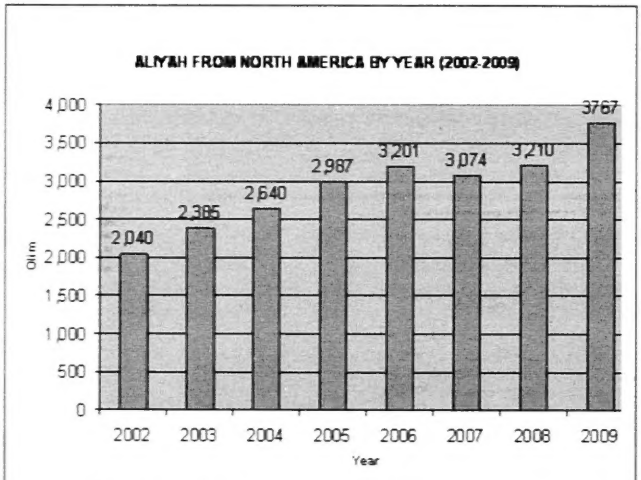
By having 24-year-old Moneta on the committee, Potter said, they hope to reach a new market. "He knows how young people think, and we're trying to catch them while their lives are in transition.

"We want to [convey] the message that Israel is a good place to start their lives. We want them to research schools in Israel. New olim don't pay for university. We're trying to plant the seeds for them to live there."

Sarah Mali, a former olah from England who is now a community shlichah for the Jewish Agency and director of Israel engagement for UJA Federation, said federation wants young people to go to Israel and discover the "grand narrative of the Jewish People and create their own personal story."

Continued on page 16

From left, Jonathan Moneta, Daniel Copeland, Liana Rose, Liane Sela, Sheldon Potter, Sarah Mali



Compiled by CJN Staff

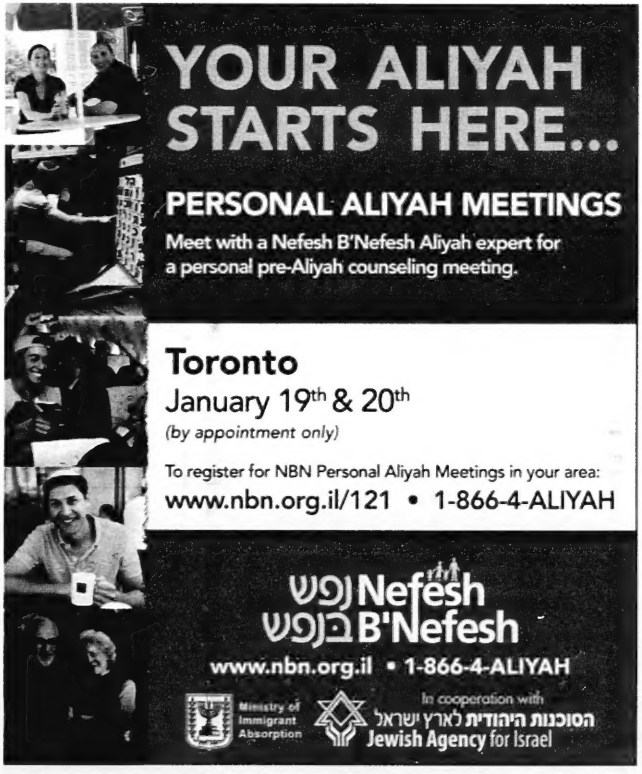
The Jewish Agency for Israel announced that 3,767 new immigrants from North America will have moved to Israel in 2009, an increase of 17 per cent over the 3,124 who came in 2008.

Of the 2009 olim, 3,324 were from the United States – a 19 per cent increase over last year and a 36-year high – while 443 hail from Canada, a six per cent increase over 2008.

The JA said the olim took advantage of absorption opportunities, including kibbutz ulpan, Ulpan Etzion and university studies.

In the last week of 2009, 400 new immigrants – who were included in the annual figures – were to have arrived in Israel – 200 from North America on a flight that was to have arrived Dec. 30 in partnership with Nefesh B'Nefesh.

Liran Avisar, head of the JA's aliyah delegation in North America said, "we are proud of the attractive and innovative absorption options which we provide olim – from Hebrew ulpan to job options. These difficult economic times have prompted people who were considering aliyah to decide that now is the time."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Greater Toronto Area

Change in year, not in hope

From the editor's desk...

It is profoundly distressing but morally imperative that the first column of 2010 begins with an expression of condolences to the families, loved ones and friends of the six Canadians who were killed in Afghanistan during the last two weeks of 2009.

Lt. Andrew Nuttall, 30, was killed Dec. 23 during a foot patrol in Panjwaii district in Kandahar province.

One week later, on Dec. 30, four soldiers and a journalist were killed when the armoured vehicle in which they were travelling touched an improvised explosive device in Kandahar city. Sgt. George Miok, 28, Sgt. Kirk Taylor, Cpl. Zachery McCormack, 21, and Pte. Garrett William Chidley, 21, and Michelle Lang, 34, a *Calgary Herald* reporter covering the conflict for Canwest News Service were killed in the powerful blast.

There are no words to abate the losses suffered by the families and friends of the fallen. There are only words of sympathy and condolence, which we so earnestly convey.

Since Canadian troops went to Afghanistan eight years ago as part of the NATO mission, 138 Canadian soldiers and two civilians have been killed there.

We salute our soldiers' courage.

And we pay deep tribute to the memories of the soldiers who did not return home from the mission so far away.

The soldiers' deaths last week in Afghanistan were part of a clearly orchestrated offensive that was intended to heighten the violence against western forces specifically during the Christmas holiday period. That same day, eight Americans were killed by a suicide bomber in Afghanistan.

The Taliban and their allies tried to impress a theological as well as a military point against the unbelieving, predominantly Christian forces of the West.

So, too, did the Taliban's soulmates, Al Qaeda. The Yemen-based wing of Al Qaeda set loose their suicide terrorist to commit his murder against helpless victims over the skies of Detroit on Christmas Day.

Thus, we begin this new year as we did last year: taking heart and example from the men and women in the armed forces of all freedom and democracy-loving nations who fight against tyrants, despots and oppressors of all stripes, religious or otherwise.

The road to a more peaceful world appears, alas, to be a long one still. Moreover, there is a sharply uncomfortable sense in the pit of the stomach that, in humanity's long march toward a better world, that we have already tread upon these very same pavement stones, yet we are making no forward progress.

For example, in Israel last week, the air force destroyed two tunnels leading from the northern and southern Gaza Strip toward the Jewish state. The tunnels were obviously intended for infiltrating into Israel and attacking Israeli civilians and possibly, even soldiers.

The attacks against the tunnels were in response to the firing of a rocket at the city of Netivot last Thursday.

Since the end of the war in Gaza in mid-January last year, more than 280 rockets and mortars have been fired at Israel. This number is vastly reduced from the more than 3,300 rockets and mortars that were fired at Israel from the Gaza Strip in 2008 prior to the outbreak of the Gaza war. But of course, too, it is vastly more than would be aimed at Israel were its neighbours in Gaza intent upon building Gazan society rather than destroying that of Israel.

Similarly, we read reports that Hamas refuses to agree to an exchange for the kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit. A delegation of Hamas leaders from Gaza returned from Damascus after two days of talks about a possible agreement for Schalit. Germany is attempting to mediate a prisoner exchange with Israel. Hamas promised to give its official answer to the German mediator in "the coming days."

As reported in JTA, Mahmoud Zahar, a member of the Hamas politburo, told reporters last week that "Hamas didn't close the door for Schalit's deal. Debates and discussions are still going on in Hamas, although we have some reservations on the recent Israeli offer."

As part of any agreement for the release of the kidnapped Schalit, hundreds of Palestinian prisoners will reportedly be released from Israeli prisons. However, Israel has reportedly refused to release a number of senior leaders of Hamas who were directly involved in the killing of Israelis. In addition, Israel refuses to allow some 100 of the Palestinians who are on the list to be freed to return to the West Bank.

The asymmetry in the prisoner exchange equation bespeaks with crystal-clear fractal precision a higher asymmetry at the core of the conflict between Israel and the enemies who strive to deny it independent sovereign life in the Middle East.

Every single human life is precious. Thus, every single human life must be protected against the evil that pays humanity and human life no regard.

It is this belief that drives and inspires the armed forces that defend Israel, even as it does the armed forces of the western democracies. First and foremost, they are defending oppressed peoples who are yearning to be free from the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but ultimately they are also defending our respective societies at home.

The new year begins as the last began. We maintain our hope. We never lose our hope. ***– MBD***

Vandals strike kosher restaurant — twice

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Toronto Police Service is investigating two incidents of vandalism that targeted the city's largest kosher restaurant late last year.

King Solomon's Table was struck by vandals on two occasions – the last, just before the holidays, saw the 310-seat venue daubed with two large swastikas on the restaurant's loading doors facing a back laneway. About four weeks earlier, a can of whitish paint was hurled at the front door, locks and sidewalk.

King Solomon's Table daubed with swastikas

The incidents, particular the one involving Nazi imagery, distressed restaurant owner Joe Elmaleh.

"I was shocked," said Elmaleh, who runs the family business. "It's very clear from the name we are a Jewish institution. We've been around 16 years. The fact someone would do this is very upsetting."

Police responded quickly on both occasions, but according to Elmaleh, the incidents took place at night when the restaurant was unoccupied. Police are examining surveillance videos belonging to a nearby tenant for clues. Police were unavailable for comment.

It took a full day to scrape off the paint from the first incident, and the swastikas remained on the back doors until police photographed them as potential trial evidence.

Elmaleh said the latter incident made him feel "sick to my stomach. I felt violated," he said.

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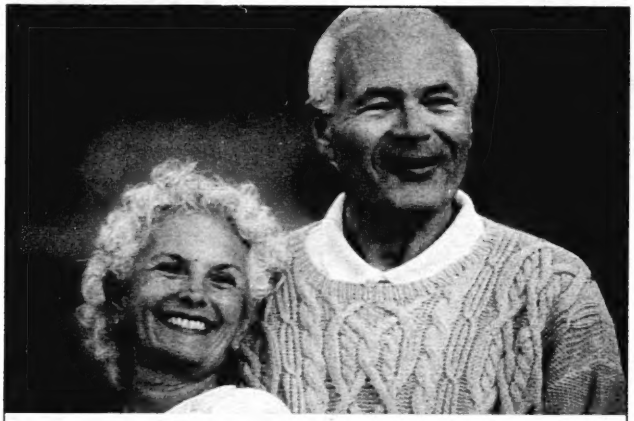

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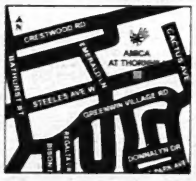

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Greater Toronto Area

Israel's high-tech revolution explained

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Israel's economy once rested on the export of agricultural produce, textiles and polished diamonds.

Not so today.

In the six decades since its birth as a sovereign state, Israel has morphed into "a high-tech powerhouse," write Dan Senor and Saul Singer in their new book, *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* (McClelland & Stewart).

Israel's transformation is such that the authors describe the Jewish state as "the country with the highest concentration of engineers and research and development spending in the world."

Consider the following statistics.

Per capita venture capital investments in Israel in 2008 were 2.5 times greater than in the United States, more than 30 times greater than in Europe, 80 times greater than in China, and 350 times greater than in India.

In addition, Israel, after the United States, has more companies listed on the NASDAQ than any other nation, including China, India, South Korea and Singapore.

Terrorism, wars and economic recessions have not slowed Israel's march to high-tech stardom.

As they put it, "During the six years following 2000, Israel was hit not just by the bursting of the global tech bubble but by the most intense period of terrorist attacks in its history and by the Second Lebanon War. Yet Israel's share of the global venture capital market did not drop – it *doubled*, from 15 per cent to 31 per cent.

The factors that account for Israel's ascent are clear.

The Arab boycott forced Israel to be inventive and innovative, thereby creating an "entrepreneurial culture."

Israel's isolation within the Middle East prompted Israelis to embrace the computer, software and telecommunications because, in these industries, borders, distances and shipping costs were virtually irrelevant.

"This, in turn, positioned Israel perfectly for the global turn toward knowledge-and innovation-based economies, a trend that continues today," observe Senor and Singer.

France's arms embargo against Israel in the wake of the Six Day War forced Israel's defence industry to produce military equipment such as tanks (the Merkava) and fighter aircraft (the Nesher and the Kfir, improved versions of the Mirage). These projects resulted in the production of avionic systems, among other technological breakthroughs, that helped jump-start the high-tech boom.

After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Israeli armed forces established a special unit for the top two per cent of its new recruits. Its purpose was to maintain Israel's scientific and qualitative superiority over its enemies.

Once admitted into this elite program, cadets took university-level courses in mathematics and physics and thereby filled the technological needs of the Israel Defence Forces.

The graduates of these courses became some of Israel's top-flight academics and high-tech entrepreneurs.

Senor and Singer elaborate: "It is no coincidence that the military – particularly the elite units in the air force, infantry, intelligence and information technology arenas – have served as incubators for thousands of Israeli high-tech start-ups."

The mass migration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel had an impact as well. As they say, "Though the Israeli government struggled to find jobs and build housing for the new arrivals, the Russians could not have arrived at a more opportune time. The international tech boom was picking up speed in the mid-1990s, and Israel's private technology sector became hungry for engineers."

With the Russian immigrants in mind, Israel established technology incubators – 24 in all – that gave Russian scientists and engineers the resources and financing to research and develop cutting-edge products.

Israeli chutzpah and the anti-hierarchical "culture of doubt" also played a role in advancing Israel's high-tech sector.

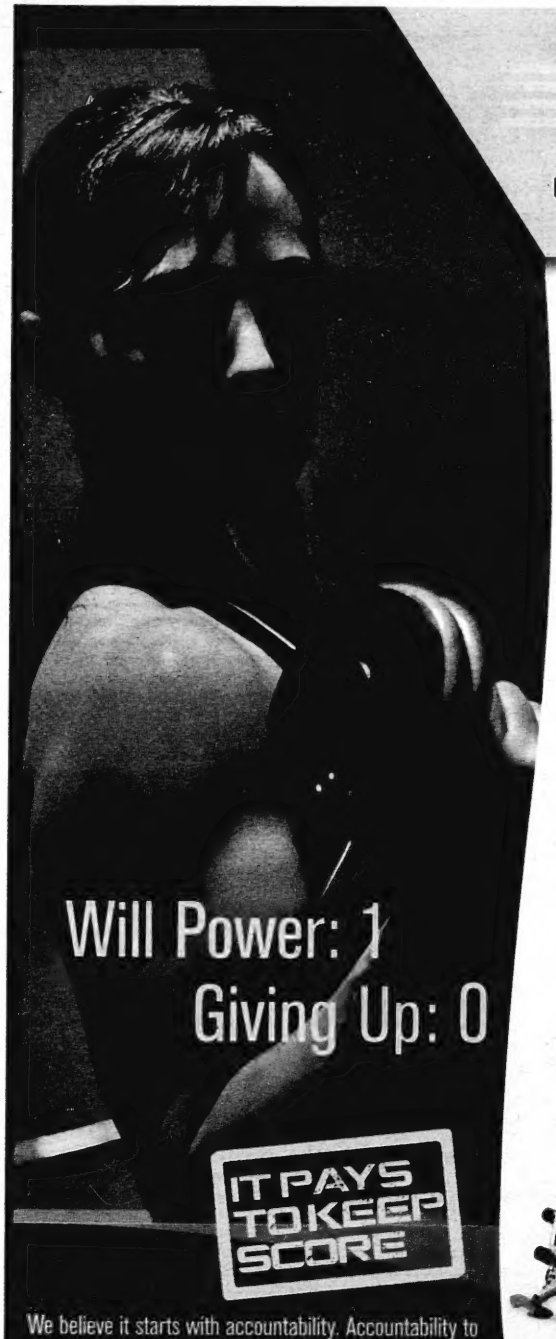
"Employees challenge their bosses, sergeants question their generals, and clerks second-guess government ministers," Senor and Singer write.

Consequently, little is taken for granted, yielding new ideas and fresh concepts.

So there you have it. Now you know why Israel has become a high-tech power.

Correction

The article "Day program launched for Alzheimer's patients" (*CJN* Dec. 24) should have stated that the initiative is the first Jewish day centre for seniors in York Region; that the agencies involved have worked together on other projects, and that the program is a partnership of five organizations: Circle of Care, Baycrest, the Alzheimer Society of York Region, JIAS Toronto and Reena.



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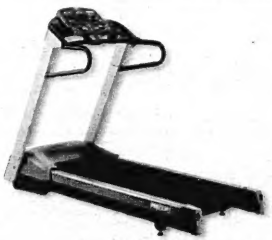

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Ultimatum: Iran

The deadline imposed by the Obama administration and its international allies upon the regime in Tehran to reduce its stockpile of low-enriched uranium has come and gone. That deadline was Dec. 31. The United Nations-backed proposal was essentially a plan to stall, not halt, the Iranian drive for nuclear weaponry.

According to the plan, Iran would export most of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium for further enrichment in Russia and France, where it would be converted into fuel rods. The rods would be returned to Iran about a year later. The rods would not be usable in the production of weapons.

Tehran was given an ultimatum to agree by the end of last year or suffer the penalty. The penalty, presumably, will be the imposition of much tougher sanctions.

We are now awaiting the response of the Obama-led coalition.

We need not await the response of mullah-led, Iranian government. Not only has Iran abjectly refused to accede to the end-of-December demand, it has turned the tables and imposed its own deadline on the West. As reported last weekend, Iran set a one-month deadline for the West to accept a counter-proposal by which the West would either sell or swap nuclear fuel to Iran. "We have given them an ultimatum. There is one month left and that is by the end of January," Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on state television.

Failure by the West to agree to Iranian terms, Mottaki warned, will result in the immediate enrichment of uranium to a higher level than the level at which Iran currently purports to enrich uranium. Higher grade enrichment is required for the making of nuclear weapons. Neither the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nation's nuclear watchdog, or the U.S. State Department commented on the Iranian proposal over the weekend.

Though there was silence in Vienna and Washington in the face of the Iranian threats, there was a very loud and articulate response last week in Jerusalem.

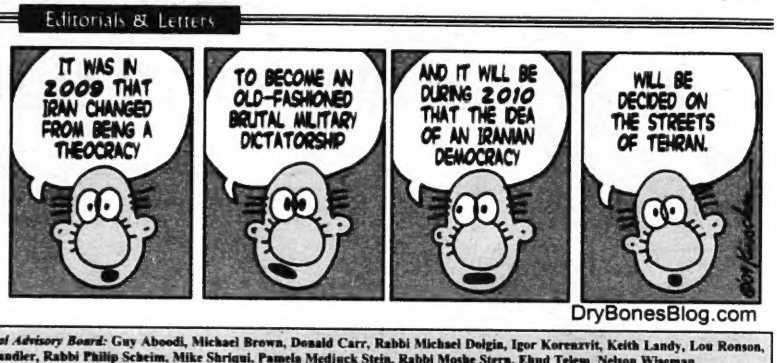
At a conference in Jerusalem, Canadian Liberal MP Irwin Cotler introduced a petition he is spearheading that calls upon governments around the world and the UN to immediately impose far-reaching diplomatic and economic action against Iran. He is joined in his initiative by a blue-chip panel of international jurists, activists and public officials that includes Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz; British MP Denis MacShane; Bassam Eid, executive director of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, and Prof. Suzanne Stone of Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

As of this writing, more than 60 people have signed the petition. Former Canadian prime minister John Turner is among the signatories, as are Elie Wiesel; Per Ahlmark, former deputy prime minister of Sweden, and Kamal Hossain, former minister of justice and minister of foreign affairs of Bangladesh.

We commend Cotler for the initiative, and we urge Ottawa to act upon it with the urgency that the situation warrants.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel officially revealed that the vast majority of Ethiopian Jews had been secretly airlifted to Israel. When the story was prematurely broken to the media by Yehuda Dominitz, the Jewish Agency's director of aliyah, the airlift was halted by Sudan and Ethiopia, who feared repercussions from other members of the Arab League.


Dry Bones FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT
IT WAS IN 2009 THAT IRAN CHANGED FROM BEING A THEOCRACY
TO BECOME AN OLD-FASHIONED BRUTAL MILITARY DICTATORSHIP
AND IT WILL BE DURING 2010 THAT THE IDEA OF AN IRANIAN DEMOCRACY
WILL BE DECIDED ON THE STREETS OF TEHRAN.
DryBonesBlog.com

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Eternal Jewish Family a divisive force

The allegations of sexual and financial misconduct against Rabbi Leib Tropper, the founder and director of Eternal Jewish Family (EJF), are embarrassing and offensive to every Jew ("Rabbi quits group," Dec. 24). But there is another, perhaps related, trait that applies to EJF as a whole that should not be obscured by the latest controversy. Created to establish "universal standards" for conversion to Judaism according to Jewish law, Rabbi Tropper and EJF have expended much effort trying to delegitimize others. Through the alliance of individuals and organizations in Montreal with EJF, they have become a dangerously divisive force here in our community.

Our conversion program, the Montreal region of the RCA (Rabbinical Council of America), has been relentlessly defamed by EJF for purely political reasons. Our rabbis are among the most highly respected and beloved in Montreal. We take no remuneration for our service. Our standards and curriculum follow the highest requirements of Jewish law, and our conversions are recognized throughout the world. But Rabbi Tropper and EJF have told prospective converts to leave our program, they denounced us to the Israeli chief rabbis, and they caused unfounded doubts among our converts about their future acceptance as Jews – all with no basis, simply to bring themselves more power.

We hope that as EJF goes through this crisis, they – and those individuals and organizations who are allied with EJF – will re-evaluate their tactics and come to work together with others, like us, who share the same goal – conversions done with respect and sensitivity according to the highest standards of Jewish law. This is how religious Jews should behave.

Rabbi Ira Ebbin, Rabbi Asher Jacobson, Rabbi Schachar Orenstein, Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz, Rabbi Michael Whitman, Rabbi Mordecai Zeitz
Montreal

* * *

Egyptian doctors promulgate blood libel

The Egyptian Medical Syndicate has promulgated a 21st-century version of the blood libel against Jews. On Nov. 27, the syndicate's head, Dr. Hamdi Al-Sayed, declared that the decision to bar Israeli physicians from the October 2009 breast cancer regional conference in Egypt was based on the torture of Palestinians and the theft of their organs by Israeli doctors for use in transplantation. This outrageous charge betrays the virtual absence of modern scientific principles of objectivity and verifiability in countries where fanatic religious and political forces distort education, research and the application of new discoveries for the betterment of the human condition.

Doctors against Racism and Anti-Semitism (DARA) urges all institutions that sponsor scientific and medical events to consider carefully where they allocate their resources. As we saw in the case of the breast cancer conference in Egypt, the political and religious agenda trumped the pursuit and spread of knowledge. The Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation learned that it could not trust the assurances of the Egyptian government to provide a venue accessible to all participants. Israeli experts in breast cancer management were boycotted at the insistence of xenophobic, anti-Semitic hatemongers.

Dr. Steve Samuel, Chair
Doctors against Racism and Anti-Semitism

* * *

Israel punished for being nice

The answer to those who call east Jerusalem "occupied territory" is simple. When did east Jerusalem become Arab territory? When the Jordanians took over the city by force in 1948 and expelled the Jews who had lived in the Old City for centuries. So in 1967, would the world have preferred it if the Israelis had expelled all Arabs from east Jerusalem? Then, under the same logic, it would now be Jewish territory. Israel is thus punished for being nice to the Arabs of Jerusalem.

David M. Sherman
Toronto

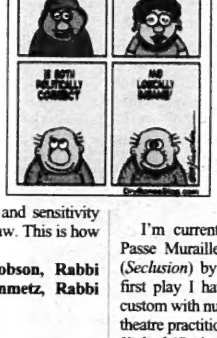
* * *

Play confronts tensions in Orthodox world

I'm currently acting as project consultant for Theatre Passe Muraille's upcoming Toronto production of *Yichud* (*Seclusion*) by Julie Tepperman. *Yichud* (*Seclusion*) is the first play I have seen that engages with Orthodox Jewish custom with nuance, precision and artistic integrity. As both a theatre practitioner and an Orthodox woman, I appreciate that *Yichud* (*Seclusion*) directly confronts the tensions that exist in the Orthodox world, specifically pertaining to issues of acculturation and religious agency, without placing tradition and modernity in opposition to each other.

Tepperman's groundbreaking play captures the beauty of Orthodox ritual without sacrificing its depth or complexity. It debunks racist stereotypes against Orthodox Jews through honest religious exploration and rigorous character development. The most provocative thing about this play is that it embraces mainstream Orthodox lifestyle, unveiling its hidden intricacies and penetrating beyond the status quo.

Shira Schwartz
Toronto



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Perspectives

Politics and the press clash in Israel

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

Should a billionaire tycoon who lives abroad be entitled to use his money to influence Israeli political life?

This question came to the fore in early December when a group of Knesset members moved to bar American Jewish casino mogul Sheldon Adelson from owning a free Israeli daily newspaper that supports Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Knesset bill, which is being promoted by a collection of interested parties ranging from owners of competing newspapers to rival politicians, stipulates that, as is the case with the electronic media in Israel, only Israeli citizens or residents should be eligible for licences to own Hebrew-language newspapers in Israel.

"Imagine if a Saudi businessman were to own a newspaper in Israel," Kadima legislator Yoel Hasson declared somewhat disingenuously, since the bill clearly was directed at Adelson.

Sheldon Adelson

It's far from clear that the anti-Adelson campaign will succeed even if the bill is passed. Adelson easily could appoint a straw-man owner, or even hand over the paper to his wife, Miriam, who is Israeli-born.

The arguments for and against, however, go far beyond the Adelsons, and touch on the very essence of democracy and free speech in Israel.

The newspaper, *Yisrael Hayom (Israel Today)*, was launched 2-1/2 years ago, and has been so uncritical in its support of Netanyahu that it has been dubbed the "Bibiton," a play on Netanyahu's nickname, Bibi, and the Hebrew word for newspaper, *iton*.

Its opponents argue strongly against it. First, they say it provides a venue for foreign money to shape the Israeli agenda. Additionally, they complain, *Yisrael Hayom* is nothing more than a propaganda sheet for Netanyahu posing as a genuine newspaper and taking in masses of gullible readers. For Netanyahu to buy that kind of publicity would have cost millions; the free newspaper with nationwide distribution could be seen as campaign funding from a foreign source, which might run afoul of Israel's strict campaign financing laws. Worse, say critics, the newspaper's free distribution – some even get home delivery free – and super-low advertising rates create an uneven playing field that threatens to destroy the competition.

The loudest complaints come from journalists at the daily *Ma'ariv*, which is already tottering. *Ma'ariv* columnist Ben Dror Yamini said Adelson is ready to spend as much as it takes to wipe out all the existing Hebrew dailies. He predicts that *Ma'ariv* will be the first to go, followed by *Yediot Achronot*. Within a few years, Yamini says, Israel will be left with a monopolistic party political pamphlet and no free press. His *Ma'ariv* colleague Ben Caspit calls it a hostile takeover of democracy and free speech.

Their dire predictions, though, appear somewhat exaggerated.

Besides *Yisrael Hayom*, Israel has only three other Hebrew dailies: *Ma'ariv*, *Yediot* and *Ha'aretz*. And although *Ma'ariv* is not expected to survive much longer, *Yediot* remains a powerful economic empire. For *Ha'aretz*, the emergence of *Yisrael Hayom* has actually provided a boost in the form of significant printing revenues: Adelson's newspaper is printed on *Ha'aretz*'s press.

Yisrael Hayom

For his part, Adelson dismisses the agitation against him as a ploy for power and market share by his competitors, notably Arnon Mozes, the publisher of *Yediot*.

"Mozes, the publisher of *Yediot*, is the most powerful man in the State of Israel, and all he wants is to maintain his power, and he manipulates the government," Adelson told JTA in an interview earlier this month. "Mozes will make a deal with anybody to advance his own personal financial agenda, so he controls everything. He was able to make or break any politician, and he uses that as a lever to get whatever he wants from the political sphere. Why is he always thumping on Bibi? Because he can't control Bibi."

Adelson also said the notion that *Yisrael Hayom* is a vehicle for Netanyahu is nonsense.

"Everybody thinks I started the newspaper *Israel HaYom* purely to benefit Bibi. Nothing could be further from the truth," Adelson said. "I started the newspaper to give Israel, Israelis, a fair and balanced view of the news and the views. That's all. It is not a 'Bibiton.'"

In a long, often angry response to the charges against the paper, *Yisrael Hayom*'s editor, Amos Regev, echoed those arguments, accusing the owners of *Ma'ariv* and *Yediot* of acting out of fear of losing their once-prodigious influence.

Regev also argued that since electronic media use airwaves, which is state-owned space, the government is entitled to impose limitations on their ownership. Print journalism makes no use of public resources, however, and therefore should not be subject to restriction. Regev cited numerous examples of major newspapers around the world run by overseas owners, noting Australian-born Rupert Murdoch's vast media empire.

Others on Regev's side add that newspapers are entitled to have political agendas and to support politicians. American newspapers, for example, regularly endorse candidates for political office. As for the claim that Adelson's pockets are so deep that *Yisrael Hayom* competes unfairly by offering free distribution, Regev says this is necessary for print newspapers to compete with free Internet news websites.

Dahlia Dorner, the president of Israel's Press Council and a former Supreme Court justice with considerable moral authority in Israel, calls the Knesset bill to outlaw foreign ownership of Israeli newspapers "inappropriate."

Dorner supports Regev's distinction between TV channels and newspapers and says it would be wrong to limit newspaper ownership. The more newspapers there are, the healthier the marketplace of ideas and Israeli democracy, she says.

This analysis, of course, makes two implicit assumptions: that all the other newspapers don't fold because of the uneven playing field, and that at least some continue to carry out the fourth estate's most important functions: democracy watchdog and fearless critic of the powers that be.

Print journalism is in deep crisis

By GABRIEL WEIMANN
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

In recent years, a harsh, cruel, existential war has raged here – a war that attracts hardly any public attention, even though its outcome will have critical implications for Israeli society.

This war is not raging in Israel alone. All over the world, print journalism is in deep crisis. In recent years, sales of leading western newspapers have declined and those that have not been closed have had to make cruel cuts, firing reporters and making their employment terms worse.

The main factor in the abandonment of newspapers by both readers and advertisers is the Internet, along with the free dailies, which are gaining increasing market share. Nonetheless, we must condemn the initiative by newspaper owners who joined forces with Knesset members in an effort to pass a law that would harm the *Israel Hayom* freebie because its owner, Jewish billionaire Sheldon Adelson, is a foreign citizen.

This initiative crudely and zealously merges the Knesset members' political interests with the economic interests of *Israel Hayom's* competitors. But a bill directed at a specific individual cannot save Israel's press. Moreover, it must be remembered that the entry of *Israel Hayom*, the country's most widely distributed freebie, did not create the problem; it merely exacerbated the situation.

Nevertheless, behind this hasty legislative initiative hides real distress on the part of the entire press – and this should concern us all.

An independent and financially solid press is a courageous, determined press able to expose folly and corruption. A weak press is a fawning press that courts advertisers, submits to their dictates and tries to appease politicians. Every newspaper that closes will reduce the media supply in Israel and transform the watchdogs of democracy into frightened poodles. If *Israel Hayom* wipes out one of its competitors, and this is certainly a possibility, Israeli society as a whole, and not just the owner of the newspaper that closes, will be harmed.

The solution must address the whole problem. Let us examine what has been done in other countries instead of hastily passing laws.

French President Nicholas Sarkozy has announced several measures to protect print journalism, at a cost of 600 million euros. These measures include doubling the amount of government advertising in the press, giving generous tax breaks and proposing to give every 18-year-old a one-year newspaper subscription.

When radio commercials were first broadcast in Israel, there was fear that this would hurt the print media. Therefore, "broadcast advertising services" were established under government auspices, in which the newspapers also took part. In this way, they were partially recompensed for their loss of income from advertising that moved to the radio.

When Israel's first commercial television station, Channel 2, began to broadcast, the law compensated newspapers that were not partners in the station's franchise, as well as the owners of movie theaters.

Government aid to the press, which is supposed to criticize the administration, raises fears of undermining its independence. However, the alternative – the collapse of the press – is even scarier.

An urgent solution is essential for the continued existence of an independent press in Israel, and therefore for the protection of this country's quality of life.

Gabriel Weimann is a professor of communications at Haifa University.

Opinions

Me-Jews or We-Jews?

Living in Israel doesn't make me a better Jew, but it does make me more Jewish.

In Canada, my Judaism is primarily religious. My faith manifests itself in observance, holy study, synagogue attendance and suchlike. Passionately committed though I am, it's still only a part-time activity, especially in my retirement. In Israel, I'm a full-time Jew by just being there. As Rabbi Daniel Gordis of Jerusalem's Shalem Centre put it, in the Diaspora, being Jewish is a choice, but in Israel, it's an instinct.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

A well-rounded Jew is a Jew both by choice and by instinct. In Canada, my Jewish instincts only kick in when anti-Semites attack us or when Jews in other countries are in distress. That's when I express solidarity by sitting on committees, writing petitions, attending rallies and offering whatever tangible support I can. At other times, I belong to one of many faith communities.

The more comfortable we become as individuals in the Diaspora, the less concerned we are with the Jewish collective. "We-Jews" become "Me-Jews." Judaism here is largely a private matter. When embarrassed about religion, we call it "spirituality" and at times even dilute it with borrowings from other traditions. That's why Diaspora Judaism is prone to being sporadic, inconsistent and – yes – assimilationist. Even when it nourishes the Jewish soul, it pays insufficient attention to the Jewish body.

In Israel, on the other hand, I'm a Jew 24/7, whether I like it or not. Jewishness there is so intense that many try to escape it periodically. Perhaps that's why Israelis are inveterate travellers. Perhaps that's also why I divide my time between Jerusalem and Toronto – between full-time Jewishness and part-time Judaism, between high maintenance and low impact.

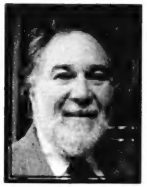
True, the impact is higher in Canada than in other countries, because of its strong Jewish links to Israel. For example, two-thirds of Jews in Canada have visited Israel, twice the ratio of the United States. The less Diaspora Jews are involved with Israel, the more self-centred and idiosyncratic does their Judaism become. That's as true of the religiously lukewarm as it is of fanatics.

The more marginal Israel is in the lives of contemporary Jews, the more likely that Judaism will become irrelevant to their descendants. It's in danger of being reduced to culinary nostalgia masquerading as culture at the one end of the spectrum and blind fundamentalism in the guise of piety at the other.

That's why, notwithstanding the risks and frustrations of living in Israel, life there isn't only exciting, but also a source of hope for the future of our people and our faith.

The duality of Jewish leadership

Forget for a moment the ridiculous accusation that Israel is an apartheid state and put aside the errors that Nelson Mandela has made regarding his attitude to Zionism. I want to write about leadership and wish to use the powerful film *Invictus* as an illustration.



Seymour Epstein in Toronto

In it, Mandela has just been elected president of South Africa and uses the Afrikaaner love of rugby as a ploy to unite the country. Whether or not the film is historically accurate, it does portray two essential elements of leadership that must work in concert for full effect. Mandela had a vision of reconciliation (even forgiveness) as the only way for South Africa to regain its integrity and to flourish. He turned to another kind of leader, a rugby team captain, Francois Pienaar of the Springboks, to assist him in his vision.

Achad Ha'am (Asher Ginzberg, 1856-1927) described the dynamics over history of the two modes of leadership in his famous essay, *Kohen v'navi* (Priest and Prophet). The Torah gives us ample illustration in the lives of Moses and Aaron. Moses is the visionary prophet, while his brother assumes the role of priest. Each function alone is necessary for true leadership, but not sufficient in itself. The two modes must support and complement each other for leadership to achieve its full potential.

We see the negative effect of pure visionary prophecy in Exodus 6:9. God has just given Moses a moving account of how He cares for the suffering Israelite slaves in Egypt, how He recognizes the covenant He made with their ancestors, and how He intends to liberate them, deliver them from bondage, and bring them to Canaan, the promised land. Both the message and the language are stirring, but when Moses delivers the vision to the Israelites, they could not pay attention due to their "shortness of breath and hard labour." Too much vision, not enough connection to the common folk.

And we note the sad outcome of too much concern for the people's needs later in Exodus 32, in which Aaron the priest acquiesces to the demands of the Israelites and helps them build a golden calf for cultic celebration at the very moment when Moses is on the mountain receiving the word of God.

Back to Mandela, whose noble vision of a reconciled and unified South Africa was more than either whites or blacks could stand. He needed a priestly leader to give the common folk a banner they could all salute, and that was a win in the Rugby World Cup. The interaction between the two becomes a complex dialogue in the film, with each kind of leader asserting himself in differing ways.

That is precisely the kind of dialectical leadership we need as a people, both in Diaspora communities and in the State of Israel. We need people of vision who can appreciate our past heritage of values, history, literature, and culture, and find a way to translate that great inheritance into a vision of Jewish peoplehood for the future. To complement those visions and to translate them into action, we also need leaders who care for all kinds of Jews and who respect all the 21st-century legitimate and authentic expressions of Jewish life so that the prophetic mission of the Jewish people is tempered by the realities of today.

True leadership of vision and integrity doesn't come about by accident. We must plan for it by educating ourselves and our children into deep Jewish literacy. Jewish identity is not enough. It produces followers. Jewish literacy produces leaders.

Invictus is a poem by William Earnest Henley that inspired Nelson Mandela in prison. Google it to see what English literacy did for him. Then imagine what our literary heritage could do for us.

Imagining a Canada-worthy museum

Spending the past four months exploring the vast and rich archives of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., has gotten me thinking not only about my research, but also about museums. Sitting at my desk atop the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in a city blessed with an abundance and a diversity of museums, I find myself musing about the nature and mission of museums, especially those that might be thought to be charged with fulfilling a Jewish mandate.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

Most museums present either a cultural vision or a historical narrative, or some combination of the two. The Jewish Museum in New York, located opposite Central Park on Fifth Avenue, is a cultural enterprise, an art museum. It features art by Jewish artists, art that explores Jewish themes such as identity or the sacred. It does not set out to tell a comprehensive history of the Jews. Implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, it poses such questions as whether there is such a thing as "Jewish art," and if so, what might define it. As art does, it mounts exhibits that may be provocative and push the boundaries of convention and propriety – such as the exhibit a number of years ago that looked at the place of Nazi imagery in contemporary art, "Mirroring Evil." Its visitors are interested in Jewish culture, in specific artists whose works are exhibited, or in cultural diversity.

By contrast, New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage, at the southern tip of Manhattan, is built on a historical narrative. Visitors moving through its permanent exhibition trace a linear path that begins with immigration from Europe to America over a century ago, encompasses the Holocaust, the creation of the State of Israel and the renewal of postwar Jewish life in America. The overarching story arc links the Jewish narrative to the American one – migration from the narrower and less tolerant Old World to the dual promise of freedom and opportunity in the New World. The walk through the exhibit arrives finally at a bank of windows overlooking the lower Hudson River, gazing on the Statue of Liberty.

The Holocaust Museum in Washington is not a Jewish museum per se, at least not in the ways that the two New York museums are. Like the Museum of Jewish Heritage, it is driven by the desire to tell a historical story. Te move through its permanent exhibition is to move through chronological time. Yet its mission is to tell an American story. It begins with the entry point that seeks to capture the horrifying sights that greeted American soldiers liberating concentration camps, and seeks to tell a story that is specific but also has broad implications. Although there are museums in Washington with more beautiful holdings, and others with a more upbeat message of progress, it is the Holocaust Museum that has – since its opening – drawn the most visitors.

And yet, although the Holocaust Museum is an American one and not a Jewish one, it is experienced by Jewish visitors as a Jewish museum. In part, this is because the Jewish experience – the Jewish catastrophe – is the dark heart of the experience it depicts. In part, the perception of the Jewishness of the museum emerges from the involvement of Holocaust survivors from its conceptualization to the actualization and evolution of its plans. In part, Jewish visitors – whether or not they have a familial link to the Holocaust – cannot help but see themselves and their ancestors reflected in the exhibitions. Whether it is the tower of photos conceptualized by Yaffa Eliach, or the depictions of destroyed communities and severed families, most Jewish visitors are affected personally. Several have referred to some parts of the museum as "Jewish sacred space."

One might say the Holocaust Museum is both American space and Jewish space, the one overlaid upon the other, intangibly but palpably. This essential duality, I believe, makes the museum a draw for people who have no a priori connection to the Jewish experience, but draws them in to this aspect of the Jewish past.

Canada needs a Jewish museum enacted in the Canadian idiom with comparable ambition and reach to anchor the Jewish experience on the Canadian landscape.

The Kirshner File

A year after the war in the Gaza Strip

A year after the eruption of the three-week border war in the Gaza Strip, a modicum of calm has settled on Israel. Data released by the Israeli army last month suggests that there has been a 90 per cent reduction in the number of rocket and mortar attacks on Israel originating from Gaza. Land-based infiltration attempts from Gaza, however, have not let up.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Israeli forces swept into Gaza in a war of self-defence, known as Operation Cast Lead. Israel's goal was to stop the missile barrages, which have killed 19 Jews, Arabs and foreign workers since November 2001, the second year of the second Palestinian uprising.

Israel's success in sharply reducing rocket and mortar attacks is a significant development, a testament to its renewed deterrent power and its ability to keep its enemies off balance, at least until the next round of fighting.

Two months ago, in a sign of the times, Hamas – which has ruled Gaza since the 2006 elections and its successful insurrection against the Palestinian Authority about a year later – arrested hotheads planning to fire rockets at Israel. The militants were detained because Hamas – which represents the rejectionist wing of the Palestinian national movement and is explicitly opposed to Israel's existence – is currently interested in abiding by the unofficial ceasefire that effectively ended the war in Gaza on Jan. 18, 2009.

Hamas' decision to hold its fire stems from a pragmatic desire to reconstruct Gaza and rebuild its forces, both of which were shattered by Israel's fierce offensive.

But smaller organizations such as Islamic Jihad, the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and the Popular Resistance Committees, though having promised Hamas to honour the truce, have resumed attacks on Israel, albeit on a much smaller scale than before the war.

By one estimate, they have launched nearly 300 rockets and mortars at Israel since the war. The last reported attacks occurred in mid and late December and Jan. 1, when several rockets hit open areas in Sderot and Netivot, causing neither casualties nor property damage.

These attacks, though limited in frequency and scope, are disturbing. But compared to the days when such projectiles struck Israel on an almost daily basis, the situation is fairly tolerable.

The Israeli government of then-prime minister Ehud Olmert launched Operation Cast Lead on Dec. 27, 2008, to end this reign of terror. Until then, Israel had carried out retaliatory raids and targeted assassinations of Palestinian officials, including Sheik Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas. These pinprick reprisals had no lasting effect and emboldened Hamas and its allies.

Hamas, in a shift of tactics, began firing rockets and mortars at Israel in the spring of 2001, shortly after Israel rebuilt a security fence enclosing Gaza that Palestinians had torn down. The fence was extremely effective, all but preventing Palestinian marauders and suicide bombers from sneaking into Israel. Hamas intensified its attacks following Israel's unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in the summer of 2005.

From 2001 to 2008, some 10,000 rockets and mortars slammed into Israeli towns and villages, destabilizing the lives of one million Israelis. During this tense period, an Israeli soldier, Gilad Schalit, was kidnapped in the course of a Hamas raid on an Israeli fortified position facing Gaza.

The effectiveness of the barrier was not the sole reason why Hamas invested in Iranian and Syrian rocket technology.

Hamas also bridled at Israel's land and sea blockade of Gaza, which, though severe, does not affect the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into Gaza.

Israel imposed the siege after Hamas defeated its arch rival, Fatah, in the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary election.

Hamas hoped that missile strikes would induce Israel to lift the embargo, but this did not happen.

Hamas was further isolated when Egypt, fearing a spillover of Islamic fundamentalism from Gaza, instituted its own blockade. The Egyptians took this step in the wake of Hamas' violent seizure of Gaza.

Egypt – which signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979 – tried to defuse the volatile situation adjacent to its border by inducing Israel and Hamas to sign a series of temporary truces. The Egyptian mediator, Gen. Omar Suleiman, was the director of Egypt's military intelligence service.

The truces he arranged all broke down, but he was not discouraged. In June 2008, he brokered yet another ceasefire, but it collapsed after Hamas chose not to renew it unless Israel lifted the siege of Gaza.

In short order, Hamas intensified its bombardment of Israel, forcing Israel to act decisively. Israel's war aims were three-fold: to bring peace to southern Israel, restore its deterrence after years of erosion and hobble Hamas' military capabilities

The Israeli Air Force initiated hostilities with a wave of devastating strikes on Dec. 27, 2008 that killed more than 200 Palestinians in the first 24 hours. Hamas retaliated by firing scores of rockets and mortars at Israeli towns that had never been hit before, including Be'er Sheva and Yavneh.

Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip during last year's war. *[Israel Sun photo]*

On Jan. 3, Israel expanded the conflict by invading Gaza. Israeli troops did not try to penetrate too deeply into Palestinian refugee camps, where Hamas is based. As well, Israel secretly bombed a Gaza-bound Iranian arms convoy in Sudan.

Despite the ferocity of Israel's assault, Hamas managed to fire more than 500 missiles into Israel, some of which were deliberately launched from civilian buildings and mosques.

Hamas' ability to exact retribution on Israel was sobering. It was indicative of the fact that Hamas remained standing and unbowed in spite of the drubbing it took on the battlefield. In direct confrontations, Hamas fighters did not particularly distinguish themselves, but Hamas as an organization did not disintegrate.

Israel's land, air and sea operation was destructive, causing damage to the tune of $2 billion in Gaza and resulting in the deaths of some 1,400 Palestinians.

Israel's losses were 13 killed.

Militarily, Israel won the war, but it has paid a heavy price for its victory in terms of its international image.

A United Nations commission, headed by South African Jewish jurist Richard Goldstone, concluded that Israel – and Palestinian armed groups – committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. Israel protested, but Goldstone's accusations have planted serious doubts in some quarters about Israel's behaviour.

In the year since the war, Israel has virtually pacified the Gaza border region, but it has not staunched the flow of weapons into Gaza through tunnels. Indeed, smuggling has returned to pre-war levels, if not exceeded them, notwithstanding Israel's claim to have destroyed 300 tunnels along the Philadelphi corridor, the narrow zone separating Israel from Gaza. Judging by the latest reports, Hamas has smuggled upgraded weapons into Gaza, notably long-range rockets capable of reaching Tel Aviv and anti-tank missiles that can penetrate heavy armour.

At Israel's urging, Egypt has begun building a massive iron wall along its border with Gaza to cope with the upsurge of smuggling. But it remains to be seen whether this barrier will be effective.

In the meantime, Israel is developing the Iron Dome missile defence system, which is due to be operational by the summer. It will be needed. Hamas, which is strongly entrenched in Gaza, has regrouped and rearmed. As Israeli Chief of Staff Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi suggested recently, Israel may well be forced to fight in Gaza yet again.

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Feature

Dead Sea remains popular destination

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

EIN BOKEK, Israel — They say the bromide in the air has a calming effect on the nerves, but it certainly didn't seem to slow down Toronto native Stanley Morais at a recent news conference promoting travel to the Dead Sea.

Morais, former head of El Al's Canadian office, added a jolt of energy to a press briefing meant to tout the virtues of the Dead Sea region. Morais joined local promoters and Israel government tourism officials who urged travel reporters and tour operators to promote the Dead Sea as a travel destination.

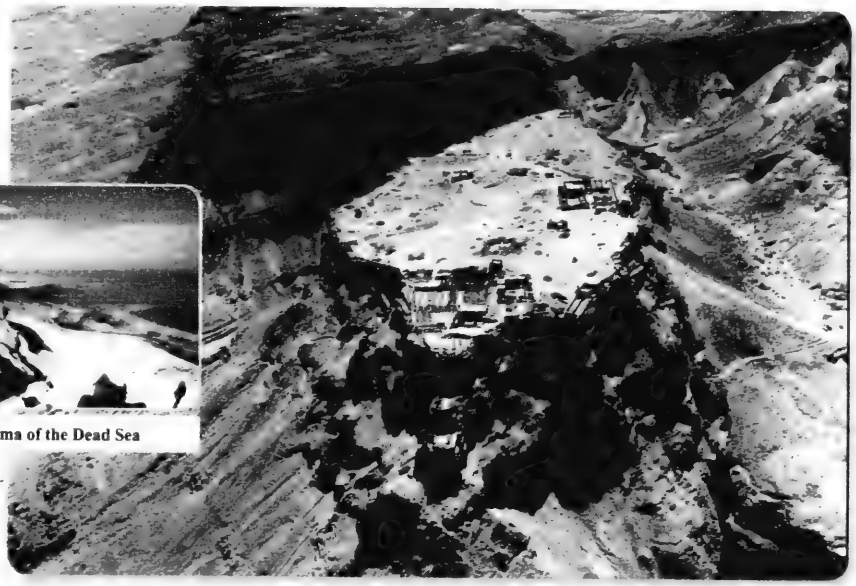
Between them, they painted a glowing picture that reinforced visitors' first-hand experience of enjoying the unique bromide and oxygen-enriched atmosphere at the lowest point on the face of the earth – 420 metres below sea level.

The area, they pointed out, is in the running for selection as one of the New 7 Wonders of Nature. It recently advanced to the final 28, joining an exclusive club that includes Angel Falls in Venezuela, the Amazon, Australia's Great Barrier Reef and Canada's own Bay of Fundy. You can vote online at www.new7wonders.com.

It's no wonder the Dead Sea is considered a world wonder. With 30 per cent salinity, it is 8.6 times saltier than the ocean, making floating for even confirmed "sinkers" like myself easy as pie. Just don't get any in your eyes, and if you have an open cut, expect a stinging sensation.

Because the Dead Sea is so far below sea level, it benefits from the screening powers of the extra atmosphere, making tanning safer than at higher elevations. It has a higher oxygen content than at sea level, and the region's mud offers therapeutic healing powers for those afflicted with skin diseases.

Panorama of the Dead Sea



An aerial view of Masada

For visitors, the area has just about everything a traveller to the Holy Land could want, including a selection of accommodations from tourist class to luxurious, good food and easy access to such historical sites as Masada. It's also close to the nature reserve at Ein Gedi, and it has 330-plus days of sunshine per year, as well as the healing powers of the Salt Sea.

The area attracts visitors from around the world, including those seeking the region's curative powers. Some European countries underwrite stays for patients that last several weeks. People with arthritic conditions also respond well to the area's dry climate and local treatments, which can be found pretty much in all the area's hotels.

According to Ofra Gazit, marketing and public relations manager for the Tamar Regional Council, which includes the west bank of the Dead Sea, there are 4,000 rooms in 15 hotels (including kibbutz Ein Gedi's guest house) along the Dead Sea, and despite the international recession, they were 80 per cent full in 2009.

Dov Litvinoff, mayor of the Tamar Regional Council, said $10 million (US) will be invested in the area in the next three to four years. Among the projects on tap are a seaside promenade, beach development, constructing a convention centre and a new park for concerts. There's even a suggestion that the area will one day accommodate a small landing strip, to make the transfer from Ben-Gurion Airport that much easier.

All this is part of an ongoing effort to attract even more visitors from around the world. A recent trade and marketing conference promoting the Dead Sea attracted tour operators, travel agents and reporters from 15 countries, including Canada, the United States, Brazil, Italy, England, South Korea, France and Russia. Some 42 per cent of the area's hotel occupants hold foreign passports, with Americans, Russians, Germans, French and Italians the most ubiquitous.

Still, it's homegrown Israelis who come to the Dead Sea in the greatest numbers. On a recent Friday night at a Dead Sea hotel, the sounds of joyous Shabbat singing gave the hotel a uniquely spiritual atmosphere.

Continued on page 14

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Tickets available online at www.mnjcc.org, in person at the MNJCC, or by phone at 416.924.6211. Presented by the Al Green Theatre/Miles Nadal JCC and the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation. Promotional Sponsors: Koffler Centre of the Arts and Small World Music Society

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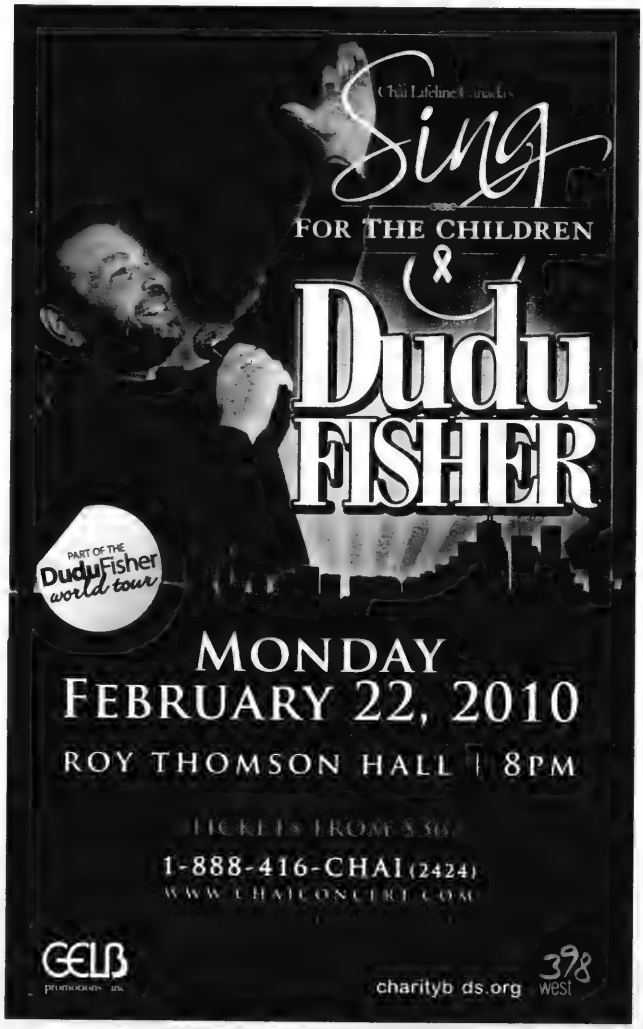


Feature

Nabucco coming to Masada

Continued from page 12

Culture is a major selling point for local officials. In June 2010, the Herodian fortress of Masada will serve as a backdrop for the staging of Verdi's opera, *Nabucco*, while a year later *Aida* will be staged.

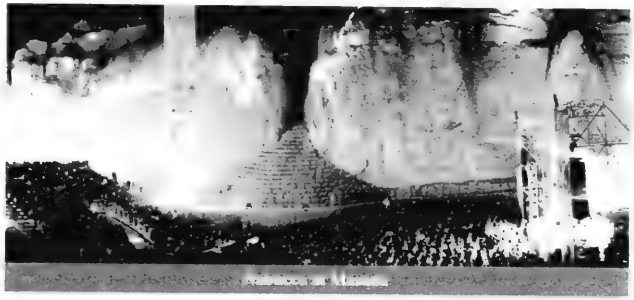
Nabucco promises to be a spectacular event and will be broadcast live in high definition to 60 countries.

Gazit points out another potential for growing the area's tourism business. While it's still only a vision, it would see the promotion of a sea to sea to sea to sea vacation, which would take travellers to sites on the Mediterranean, Dead and Red seas along with the Sea of Galilee.

As for Morais, he's busy directing the development of El Al's international business. The feather in his cap is an arrangement reached with American Airlines, which allows U.S. passengers to fly with El Al ticket coding and more seamlessly make the connection to Israel-bound aircraft.

With Israel's tourism potential expanding – ministry officials expect to better last year's three million in 2010 – El Al is seeking to expand its presence in non-traditional markets and develop others that promise a bright future, such as India, Shanghai and Sao Paulo in Brazil. Many of the visitors will no doubt end up at the Dead Sea.

The region is about to become a lot more multicultural and diverse.



Shmoozing at the spa

EIN BOKEK, Israel — The first person I ran into at the Dead Sea was Patrick. He and I shared a Jacuzzi along with a third fellow at the -2 level of the Moriah Classic Hotel – not to be confused with the older Moriah Plaza.

The -2 level – two stories below ground level – is where the Classic has its spa, which offers two kinds of whirlpool baths, a heated pool of Dead Sea water, heated freshwater pools, dry sauna and wet steam plus showers.

If you're familiar with the hotels alongside the western shore of the Dead Sea, the Moriahs are pretty much the most southerly of the bunch and somewhere in the middle when it comes to quality.

Anyway, Patrick.

Patrick was a friendly fellow eager to strike up a conversation. I was still tired from the 11-hour flight from Toronto to Israel, plus the more than two-hour drive from Ben-Gurion Airport to the Dead Sea hotel strip that went via the country's coastal road, then east through the northern Negev, past Arad and then down a roller-coaster of a road to Ein Bokek.

En route we stopped for a bathroom and leg-stretching break at a dusty truck stop, where I learned that the salesperson at a store, carrying a full line of Dead Sea products, came from the nearby yishuv of Meitar. It's "the best place in the world to live, quiet, everyone's nice," she professed. It seemed like a dusty outpost in the middle of nowhere to me, but to each their own.

Come to think of it, she was the first person I met in Israel.

But back to Patrick.

Patrick hailed from Singapore and, despite his name, had no Irish blood. In fact, he was eager to explain his Chinese origins and the reason for his visit to Israel. He was visiting the Holy Land along with his family as part of a Christian group, and he mightily admired the Jews. They are part, he explained, of one of the most ancient cultures in the world, even older than the Chinese.

With a smile on his face, he explained that in the Cantonese language, the character for sacrifice was an altar with a lamb on top, something very Jewish, suggesting there may have been some contact between the peoples in ancient times.

When he asked about my heritage, I told him "Jewish." His response: "So, you're home."

For the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, which sponsored my recent visit, getting someone like Patrick to the Holy Land must be like winning the trifecta at Toronto's Woodbine Racetrack – a Christian pilgrim who brings his family and visits the Dead Sea, as well as holy sites in Jerusalem and the Galilee. Oh, and who's eager to tell his friends about his trip to Israel when he returns home.

— P.L.

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Book explores world of 19th century gay Polish Jew

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — You know attitudes have evolved when an Orthodox rabbi writes a foreword to a novel about what it might have been like to be Jewish and gay in a 19th-century Polish shtetl, a book that has clear autobiographical elements.

Montrealer David Brody's self-published book *Mourning and Celebration* is introduced by Rabbi Daniel Sperber, president of the Institute for Advanced Torah Studies at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

Brody is gay and observant.

"Times have changed, and even among Orthodox Jews, there is a growing understanding of the tragic situation in which a religious homosexual finds himself," Rabbi Sperber writes. "There is a greater willingness to view the phenomenon with sympathy, rather than cause the 'gay' to be an outcast, a pariah in his own community."

Rabbi Sperber says that homosexuals must be granted "full admission into the community," despite the seeming challenges Jewish law poses.

Part of the reason for this evolution is due to people like Brody going public with the anguish they felt in their own community, he continues.

Brody, a translator by profession who has lived in Montreal since 1968, dedicates the book "to the thousands of voiceless souls whose anguish could rise only to heaven." Through the main character Yankl, he is attempting speak for the many gay Jews of the past who dared not reveal themselves.

He explains that his objective in writing this work of fiction was to gain recognition that, though things have advanced, the place of homosexuals within Orthodox Jewry has not been resolved.

Brody and Rabbi Sperber, now in their late 60s, went to school together in London, England. The latter said he had no idea that Brody was gay at the time because he apparently concealed it so well.

Homosexuals must be granted 'full admission into the community,' says Rabbi Sperber

Mourning and Celebration also contains testimonials from other rabbis, including Rabbi Adam Scheier of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, where Brody has been a member for many years and feels is fully accepted, even though the synagogue is traditional.

Rabbi Scheier comments that *Mourning and Celebration* is a story of "a conflicted world that most neglect to imagine even existed," adding that it is, "tragically, timeless." He says he considers Brody "my teacher in the implications of what transpires when deep emotional longing meets moral blindness."

"The Shaar is extremely open-minded," said Brody, a founder of one of the pioneering Jewish gay groups in Montreal, Yakhdav.

The Shaar granted his request to dedicate a breakfast in memory of his late partner, who was not Jewish. That was 15 years ago.

The Shaar was also one of the first traditional congregations anywhere to screen the groundbreaking 2001 documentary *Trembling Before G-d*, a frank examination of what it means to be Orthodox and homosexual. Brody participated in the discussion that took place afterward.

In *Mourning and Celebration*, Brody imagines what a hell it would have been if he had been born 100 years earlier, in the time of his grandfather, in a Jewish village in eastern Europe. His grandparents were indeed from Rypin, Poland.

Much of the book takes the form of conversations between the present-day narrator and Yankl, the shtetl dweller who must contend with living in a community where homosexuality is forbidden and regarded as wicked.

Yankl is not only gay; he is an only son, in whom much is invested by his parents. He is a brilliant scholar and a talented violinist.

From an isolated adolescence, the story follows his search for validation and human rights in a time and place when such concepts were not commonplace.

The story, however, is not a condemnation of Orthodox Judaism; on the contrary, the rabbis are humane and grapple with Yankl's "problem" in a way that causes the least hurt to everyone.

"The second objective of the book was to demystify Judaism," said Brody. "I've tried to explain Shabbat and the festivals and the different rituals." The book contains a glossary of Hebrew and Yiddish terms.

Despite having lived a century apart, there are similarities between Yankl's struggle and that of the narrator, whose early life is likewise marked by concealment and shame. In real life, Brody was the eldest son in an Orthodox family; his father had been a shochet and cantor. His parents also had high expectations of him, not the least of which was to marry and live a "normal" life.

Homosexuality was, after all, decriminalized in Britain only in 1967.

Indeed, Brody many years wanted to "change" to spare his family and went to a series of psychiatrists, before accepting himself as he was. His father did, too, in time, although his mother, he believes, never really did.

Brody, a gay rights activist in Quebec, successfully sued the province for the right of homosexuals in committed relationships to the survivor's pension. It was an eight-year court battle that ended in 2002. Brody, whose partner of 23 years died, believed gays had just as much right to the benefit as any common-law couple.

Brody considers himself "lucky to have lived to see the complete evolution of gay emancipation and I feel very lucky to be living in Canada. I never dreamed I would see legalized [same-sex] marriage.

"But I think the final victory for gay rights will come when we don't talk about it anymore like we don't talk about the women's vote," Brody said.

For more information about the book, visit www.mourningandcelebration.com.

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'My aliyah started here'

Continued from page 3

"Between 10 and 15 representatives will be available for consultation about anything that has to do with Israel, and one-on-one interviews can be booked in advance," she said

"We are also looking to partner events with other organizations so that we can carry out the message about Israel in a variety of ways."

Sela said that since Montreal closed its aliyah office about a year ago, the Toronto office is the only one in Canada. "We help about 430 people a year make aliyah, and we have a higher per capita [aliyah rate] than the United States."

She said that Canada represents about 12 per cent of the aliyah numbers from North America, "and we try to offer as many absorption plans as possible. People want to have something solid to go to, so we present them with their options."

Torontonians are fortunate to have a local aliyah office, she said, because they can consult in person before they make a final decision, and afterward. "It is like having a friend nearby, helping them through every step."

Daniel Copeland, 29, works in human resources here and is making aliyah in the next few months. He reviewed a number of options, he said, and chose to attend the Beit Canada-Ulpan Etzion program in Jerusalem, a five-month program geared toward single graduates or professionals aged 22 to 35.

He has been planning the move for about a year, he said, because he feels a strong connection to Israel and the Jewish People.

"I believe Israel will do something for my Jewish identity. It is hard for my parents, but they are being very supportive."

Liana Rose, 26, a music therapist who has a fiance in Israel, is also planning to make aliyah. She fell in love with the country while on a Birthright Israel trip, she said. "The energy is unparallelled."

Having a local office was important to her, she said. "My aliyah started here."

Coast to Coast

Winnipeg woman to help write a Torah

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Sofer Irma Penn is one of five women who has been invited by the Kadima Reconstructionist Jewish Community in Seattle, Wash., to complete a Torah scroll.

According to the Kadima community, this is the first time a Torah scroll will be written and embellished by an international community of women.

"I am deeply honoured and blessed to be part of the Women's Torah Project," said Penn, who has been assigned to write the Book of Dvarim.

Irma Penn *[Myron Love photo]*

She will be writing the Torah with Shoshana Gugenheim of Israel, Rachel Reichhardt of Brazil, and Americans Linda Coppleson and Julie Seltzer (who completed her portion earlier this year).

"By being part of this project, I can contribute something positive, while working with many other caring, dedicated, artistic, women," Penn said. "I can do something with meaning, and it's a way of connecting with God."

A writer and artist who uses her talents for the betterment of others, she was honoured as Canada's volunteer of the year by Jewish Women International in 1998. She has also won awards from local organizations for fundraising and volunteering in the community.

Penn worked as a teacher and archivist for the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada.

To become a Torah scribe is a realization of a dream she has had for 30 years, she said. Last February, she went to Israel to learn the calligraphy involved in STaM (which stands for sefer Torah, tfillin, mezuzah and megillah) – the writing of a sefer Torah.

"The only way to learn properly is to get proper instruction from someone who knows," she said.

Penn said she first studied Hebrew calligraphy by correspondence with a sofer in Jerusalem. "I learned to do Hebrew calligraphy very well," she said.

"I asked my teacher [who prefers anonymity, she said] if he would also teach me STaM. He agreed, so I went to Israel."

Penn studied for several months. "It was exhaustive and intensive," she said, "but I learned so much. I learned everything from cutting a quill to the Halachah for every letter."

She learned, for example, that there are 79,847 words in the Torah, which comprise 304,805 letters. She learned that a Torah scroll consists of 62 pages, with four columns per page, and that each page has 42 lines.

She learned how to weave the pages together with fine twine made from sheep gut.

"I went to Mea Shearim many times for materials," she said. "I bought turkey feathers [from which she made her own quills] and parchment. People there were so helpful and friendly. I was shown how to pick skins and what to look for."

In Israel, she practised writing for four or five hours every day, except Shabbat. "It was exhausting," she said. "Every letter has to be written a certain way."

Once back in Winnipeg, Penn received a commission from a friend to write a megillah, which she is halfway through writing.

"I write no more than three lines at a sitting," she said. "Then I take a break for an hour… If I try to do too much at a sitting, I start making mistakes."

She expected that she would write at least three or four megillot before she tackled a Torah, but events have overtaken her.

Along with the five Torah scribes, artists from around the world are contributing to the Kadima scroll. Women from Georgia, California, Washington, Oregon and Texas, and from Sao Paulo, Brazil, will design and craft embellishments such as the *yad* (pointer) and Torah cover.

"The Torah cover, or mantle, is a particularly wonderful part of this project," said Wendy Graff, director of the Kadima Women's Torah Project.

She said that anyone who donates to the Women's Torah Project is invited to contribute a bit of cloth that will be fashioned into a seed in the mantle's pomegranate motif, "thus literally becoming part of the project."

For more information, visit www.kadima.org.

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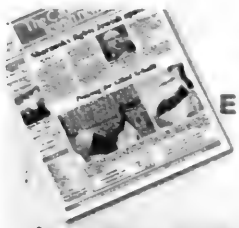
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Jewish Life

Ottawa shul joins Conservative group

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — After a five-year experiment as an unaffiliated, independent synagogue, Congregation Beth Shalom has decided to join the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues.

The decision to join the Canadian group – which was formed in 2008 by four Toronto shuls, including three that had broken away from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – was within one vote of being unanimous at the board level last January, and at the membership level this past November.

The congregation, Ottawa's oldest, had been Orthodox until a decision in June 2003 to adopt mixed "family seating."

Although it was hoped that the decision would attract new families to the downtown shul, a number of members were displeased and left, some to form a small Orthodox minyan in the same neighbourhood. In addition, the congregation's Orthodox rabbi and cantor at that time both left as well.

In 2005, the congregation embarked on a major refurbishment project, hired a new rabbi and introduced new programs, all in an effort to increase membership and bring people back downtown from the suburbs.

And while it was hoped that family seating would increase membership, in fact, it didn't. Some new families did join, but others left and many elderly members have died, leaving total membership in 2009 at 340 families, more or less the same as it was in 2003.

According to Jason Moscovitz, secretary of the shul's board of governors and chair of the task force that recently decided to affiliate with the new Conservative group, "when the decision to move to family seating was originally taken in June 2003, a commitment was made to revisit the concept after five years."

The review took place in January, 2008. Although the membership was generally satisfied with the direction it had chosen, it was acknowledged that the shul faced an "identity problem" of sorts, Moscovitz said.

"While we may have understood what we stood for inside our four walls, it was increasingly difficult to explain it to the community, to potential new members and, perhaps most importantly, to prospective rabbi candidates," said Moscovitz, a former chief political correspondent for the CBC.

The congregation has been without a permanent rabbi for a couple of years, with Rabbi Arnold Fine, rabbi emeritus of the Conservative Agudath Israel Congregation, filling in.

Rabbi Fine said he's pleased with Beth Shalom's decision and was grateful to have been consulted.

"They gave me an opportunity to speak at various meetings. My voice was heard, but my job was not to push them in one direction or another," he said.

The affiliation isn't expected to cause any major changes for the congregation.

"Beth Shalom will continue its practice of traditional Judaism, its use of Orthodox liturgy, as well as continue to maintain a separate-seated chapel for our daily minyan," Moscovitz said.

"Affiliation with the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues does not change how we conduct services. What it does is provide us with a network of like-minded synagogues. Through that network, we will be able to tap into many more resources to help us improve the many services we offer our members."

The congregation is pursuing its search for a new rabbi and is expecting its first visiting rabbi in early January.

Can we match the Mormons?

CLASS ACT
By Daniel Held

I've often heard students remark, "I'm a bad Jew. I don't keep kosher," but I've never heard one say, "I'm a bad Jews. I don't give tzedakah."

Notwithstanding their corresponding status in Halachah, somewhere along the line, ritual laws became the demarcation of Jewish identity and ethical laws lost out.

This trend is not only one of self-perceived Jewish identity, but it is solidified by our communal definition of affiliation. When we count Jews in demographic studies or when we evaluate the efficacy of educational programs such as Birthright Israel, day schools or summer camps, we look at Jewish ritual practice. We carefully scrutinize, and then bemoan, the decreasing number of Jews lighting Shabbat candles, going to synagogue, travelling to Israel, having Passover seders or, of course, marrying Jewish.

I agree that these are important indicators of Jewish identify. I'm concerned however, that teaching toward these litmus tests of affiliation serves to the detriment of other important indicators of Jewish ethical living. We teach Hebrew reading and synagogue services, and about Shabbat, holidays and kashrut, but we don't seriously challenge students to establish their own Jewish ethic.

Many of the lessons I've observed in Hebrew schools or camps relating to ethics lack the level of maturity and sophistication of other curricular content. It seems that we teach Rambam's ladder of tzedakah the same way in Grade 3 as we do in grades 6 and 9. Annual charity projects, planting trees on Tu b'Shvat and collecting food for the Passover food drive, while important endeavours, don't engender the type of passion for Jewish ethics that should be our goal.

I dream of the day when volunteering and giving tzedakah hold their rightful place in the measure of Jewish identity alongside Shabbat and kashrut. When a year of service after high school is considered a Jewish act on par with a year of study in Israel. When the expectation of celebrating Shabbat is paralleled with the expectation to give tzedakah.

We in the Jewish community have a long way to go. But it's not only us.

At this time of year, between Chanukah appeals and charities reminding us to get a 2009 tax receipt, I always get the impression that Canadians give generously. But it seems this isn't the case.

The Fraser Institute recently released its 2009 Generosity Index, which, by studying Canadian and American tax returns, analyzes trends in charitable giving. I was truly shocked by the findings.

Canadians, on average, donate .76 per cent of their income to charity. Americans, on average, donate 1.6 per cent of their income, more than double the Canadian amount.

I've always assumed that Canadians are generous. It may well be that the data shifts dramatically when we consider after-tax as opposed to pre-tax dollars. It may well be that, in considering our charitable giving, Canadians take into account the social-welfare safety net that's built into our tax system. Nevertheless, .76 per cent is remarkably low.

Jewish law – the same legal system that mandates lighting Shabbat candles and separating meat and milk – obligates ma'aser, the tithing of 10 per cent of our earnings for charity. If each of us were to do calculate our charitable giving, what would we find? Would we be closer to the national average of .76 per cent or the Jewish commandment of 10 per cent?

The most remarkable finding of the Fraser Institute study is that Utah residents, on average, donate 3.66 per cent of their income – more than four times the figure for the average Canadian.

It seems that the 60 per cent of Utahns who are Mormon can say, "I'm a good Mormon because I give charity?"

Can we Jews say the same about ourselves?

Jewish Life

Fraternity helps in the community

For the past four years, Ottawa's Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity (AEPi) has been giving back to the Jewish community with a day they have dubbed Mitzvah Day.

On that day, many members of AEPi head down to the Jewish community centre in the early morning to play games with the kids in the gym and do arts and crafts in another room. Everyone involved makes sure all the kids get to participate in all the events.

"We take this day seriously, and it gives us a great source of pride to give back to the Jewish Community," AEPi Ottawa president Jason Friedman said. "It speaks volumes, being able to get a large number of university students awake at 8 a.m., but no one dares to utter a complaint because not only is this event important, but we also have a great time doing it."

In addition to enjoying the activity, volunteers find satisfaction in the fact that all the kids do as well.

"The kids really enjoy the sports and arts and crafts we play with them. A lot of us there have experience working with kids in camps and community centres like the JCC, so we really knew what we were doing," Friedman said.

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

AEPi has once again proven itself contrary to the negative stereotypes that tend to be associated with fraternities. While many picture the typical fraternity as focused more on parties than academia or charitable events, the members of this fraternity not only woke up early in the morning to give something back, they also enjoy being involved with other philanthropic events in Ottawa.

Annually, this Jewish fraternity donates blood – around 10 members donated their time and blood last year, and this year, the numbers are likely to rise, as a blood drive is slated to take place sometime in the second semester.

Jonathan Kohn, a member of AEPi in his third year at Carleton University, speaks about the importance of donating blood: "It's everyone's responsibility to donate if they are eligible. We can save so many lives, it doesn't make sense not to do it. I'm glad to be part of an organization that shares similar values."

This year, AEPi Ottawa has really gotten involved in campus events. For Chanukah, the fraternity teamed up with Chabad to light the menorah on campus, an event that was supported by both Jewish and non-Jewish community leaders. Among the speakers was Allan Rock, the dean of the University of Ottawa.

It is important for AEPi to have a good relationship with Rock. Last year, when anti-Israel posters were spotted around campus, Rock was the man who took the initiative to make sure they were all removed. He is a great ally for any Jewish organization to have, especially for a student organization that draws many of its members from a campus where Rock has so much authority.

It's important for AEPi to continue to grow in its philanthropic ways and continue to create bonds with such prestigious people such as Allan Rock.

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By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Cholent: legend and lore, Part 1

The days are short. The nights are cold. And if there is one perfect Jewish food for the season, it is cholent. Since cooking is forbidden on Shabbat, cholent is precooked on Friday and left to simmer overnight. On Saturday, the fragrance of the cholent permeates the home and by midday, it's ready. But cholent is far, far more than just a Shabbat staple. Tucked away in this meaty stew, you'll find clues about Jewish law, history and the migration of Jews around the world.

Eliezer Segal suggests the humble cholent is actually "a sublime expression of Jewish identity." When the Roman satirist Juvenal depicted Jewish poverty, he said Jews only owned "a basket and a box of hay." In fact that "box of hay" is described in the Mishnah and Talmud as a way to insulate cholent on Shabbat. Centuries later during the Spanish Inquisition, tips were issued to help recognize Jews illicitly observing their traditions, including believers who precooked meals to be eaten on Saturday. **[bit.ly/chol1]**

Leah Koenig makes a fascinating point about necessity being the mother of cholent. "It's this creativity, born of need, that distinguishes Jewish cooking in general, and cholent in particular, from other cuisines. People of most other cultures would not have conceived of a dish such as cholent, because… they are free to cook seven days a week. Perhaps that is why some scholars identify cholent as one of the few authentically 'Jewish' recipes in a food repertoire known for adapting to and borrowing from the many different countries in which Jews have lived throughout history." **[bit.ly/chol02]**

And then there is the etymology of the word. An Ohr Somayach rabbi suggests "cholent" could come the French "chaud-lent" meaning "hot-slow." Rabbi Naftali Falk says it derives from the Hebrew "sh'lahn," meaning "that it stayed" overnight Friday on a fire. Whereupon Shimon Goldstein chimed in that cholent comes from "shul end," because in many communities people didn't have private stoves, so before Shabbat they all put their cholent in the baker's oven. On Shabbat morning after shul ended, everyone went to the baker to pick up their cholent. **[bit.ly/chol07]** (By the way, the sages of Wikipedia claim that professional linguists have "categorically rejected" the chaud-lent theory. **[bit.ly/chol04]**)

Cholent is also firmly ensconced in Jewish legend and lore. There is the story of the simple, unlettered Jew who found himself in a new community and seated in a particularly lengthy Rosh Hashanah service. As the prayers dragged on, hunger gnawed at his insides and he noticed that the congregation had burst into tears. Why is everyone weeping? "Then it dawned on him. Of course! They, too, are hungry." Strangely, as the service continued, he detected that the weeping had abated. But why? Now, he reasoned that the congregation surely knew what sublime reward awaited them after the interminable prayers. Cholent! Everyone knows that "the longer it cooks, the more sumptuous your cholent… A few hours of aching feet and a hollow stomach are a small price to pay considering what was developing under that lid with each passing minute." **[bit.ly/chol05]**

When I came across The Great Cholent Divide, I was sure it would be a debate on the merits of bean versus potato cholent. I was flabbergasted to discover the divide is between cholent lovers and cholent haters. Author Judy Gruen is firmly situated in the latter camp. "As a card-carrying member of the anti-cholent brigade, I smugly assumed that my home would always remain a cholent-free environment. After all, I had read about the dangers of secondhand cholent, such as family members and guests falling asleep at the table before the dessert was even served. As long as I wielded the power of the pots, the pans and the mixing spoons around here, I thought I was safe." And then she heard the dreaded question from her children. "Why don't you ever make cholent?" Does Judy cave? Draw your own conclusions when she says, "I began to feel that I was a rebellious daughter of Israel, flagrantly violating the 614th commandment: 'Thou shalt make cholent!'" **[bit.ly/chol06]**

Next week, we make cholent.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Research shows circumcision can help prevent AIDS

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Research spearheaded by Dr. Stephen Moses of the University of Manitoba has found that circumcision among men who participate in heterosexual sex greatly reduces their risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Moses recently received national recognition when his findings were listed as one of the top Canadian achievements in health research in 2009 by the Canadian Institute of Health Research and the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

Although scientists had suspected that circumcision was one way to help prevent HIV, Moses' randomized clinical trials offered conclusive experimental proof to support this claim.

The project, originally started in 2001 in Kenya, where HIV infections have been widespread, involved more than 2,700 men, and was ongoing for five years. The findings of the study showed that those circumcised had a 55 per cent less chance of being infected with HIV/AIDS while having heterosexual intercourse, compared to uncircumcised men. Moses' clinical trials ended early when it was determined that the results were already so compelling that it was unethical to continue the trials without offering the control group the protection of circumcision.

Moses, 57, who is a physician, a medical microbiology professor and a public health specialist, collaborated with researchers from the United States and Nairobi to conduct his study.

"Since foreskin on the male penis has many receptor cells, circumcision makes it less likely that HIV will be contracted," he told *The CJN*.

The study, in conjunction with two other studies showing that circumcision reduced the chances of HIV infection, was named by *Time* magazine in 2007 as one of the years' top medical breakthroughs.

Moses' findings will have the greatest impact in regions where HIV infection rates are high and rates of male circumcision are low, including several countries in eastern and southern Africa.

"In these areas, it could take as few as 19 circumcisions to prevent one person from contracting HIV," the Toronto native said. "Doing more male circumcisions over a period of years in those countries... could result in a reduction in HIV prevalence in the general population by as much as 67 per cent," he added.

When asked whether his being Jewish was a factor in his taking an interest in studying the connection between circumcision and HIV prevention, Moses answered, "No, not really. It was more that I was with a research group from U of M, which I joined while I was in Kenya in 1989."

Moses, who moved to Winnipeg in 1989, noted that the group of researchers was already interested in the topic of male circumcision and HIV infection.

After the results of Moses' study were made public, male circumcision was endorsed as a preventive measure by the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

Dr. Stephen Moses

In March 2007, these organizations wrote: "The efficacy of male circumcision in reducing female to male transmission of HIV has been proven beyond reasonable doubt." They went on to recommend that "promoting male circumcision should be recognized as an additional, important strategy for the prevention of heterosexually acquired HIV infection in men."

Moses said that "already this year, in one area in Kenya where circumcision is traditionally not performed, there have been 50,000 circumcisions. The goal is to do 100,000 circumcisions there a year for the next few years."

When asked about HIV rates and the Jewish community, Moses said that within the Jewish community of North America, those most likely to become infected with HIV are "gay men and intravenous drug users."

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SHARING THE TORCH: Amica at Thornhill, a retirement community north of Toronto, was excited to have the Olympic torch come to the residence. The torchbearer was Kaila Orr, seen here with her grandmother, Amica resident Grace Orr.

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Get ready for healthy homemade bread

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

When I saw the title *Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day*, I was intrigued. Healthy eating is at the top of the list of most people's New Year's resolutions, but January also brings long, cold nights, a desire to hibernate and a craving for carb-loaded comfort foods such as bread and chocolate.

Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day: 100 New Recipes Featuring Whole Grains, Fruits, Vegetables and Gluten-Free Ingredients (Thomas Dunne Books), was co-authored by Jeff Hertzberg, M.D. and pastry chef Zoë François. Their first bread-baking book, *Artisan Breads in Five Minutes a Day*, has sold over 200,000 copies, with rave reviews.

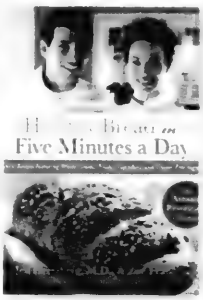
In their latest book, Hertzberg and François took their simple, super-fast technique and adapted it for the health-conscious bread-baker. Their secret is to mix up a big batch of super-moist yeast dough that takes just five minutes of active preparation time, store it in the refrigerator, cut off portions as needed over the next week or so, then shape and bake. You'll find recipes for Black and White Braided Pumpernickel/Rye, 100 per cent Whole Wheat Bread, Garlic Knots with Olive Oil, Braided Challah with Whole Wheat and Wheat Germ, and Chocolate Espresso Whole Wheat Bread (below). Many of the recipes are 100 per cent whole grain.

The authors have also included several gluten-free breads and pastries, along with helpful information about unfamiliar ingredients. Gluten-Free Olive Oil Bread can be baked as a free-form loaf with a crispy crust, or can be transformed into pizza with a crust that tastes like the real thing.

The authors answer bread questions at their website, www.healthybreadinfive.com.

This book will show you that there is time enough for home-baked bread, and that it can be part of a healthy diet. Whether you are looking for more whole grains, watching your weight, trying to reduce your cholesterol, or just care about what goes into your body, this book is a must-have. Enjoy in good health!

CHOCOLATE ESPRESSO WHOLE WHEAT BREAD



"I was so pleased when the nutritional powers that be deemed dark chocolate and espresso 'good for you.' Considering what a large portion of my diet they occupy, I was relieved to know I no longer needed to feel guilty, not that I ever really had. So, in an attempt to make you all a bit healthier and a lot happier I've come up with Chocolate Espresso Bread. Not too sweet but packed with flavour." –Zoë François

Makes enough dough for at least two 2-pound loaves. The recipe is easily doubled or halved. Use any leftover dough to make cupcakes (below).

2 cups whole wheat flour
4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup cocoa powder
1 1/2 tbsp. granulated yeast, or 2 packets
1 tbsp. kosher salt (increase or decrease to taste)
1 4 cup vital wheat gluten (e.g., Bob's Red Mill)
1 cup lukewarm brewed espresso or strong coffee
1 1/4 cups lukewarm water
4 large eggs
1/2 cup neutral-flavoured oil
3/4 cup honey
6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
egg wash (1 egg beaten with 1 tbsp. water) for brushing on top crust
raw sugar for sprinkling on top

Mixing and storing the dough: Whisk together the flours, cocoa powder, yeast, salt and vital wheat gluten in a 5-quart bowl or a lidded (not airtight) food container.

Combine the liquid ingredients and the chopped chocolate, and mix with the dry ingredients without kneading, using a spoon, a 14-cup food processor (with dough attachment), or a heavy-duty stand mixer (with paddle). You might need to use wet hands to get the last bit of flour to incorporate if you're not using a machine. The dough will be loose, but it will firm up when chilled. Don't try to use it without chilling at least 2 hours.

Cover (not airtight), and allow the dough to rest at room temperature until it rises and collapses (or flattens on top), approximately 2 hours.

Refrigerate it in a lidded (not airtight) container and use over the next 5 days. Beyond that, the dough stores well in the freezer for up to 2 weeks in an airtight container. Freeze it in 2-pound portions. When using frozen dough, thaw it in the refrigerator for 24 hours before use, then allow the usual rest-rise time.

On baking day, grease an 8-1/2 x 4-1/2-inch nonstick loaf pan. Dust the surface of the refrigerated dough with flour and cut off a 2-pound (cantaloupe-size) piece. Dust the piece with more flour and quickly shape it into a ball by stretching the surface of the dough around to the bottom on all four sides, rotating the ball a quarter-turn as you go.

Elongate the ball into an oval and place it into the loaf pan; your goal is to fill the pan about three-quarters full. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and allow to rest and rise for 1 hour 45 minutes.

Thirty minutes before baking time, preheat the oven to 350, with a rack placed in the centre of the oven. If you're not using a baking stone in the oven, a 5-minute preheat is adequate. Steam is not needed.

Just before baking, Use a pastry brush to brush the loaf's top crust with egg wash, and then sprinkle with the raw sugar.

Bake near the centre of the oven for approximately 45 to 50 minutes, until firm. Remove the bread from the pan and allow it to cool on a rack before slicing and eating.

For more recipes, go to cjnews.com

Norene Gilletz is a cookbook author, teacher and food consultant who lives in Toronto. For updated information, call 416-226-2466 or visit her website at http://www.gourmania.com.

Satellite at Sinai
Live from New York

Women Come of Age
with Gail Collins and Nora Ephron
Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 8.15 p.m.

Rabbi Capers Funnye In Conversation
with Ari L. Goldman
Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 8.15 p.m.

A World in Crisis: What Are Our Moral Obligations? with Elie Wiesel
Thursday, April 15, 2010 at 8.00 p.m.

Cost:
Members: $10
Non-Members: $15
Tickets sales start at 7:30 p.m.

Food on the Tube: How TV Shapes the Way We Think About Food
Panelists: Padma Lakshmi, Amanda Hesser, Kathleen Collins and Charlie Trotter
Moderator: Alexandra Leaf
Monday, April 26, 2010 at 8.00 p.m.

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FEDERATION

On Campus

BOWLAREINU: Jewish Student Union (JSU) members represented five Toronto public schools at a "Bowlareinu" to benefit Zareinu Educational Centre. Over 60 students attended and raised more than $6,000 for the school. JSU aims to get more Jewish teens who attend public high schools to do something Jewish.

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*Games Jewish Singles Play! Ages 21-39; 40-69. Sun., Jan. 10, 7:30 pm. Beth Torah, 47 Glenbrook. *Millionaire, Scrabble, etc. Bingo, 7:30-8. Prizes, refresh. $8. 156 couples have met! For info, Mollie 416-733-3634 or mollie_rothman@yahoo.ca

Deadline: Wednesday, 4 p.m., 8 days preceding issue date.

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CALLING ALL BRIDES & GROOMS

The CJN
wants you to share your story with our readers in our upcoming Bridal Supplement.

Tell us how you got engaged, talk about your wedding plans, or share your feelings on your wedding day.

Deadline for submission is Mon. Jan 25.

Send about 400 words plus a picture to:
cblackman@cjnews.com

שיאר ענינו

גידי קורן וחברים

לפני בדיוק מאה חמישים שנה הוכה העולם בתדהמה כשמדען אנגלי, צ'ארלס דארווין, הוציא ספר שבו שחט את התיאוריה המקובלת עד אז וקבע שהמינים השונים בטבע הם תוצאה של שינוי ואבולוציה, וההשוב ביותר- אין האדם יציר אלוהי אלא התפתחות טבעית מן הקוף. אני קורא עכשיו שהשוק והתדהמה היכו בראש ובראשונה בביתו שלו, שכן אשתו היתה אשה דתיה ביותר, והרעיון שלא האל יצר את האדם נראה לה אפיקורסי לחלוטין.

חלק לא קטן בתיאוריה של דארווין מבוסס על תצפיות שעשה באיי גאלאפאגוס, שנמצאים כשעה טיסה מחופי אקואדור. שם ראה דארווין חיות מאותו זן שהתפתחו עם השנים בצורה שונה על האיים השונים, והוא הסיק שמוכרחה היתה להיות סיבה גנטית לשינויים, כתגובה לסביבה השונה בכל אי.

לדוגמה: על אי אחד האיגואנות גדולות יותר, כי הקקטוסים גבוהים יותר , מה שלא מאפשר לאיגואנות קטנות לטפס ולאכול. וכך ברבות השנים שרדו רק האיגואנות הגדולות יותר, ומטבע הסלקציה הגנטית-גם צאציהן גבוהים יותר.

עכשיו ביקרנו באיי גאלאפאגוס כדי לטעום את התפנית האולי חשובה ביותר בתולדות האנושות. אפילו אם איננכם מתעניינים גדולים בביולוגיה-המקום מדהים. מאחר והחיות שם שמורות ורק קבוצות קטנות של מטיילים יכולות להגיע לשם- אין החיות פוחדות מאנשים, וכך אתה יכול לעבור ליד ציפור אלבאטרוס ענקית שדוגרת על ביצים והיא איננה שמה עליך, וממשיכה במהלכיה כאילו אתה לא מסתכל. וכל זה בטבע ולא בגן חיות. יד על הלב- זה היה המסע הכי מדהים שהתנסיתי בו עד היום.

יש בטורונטו משרד נסיעות שמתמחה בגאלאפאגוס, וקלודט התגלתה כמומחית בינלאומית (4164139090) אבל שישאר בינינו.

נשק קטלני-יהורם פירוצקי

לפני זמן קצר, נפל בחלקה של חברת השייט "סלבריטי" הכבוד להשיט כמה סלברטאים אלמונים כמוני, בת זוגי ועוד חברים שהגיעו מארץ האבות, לגלות את אלסקה הנידחת. יחד הגענו לבניין הטרמינל בוואנקובר כדי לעבור בקורת דרכונים, בטחון ועוד כמה יסורים בדרך לסיפון הנכסף. כך, צפופים כמו בתוך להקת סרדינים, מילאנו טפסים, עברנו בהצלחה בקורת דרכונים והגענו לבדיקה הבטחונית. קצין בטחון אמיץ, שסכנת חיים נשקפה לחייו כאשר בדק את תרמילי וגילה אולר יליד שוויץ שהסתתר בין המצלמות, הטייפים והבטריות, בניסיון לחדור באומן בלתי חוקי אל סיפון האוניה ואולי בעזרתי האדיבה לחטוף את כלי השיט, או לקחת בני ערובה, בעזרת להב קצר ואומלל שלא מסוגל חדור לליבו של יצור אנוש בדיאטה חמורה.

כמובן שהנשק הקטלני הוחרם על המקום, ואני אחרי שהצלחתי להוכיח שהאולר התפלח לתיק בלי ידיעתי, יצאתי רק באזהרה. עד באותו יום הגענו לאחד מחדרי האוכל הרבים שעל הסיפון, ולהפתעתי גיליתי על כל שולחן, מחסן נשק לא נסתר, בצורת סכינים, מזלגות ועוד כלי זין מסוכנים עם להבים ארוכים, להבים שמסוגלים לחדור לכל לב ואפילו ללב שבעליו לא עושה דיאטה.

אז נכון שאולרי השוויצרי ז"ל יכול היה לסכן את בטחון הסלברטאים האלמונים בדרך לאלסקה. אך כיצד כל הסכינים (אשר לעומתם אולרי נראה כמו תלמיד ישיבה) שנמצאו בטווח ידו של כל חוטף מקצועי או חובב, הצליחו לעבור את קצין הבטחון הנועז ולהגיע עד שולחנות הסועדים?

אני למדתי שבין-לאדן אכן הצליח להרשים ולשגע את אמריקה הגדולה. ולמרות כל המטוסים, הטילים, הטנקים, הנשק הגרעיני ושאר העוצמה שממלאת את מחסני הנשק של הדמוקרטיה הגאה. עדיין קבוצת טרוריסטים בפקודו של אללה והקוראן מצליחה להכניס את האומה החזקה להיסטריה שלא הייתה מביישת אף אמא פולניה.

תארו לעצמכם מה היה קורה לאמריקה אם האיומים ופעולות הטרור נגד מדינת היהודים היו מקבלות הסבה לארצות-הברית של דודנו סם.

On Campus

Students to 'explore Jewishness' in Chicago

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

For Aaron Vomberg, spring break isn't just about parties, sunshine and expensive resorts. It's about bringing people together.

Vomberg, the vice-president of programming at the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS), is working with National Jewish Campus Life (NJCL) on CFJS's first annual winter symposium for leadership and social justice.

The symposium, which takes place in Chicago from Feb. 16 to 21, will focus on teaching leadership skills and merging them with volunteerism and social action. Participants will be hosted by Spertus College and will be involved in lectures and discussions, as well as volunteer work in Chicago's less fortunate areas. They'll also earn a leadership certificate from the college.

"It's very important to maintain a network of strong, large communities across North America," Vomberg, who is also a student at Dalhousie University, said.

For Vomberg, the concepts of leadership and social action are intertwined.

"Social action serves as a good mechanism for… attracting and maintaining good leaders," he said. "It also teaches good fundamentals surrounding leadership. Social action opportunities really bring people together."

Vomberg, 22, knows the importance of promoting social awareness and volunteerism. The urban planning and development student was president of Hillel at Dalhousie University and involved with Habitat for Humanity. He later got involved with CFJS and went to Israel with the group.

"When I got involved, it was kind of one of my personal goals to… promote this idea of tikkun olam," he said.

While students will be focusing on a variety of subjects during their time at Spertus College, they will also participate in hands-on experiences.

"We're not just focusing on advocacy and identity-based issues – it will be directly intertwined with tikkun olam," Vomberg said. "This could involve working through food banks and homeless shelters. It's going to carry a significant load of our time there."

The symposium, which organizers hope to hold in different cities every year, took around two years to develop.

"There seems to be a lack of opportunities to bring students from across Canada together. We were aiming to fill that void," Vomberg said.

"We've explored a variety of different opportunities. We created this objective with… different goals in mind, one of the goals involves making these opportunities meaningful but accessible."

This means making the symposium both geographically and financially accessible for participants. The trip will cost about $500 per student, said Samuel Konig, the national director of NJCL.

"Wherever you're from, we wanted to make it a trip which is feasible economically," he said. "We realize that students are working and going to school. We're trying to just be realistic."

Konig sees the trip as an important opportunity for Canada's undergraduate students.

"This is at a critical age. [You can] explore your Jewishness [and] explore who you are," he said. "It's an opportunity to forge relationships."

Konig hopes the symposium will act as a networking exercise.

"This is the place to do it – to come up with ideas and initiatives," he said, adding that the free time between activities may prove the most useful.

"It's during your dinners, your social time, during Shabbat. It's about creating that forum, a safe place for Jewish students to come together… This will make them grow."

Students will be selected through an application process to participate in the symposium. While Jewish undergraduate students throughout Canada can apply, only 15 will be chosen.

"We want to make it selective, we want to really attract a certain group. It's a prestigious thing," Konig said.

The trip's organizers are looking for students with some leadership experience who are involved in the Jewish community. While the symposium's target audience is undergraduate students, graduates may apply as well.

"It's a diverse trip, we want a diverse crowd," Konig said.

Students can apply online at www.students4israel.ca/cfjs-chicago-trip by Jan. 10.

MED STUDENT CARRIES OLYMPIC TORCH

Daniel Abramowitz, a third-year medical student at Queen's University, carried the Olympic torch in Napanee, Ont. He entered a carry-the-torch contest through Coca-Cola and wrote an essay on "how I motivate others to live active."

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

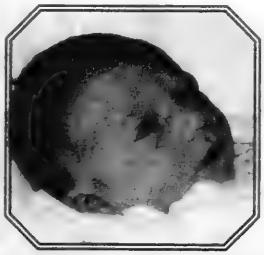
The Canadian Jewish news

Congratulations Rita & Sol Dennis who celebrated their 60th anniversary Dec. 31. Here's to many more years watching you conquer the world. Love, your family.

Mazel tov Papi & Mami (Michael & Orna) on your 15th wedding anniversary! Love from your five kids, Aaron, Clara, Sam, Josh and Esther.

Best wishes to Erica Stern and son Jacob who shared their birthdays in November. Hugs, kisses and love from the entire Stern family.

Mazel tov Jeffrey & Shari on your engagement. Love from parents Donna & Gerald Swartz, Sophie & Joel Shafer and bubbies Sylvia Walters and Ibi Weiss.



Mazel tov Aaron & Heather Levinoff on the birth of David on Dec. 9. Love, Bubbie & Zaidie Howie & Elaine, and Bubbie & Zaidie Mindy & Merv.

Happy first birthday Daniel, Benjamin and Shane, born Dec. 25, 2008, to Alan & Dina Naiman. Love, the Kleiman, Naiman, Hornstein, Nusinowitz and Kertzman families.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments button!**

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan. 11, is the deadline for the Jan. 21 issue, and Monday, Jan. 18, is the deadline for the Jan. 28 issue. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

Saturday, Jan. 9

JEWISH ECOLOGY

Rabbi Lawrence Troster, scholar-in-residence and fellowship director of Green Faith, leads a day of exploration into the world of Jewish ecology. Darchei Noam Congregation, 864 Sheppard Ave. W., 10 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 10

HISTORY ON FILM

Rabbi David Aronson moderates series on film *Sunshine*, Sundays Jan. 10, 17, 24, 7:30 p.m. Movie follows three generations of the Sonnenshein family, from the 1800s to the 1950s. Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue, 2640 Bayview Ave. $10.

Monday, Jan. 11

SCHISMS

Rabbi Asher Vale offers the first in a 6-week lecture series on "Major Schisms in Jewish History." This week, Sadducees and Pharisees. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 8 p.m. For information, call 416-789-3213.

DENTAL HYGIENE

Jewish Diabetes chapter meeting on the importance of dental hygiene for people living with diabetes. Guest speaker is registered dental hygienist **Ronit Schiff**. Everyone welcome, $1. Shaarei Shomayim, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, Jan. 12

ISRAEL PHILATELISTS

Monthly meeting of the Society of Israel Philatelists, Antibes Community Centre, 140 Antibes Dr., 7 p.m. Slide shows and lectures on production of an Israel stamp and art on Israel stamps. For information, **Philip Elias**, 416-226-2050, or p.elias@rogers.com.

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

Presentation on *Fugitive Pieces*, the 2007 film shot in Toronto, produced by **Robert Lantos**, directed by **Jeremy Podeswa**. Includes an introduction and commentary by **Larry Ankiewicz**, programming coordinator of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival. Doors open at 1:30 p.m., film at 2 p.m. $5 at the door. Beth Tikvah Congregation.

BETH TIKVAH MEN'S CLUB

Meeting for family or friends of inter-dating or inter-married couples with professional facilitator **Andrea Litvack**. Part of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs Keruv initiative. Light refreshments. No charge. Call **Moe Horenfeldt** (in confidence), 647-282-0277, or e-mail mhorenf@idirect.com.

SISTERHOODS PROGRAM

Beth David, Beit Rayim and Beth Tzedec sisterhoods present a joint program on "Women's Mitzvot" with guest speaker **Rabbi Jennifer Gorman**. Beth David, 8 p.m. Refreshments. Non-sisterhood members $5 at the door.

VICTOR KUGLER

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation adult education committee presents **Rick Kardonne** discussing his book *Victor Kugler: the Man Who Hid Anne Frank*. 7:30 p.m. Books available for purchase after lecture. $5 at the door. 416-787-1631.

Other News

JEWISH HEALING SERVICE

Jewish Healing Program presents a healing service, Sunday, Jan. 24, 3-4 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue chapel. Facilitated by **Rabbi Jarod Grover** and **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Child. Call 416-638-7800, ext. 287. No charge.

Continued on page 25

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Continued from page 24

LEARN HEBREW

Kachol Lavan, The Centre for Hebrew and Israel Studies, presents a unique Hebrew language program. Learn how to speak, read and write Hebrew, as well as everything you wanted to know about the Jewish state. Sundays 1:15-2:30 p.m., Tuesdays 6:30-8 p.m. Starts Feb. 2. For more information, **Ariel**, 416-985-1216, or **Dorit**, info@kachol-lavan.com.

LODZER CENTRE

Dr. Brian Goldman, CBC Radio One's House Doctor, presents "New Players on Medicine: Alternatives to seeing a doctor." Lodzer Centre , 12 Heaton St., Sunday, Jan. 24, 2 p.m., $5. Light refreshments. Also Introductory Mah Jong evening, Monday, Jan. 25. Call **Sarah**, 416-636-6665. Wednesday nights, parshah of the week study, 7:30 p.m. Free. Contact for all programs, www.lodzercentre.com.

KABBALISTIC HEALING

Jewish Health Alliance, a social and professional network for health-care providers, presents "Healing in the Kabbalistic Tradition" a talk by **Rabbi Gedalia Fleer**, a visiting scholar from Israel. Thursday, Jan. 14. Pine Villa, 1035 Eglinton Ave. W. 8 p.m. $10 admission includes refreshments. RSVP 416-208-0610.

SINGLES FOR SINGLES

Sasson V'Simcha presents a coffee night, Tuesday, Jan. 19, 8 p.m. Second Cup, Sobey's Plaza. $10. Orthodox singles 26-38. RSVP 416-256-4497, 416-729-4598.

JF&C GROUP SERIES

Effective Parenting: a 4-session group to show parents of children 2-11 years how to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. Starts Wednesday, Jan. 27, 7-9 p.m. 4600 Bathurst St.

New parenting workshop: Survivor – the Teen Years is a 2-hour workshop to teach skills "to parent your adolescent without losing your sanity." Led by **Ted Borovoy**. Thursday, Jan. 28, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

Workshop on When You're about to Separate: what to tell the kids, for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation. How and when to tell the children, how to handle moving day, and more. Thursday, Jan. 28, Lipa Green Building, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Registration required.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides handknitted hats and mittens to inner city schoolchildren. Call 416-630-9313 to donate.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents a Shabbat Shirah of Music and Fun: Friday, Jan. 29, Carlebach Kabbalat Shabbat; Shabbat davening Jan. 30 with elaborate melodies; Motza'ei Shabbat kumzitz featuring Shema Koleinu, at 8 p.m. Wine and cheese. No charge. For information, call **Carol Handelman**, 416-789-3213, ext. 204.

FOR SENIORS

Miles Nadal JCC Active Seniors presents "Jewish Ways to Gain More Energy and Manage Stress." Thursday, Jan. 14, 1:30 p.m. Learn how to add more energy to your life and manage stress, with **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Adath Israel Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park re-opens for programming and to accept phone calls on Jan. 12. Line dancing program begins Jan. 14 and runs Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Social bridge starts again Jan. 14, running Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 5. For more information, call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Club Someach, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda holds a musical matinee, with **Rita & Alex**. Sunday, Jan. 10, noon. Fischtein Hall. Club Someach members $12, guests $15. Lunch, followed by musical entertainment. Reservations by Visa, MasterCard or cheque at the shul office or by phone.

Association of Jewish Seniors discusses the impact of the Harmonized Sales Tax on seniors, Jan. 14, Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue, 1 p.m. Speaker will be a tax advisory specialist from the Tax Advisory Services Branch of the Ministry of Revenue. Light refreshments. Members free, guests $2. Call **Tammy**, 416-635-2860, ext. 458.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave. presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10 -11:30 a.m. For registration and information, call **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Tuesday, Jan. 12, lecture by **Vasili Dimitrov** on "Earth: Our Home." 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

Thursday, Jan.14, Nintendo Wii Bowling. Virtual bowling with laughs, energy and fun. No experience necessary. 1-2 p.m.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Prosserman Jewish Community Centre, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Family programs include Mighty Munchkins (age 2-3, with parents), Sundays, Jan. 10-March 14, 10-10:45 a.m. Sports with Jay, MultiSport Extravaganza (age 4-6, drop-off), Sundays Jan. 10-Mar. 14, 11 a.m.-noon. Living Rhythm Drumming Program (age 3-5, with parents) Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1-1:30 p.m., $10. For more information or to register for any family programs, call ext. 235.

Prosserman JCC's new *Winter Program Guide* is now available. Drop by the centre or call ext. 0 for more information.

Let's Talk bulletin outlining all senior and adult programs for the term starting January 2010 available now. Drop in or e-mail kareng@prossermanjcc.com. Programs include Ryerson/Chang course, NIA, Zumba Gold, Memoir Writing, Tai Chi and more. To register call ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Mark Clamen series Media Mondays: The Art of Television. Monday, Jan. 11, topic is "The Wire: Tales from the Broken City." Drop in. $12 with TV clips. For more information, ext. 606.

Hebrew language classes begin this month. Beginners Level A and B, Mondays, Jan. 11-Feb. 22. Intermediate, Thursdays, Jan. 21-March 4. Hebrew Conversation through Israeli love songs, Thursdays, Jan. 21-March 4. For information, ext. 154, or jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

MNjcc, together with the Al Green Theatre and the Canada Israel Cultural foundation, present Habanot Nechama in concert. Al Green Theatre, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 8 p.m. Tickets $25. Ext. 0.

Toronto Jewish Film Society 2010 memberships on sale now. Eight film events from January to December 2010. **Joelle Malka** joellem@mnjcc.org, ext. 139.

Michael Bernstein Chapel. Services Sundays 8 a.m., Thursdays 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast buffet after services. Call **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-636-1881, ext.4228.

Koffler Gallery presents "How good are your dwelling places?" a new off-site group exhibition organized by guest curator **Cyril Reade**. Jan. 14-Mar. 14. 23 Beverley St. Four artists reflect on the fluidity of Jewish identity in North America.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

KIDS HELPING KIDS: Mordechai Rothman, director of Chai Lifeline Toronto, came to receive the new gifts collected y parents and children of Torah Tots preschool to be given to kids involved with Chai Lifeline, which helps Jewish children with cancer and other genetic diseases.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 22

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Renee Caplan	Dec 11/09	800 Cypress Grove Dr
Marli Pressman	Dec 14/09	119 Oakcrest Dr
Dr. Daniel Deitch	Dec 13/09	55 Ameer Ave
Renia Zeligman	Dec 15/09	110 Promenade Cir
Chasia Perlov	Dec 15/09	3560 Bathurst St
Maurice Veffer	Dec 13/09	3000 Dufferin St
Fran Udlis	Dec 15/09	115 Antibes Dr
Pearl Feldman	Dec 14/09	32 Division St
Ruth Mizel	Dec 15/09	80 Antibes Dr
Abisz Nagel	Dec 17/09	7300 Yonge St
Ilona Schwartz	Dec 18/09	38 Metropole Private
Betty Sherriff	Dec 19/09	Terrace Gardens
Richard Kitz	Dec 18/09	139 Simmons Rd
Mollie Finewax	Dec 20/09	11 Townsgate Dr

HEBREW BASIC

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LAYTNER, Mign (Minnie) MINNIE DAVIS LAYTNER - At 107 1/2 years old, on Saturday, December 19, 2009 at Valleyview Nursing Home. Minnie Davis, beloved wife of the late Frank Davis. Devoted daughter of the late Anschel and Blima (Wajszalc) Laytner. Adored and lost surviving sibling and sibling-in-law of the late Evelyn Laytner Collins, Albert and Pearl Laytner, Dora Laytner, Samuel and Sally Laytner, and Dr. Bernard and Rayanna Laytner. She will be deeply missed by her many nieces, nephews, great and great- great nieces and nephews and by her friends. The family gratefully appreciates the excellent care given by the staff of Valleyview Nursing Home. A very special thank you to nephew, Dr. Bernard Collins for his total love and commitment to the caring and nurturing of our Aunt Minnie for the last 8 years. Memorial donations may be made to the Baycrest Foundation, 416-785-2875, www.baycrest.org/donate

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Educator fought for teachers' rights

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Veteran Jewish educator Freda Steinberg began teaching at Beth Tzedec Congregation in 1952 and worked there for most of the rest of her life, until she was forced to stop in November for health reasons.

Steinberg died of cancer Dec. 14 at Baycrest's palliative care unit. She was 78.

A founder of United Synagogue Day School, she was on staff most recently at Beth Tzedec Congregational School, teaching reading to students who were having difficulty, Jennifer Turack, director of education and family programming at the synagogue, told *The CJN*.

"She was devoted to the cause," said Turack. "Her goal was always that [students] should walk away learning something."

A founder of the Federation of Teachers in Hebrew Schools in the 1970s and its former co-president, Steinberg is remembered for her involvement in the organization, which functioned as a union for Jewish educators.

"She had a strong sense of justice and felt that Jewish educators should be compensated and protected," said Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl in a eulogy.

He told *The CJN* that Steinberg was "part of a generation of educators who fought very hard for a place [and] to create respectability for Jewish teachers."

Steinberg and the union fought for Jewish day school and supplementary teachers to have the right to a contract and to collective bargaining, said Jack Lipinsky, who teaches at United Synagogue Day School.

"I never met anyone like her," Lipinsky told *The CJN*. "She was like one of these people you read about in the newspapers, a union organizer. She was an incredibly devoted person for the rights of Hebrew educators.

"Her basic premise was that teachers had to be held in higher esteem in the community." In addition to rights, she also believed that teachers had to earn respect through proper training and "professionalization," he said.

As well, Lipinsky recalls, Steinberg was a great lover of opera and theatre.

Freda Steinberg

A Toronto native who grew up in an Orthodox home, Steinberg, who never married, studied early childhood education at the University of Toronto's Institute of Child Study, and later at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

Aaron Nussbaum – the first director of education at United Synagogue Day School, of which Steinberg was a founder – met her in 1948 at a convention of Hashomer Hadati (now Bnei Akiva), the religious Zionist youth movement.

She was the first director of Camp Arrowhead, on Lake Simcoe, for at least 10 years after it was founded in 1955, said her niece RoAnne Leneck, of Los Angeles.

Working in the same building in the early 1960s, Nussbaum got to know Steinberg as a teacher who was "very devoted to the kids, to the school and to the program."

Before USDS opened in 1961 at Beth Tzedec, Steinberg was involved in founding and then teaching at the synagogue's "Foundation School" in the mid-1950s, Nussbaum said.

He explained that "the idea in those days was to go to Foundation School from nursery until Grade 2, and then go to public school."

Steinberg was predeceased by a sister, Helen Aron. She is survived by her nieces and nephew RoAnne, Brian and Danielle Leneck and Shawna Aron.

Survivor was a veteran of March of Living

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Few people had a chance to see the Dec. 18 obituary for Mayer Schondorf in the Gazette, because it appeared only once.

But word-of-mouth and e-mail were enough to fill Paperman & Sons funeral home the same day for a rare 8:30 a.m. funeral for Schondorf, a prominent Holocaust survivor who died suddenly from a massive stroke the previous day at age 81.

Schondorf's body was flown to Israel after Shabbat for burial, but at Paperman's, the disproportionately high number of young people was a telling indication of the respect and affection they had for him.

Schondorf and his wife, Rena, also a Holocaust survivor, were reliable presences, linked arm-in-arm, on Israel Experience's annual March of the Living trip to Poland and Israel for high school students.

They participated in the march seven times, most recently last spring.

"His impact on young people was two-fold," Rabbi Reuben Poupko, one of two rabbis who delivered eulogies at the funeral, told *The CJN*. "The first was his ability to tell his story in a moving and compelling way. The second was his character, his bearing and personality, the way he was with young people. He was an inspiration."

That echoed the sentiments of Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz of Tifereth Beth David Jerusalem synagogue, who also delivered a eulogy.

Mayer Schondorf

Schondorf and his wife "insisted on accompanying the March of the Living… because they saw stories about Holocaust denial and understood the need to tell their story. They needed to be a link to another era," Rabbi Steinmetz said.

"The marchers were automatically drawn to Mayer and Rena… [because] Mayer was not only telling them how he survived, but also why he survived. He wanted to recreate a Jewish life, a Jewish world."

The gentlemanly and amiable Schondorf and his spouse were also active in transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust to non-Jews, said Alice Herscovitch, executive director of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre (MHMC).

Herscovitch said the Schondorfs, besides addressing audiences during the centre's annual Holocaust Education Series and speaking to hundreds of Jewish and non-Jewish students during the school year, also spoke to a group of young Rwandans only two months ago.

"There are no elders in their community [due to the Rwandan genocide], Herscovitch said. "He told them how it was possible to build their lives again."

She added that Schondorf also played a role in developing the MHMC museum and served as a docent there.

Schondorf is survived by his wife Rena Leinkram, son Ronald, daughter Debbie Eisenberg, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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Pope Benedict practices delicate Jewish dance

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

ROME — For at least the third time in his papacy, Pope Benedict's XVI is doing the Jewish dance that takes him one step back, one step forward.

The step back came when Benedict made a move in mid-December to bring Holocaust-era Pope Pius XII a bit closer to sainthood. The step forward will come in mid-January, when Benedict visits Rome's main synagogue – a trip planned long before Benedict's move on Pius.

The question is what impact the visit will have on ruffled Catholic-Jewish relations.

"It is an important event, a milestone in the dialogue," Rome's chief rabbi, Riccardo Di Segni, told Vatican Radio about the planned synagogue visit. "We have great expectations for what it can mean in terms of the general climate."

"If we stop at the things that divide us deeply, we won't get anywhere," he said. "The differences are important to move forward."

Benedict's visit – set to take place Jan. 17, the Catholic Church's annual Day of Dialogue with Judaism – will come a month after he recognized the religiously defined "heroic virtues" of both John Paul II and Pius XII, putting them one step away from beatification.

The Polish-born John Paul made fostering Catholic-Jewish relations a hallmark of his papacy. But critics have long accused Pius of having turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. The Vatican and other supporters say Pius acted behind the scenes to help Jews.

Gary Krupp, a Jew and the head of Pave the Way, a non-sectarian foundation that promotes interfaith dialogue, suggested in a recent opinion piece in the *New York Post* that criticism of Pius XII began in the 1960s as part of a Soviet smear campaign against the Catholic Church, which at the time was profoundly anti-Communist. The Anti-Defamation League responded with a call on the pope to disregard Krupp's "flawed" evidence.

Scholars and Jewish organizations for years have called on the Vatican to fully open its secret archives in order to clarify the issue before Pius is moved any further toward sainthood. Benedict's decision to green-light Pius's advance drew widespread criticism from Jewish bodies. While many Jewish organizational leaders said it was up to the Vatican to decide whom to honour with sainthood, they renewed calls for the archives to be opened.

"As long as the archives of Pope Pius about the crucial period 1939 to 1945 remain closed, and until a consensus on his actions – or inaction – concerning the persecution of millions of Jews in the Holocaust is established, a beatification is inopportune and premature," the World Jewish Congress' president, Ronald Lauder, said in a statement.

The Vatican responded with a conciliatory statement, saying Benedict's move was in no way "a hostile act towards the Jewish people" and should not be considered "an obstacle on the path of dialogue between Judaism and the Catholic Church."

The uproar over Pius XII is not the first episode in which the Vatican had to backpedal, clarify or explain a Pope Benedict decision that angered Jews.

In 2008, Jewish protests over the reinstatement of a Good Friday Latin prayer that appeared to call for the conversion of the Jews led the Vatican to change some of the prayer's wording. Still, Italian rabbis were so angry over the issue that they boycotted participation in last year's Jan. 17 Day of Dialogue with Judaism.

One year ago, the Pope's lifting of a 1988 excommunication order against Richard Williamson, a renegade Bishop who turned out to be a Holocaust denier, sparked outrage among political figures and mainstream Catholics as well as Jews. Bishop Williamson was one of four bishops rehabilitated as part of the Pope's effort to bring their ultra-conservative movement, the Society of St. Pius X, back into the mainstream Catholic fold.

The Vatican ordered Bishop Williamson to recant and admitted that the Pope had not been aware of his views, despite a video of Williamson that was widely circulated on YouTube.

The Pope himself issued a strong message of support to a visiting delegation from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and announced to the group the plans for his May 2009 visit to Israel, his first to the Jewish state as pontiff.

Analysts said Benedict's move on Pius is part of the Pope's effort to shore up conservative forces within the church.

"The Pope apparently has chosen to balance his unquestionable commitment to the Catholic Church's good relations with world Judaism with his commitment to recuperating the religious right wing of Catholicism," said Lisa Palmieri Billig, the American Jewish Committee's liaison to the Vatican. "Obviously his path is strewn with warring obstacles."

Rabbi Gary Bretton-Granatoor, an expert in interfaith relations and the vice-president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, said, "The great struggle of this moment is shoring up the most traditional elements of his church as he fights the growing secularization and Islamification of the European stage, which is right before his eyes."

Rabbi Bretton-Granatoor said that the visit to the shul in Rome is "far more telling about the state of Catholic-Jewish relations" than the move to elevate Pius.

Jordan waging 'lawfare' with Dead Sea Scrolls request

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Jordan is waging "lawfare" against Israel by trying to prevent the return of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Canada to the Jewish state, an Israeli strategic analyst asserted earlier this week.

There has been no particular cooling of relations or notable difficulties between Jordan and Israel, which signed a peace treaty in 1994, said Prof. Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. "The relationship is just the usual. This is part of the usual."

"In Israel nobody pays attention to [the Jordanian claim]. It's ridiculous," he said. "[The scrolls] clearly [belong] to the Jewish People.

"They [Jordan] want jurisdiction over the West Bank," but their jurisdiction was recognized by only two countries, he said. "They are trying to make trouble. Their strategy is to delegitimize Israel's connection to the Land of Israel."

CBC reported on the weekend that the government of Canada turned down the Jordanian request.

The scrolls were exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum beginning in June and ending Jan. 3. Thousands viewed the 2,000-year-old artifacts, which were written primarily in Hebrew and Aramaic and were found in caves near the ancient Essene community of Qumran.

A little over two weeks ago, Jordan, citing a 1954 Hague Convention, asked the government of Canada to seize the scrolls and prevent their return to Israel, which has custody of the historic items.

Jordan accuses Israel of taking the scrolls from a museum in Jerusalem in 1967 when Israel captured the eastern part of the city during the Six Day War. The scrolls had been found by Bedouins in caves on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, an area under Jordanian control from 1948 to 1967. However, only two countries recognized Jordan's jurisdiction and the Palestinian leadership of the day rejected a UN partition resolution which would have given them sovereignty over the lands where the scrolls were found.

Moshe Ronen, chair of the Canada Israel Committee (CIC), said in a Twitter update that Jordan long ago relinquished its claim to the West Bank and it therefore "has no legal basis or authority for its request."

He noted that under the Oslo Accords, which Jordan witnessed, Israel was to remain custodian of the scrolls and their ultimate ownership was to be negotiated between Israel and the Palestinians.

"This is in effect a ploy aimed at delegitimizing the Jewish aboriginal claim to Israel, for which the scrolls are a living testament," Ronen said.

The Israeli embassy in Ottawa declined to comment, but in Israel, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Yigal Palmor called Jordan's claim ridiculous.

"The Dead Sea Scrolls are an intrinsic part of Jewish heritage and religion. The scrolls have no relation to Jordan or the Jordanian people," he said.

"Jordan's occupation of the West Bank was never recognized by the international community, and the kingdom relinquished all claims on the territories back in the 1980s. On what grounds are they trying to lay claims to the scrolls, which are a cornerstone of Jewish cultural history?" he asked.

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Israel Briefs

Israel's population 7.5 million

Israel's population at the end of 2009 stood at 7,509,000. The Central Bureau of Statistics released the figures in advance of the new year. According to the bureau, 75.4 per cent of the population is Jewish. 20.3 per cent is Arab and 4.3 per cent is classified as "other" – either non-Arab Christians or those without a religious designation. Israel's population grew 1.8 per cent in 2009, with 160,000 births and 39,000 deaths.

Hebrew Day to be marked

Israel's cabinet is set to make the birthday of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the father of modern Hebrew, National Hebrew Day. The recommendation must still pass the ministerial committee for symbols and ceremonies. In a meeting Sunday, the cabinet set up a committee to urge ways to strengthen the language in everyday use. Ideas floated by the cabinet include establishing a team to maintain the language, a Hebrew conference, a national medal, and stamps, Ynet reported.

Sharon in coma for 4 years

Ariel Sharon's family and friends marked the fourth anniversary of the former prime minister's massive stroke. Sharon, now 81, never regained consciousness after his Jan. 4, 2006 stroke. He remains in a coma, although he breathes on his own. He lives in a long-term care facility in Ra'anana and is visited frequently by family and friends, reports said. Sharon, elected prime minister as head of the Likud party in 2001, suffered the stroke several months after overseeing Israel's pullout from Gaza. He formed the new centrist Kadima party to run in the 2006 elections. Doctors say it's unlikely he'll come out of the coma.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

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Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.

Submissions can not be returned

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Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4.

If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selections based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

'Time has come to enact sanctions'

Continued frompage 1

Cotler is one of more than 60 petition signatories, including Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel; former Swedish deputy prime minister and expert on genocide, Per Ahlmark; Darfur survivor and Sudanese member of parliament, Salih Mahmoud Osman; leading Egyptian democracy advocate Saad Edin Ibrahim, and former Israeli MK and human rights advocate Amnon Rubenstein.

Canadians signatories include former prime minister John Turner; former foreign affairs minister Lloyd Axworthy, and a specialist in international law, Prof. Fayam Acavam.

A significant number of Canadian signatories are of Iranian descent. "The signatories to the petition are not mainly Jewish. Many are non-Jewish, members of the Iranian diaspora, and leading figures in the Arab and Muslim worlds," Cotler said.

"It's one thing for me to endorse this petition. It's another thing for an Iranian Canadian to do so."

The 156-page document, called *The Danger of a Nuclear, Genocidal and Rights-Violating Iran: The Responsibility to Prevent*, is split into two parts. The first part offers evidence of the state's transgressions: its nuclear weapons program, its state-sanctioned incitement to genocide and its domestic human rights violations.

The second part is a 12-point "road map" on how to remedy the situation. Each point deals with different types of sanctions, including those that could be imposed through domestic and international law and diplomatic measures, as well as sanctions that are economic and investment-related.

"[This petition] is the most comprehensive and compelling witness testimony and documentary evidence ever released on the nature of the Iranian threat, and it's the most detailed set of recommendations for action by the international community," Cotler said.

The list of violations, aside from those related to the nuclear program, includes widespread killing and torture, assault on women's rights, detention and murder of political dissidents, coerced confessions, show trials, demonization of Israel, Holocaust denial and rampant anti-Semitism, as well as an assault on the Baha'i, a religious minority targeted for special oppression by the regime.

An Interpol arrest warrant is out for the Iranian Revolutionary Guard corps' minister of defence, Ahmed Wahidi, who is alleged to have headed the attack on the Jewish community centre in Buenos, Aires, Argentina in 1994.

Irwin Cotler

"You have this absurdly Orwellian act, where a person involved in international terrorism has been appointed defence minister," Cotler said.

The petition outlines several sanctions aimed at making it harder for Iran to produce nuclear weapons, weakening the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and prohibiting private companies such as Nokia to facilitate domestic repression. Nokia provides the Guard with surveillance equipment.

One of the sanctions targets gasoline and petroleum imports. Although Iran is the second-largest exporter of oil, it imports some 40 per cent of its gas. "This is their Achilles heel, a major economic vulnerability," Cotler said.

He said the "time has come to enact sanctions. It cannot just be a declaratory response. [The petition] is not a policy request. It outlines the legal obligations of the international community. The rights of the Iranian people are under attack and the international community must assume its legal responsibilities.

"Iran is at a tipping point now in respect to regime change. It is the responsibility of the international community to not stand idly by and permit the Revolutionary Guard to assault the Iranian green movement," Cotler said, referring to ongoing anti-government demonstrations in Iran.

He said Canada is in a strategic position to promote the petition. Canada, more than any other country in the world, is involved in international political and economic decision-making bodies such as the UN Security Council, he said. "Canada takes multilateralism seriously. Canada has a special role to play because of these involvements."

He added that international law is a "centrepiece" of Canadian foreign policy, and the petition draws heavily upon international law.

Canada always speaks of itself as having a "human rights foreign policy" and human rights is another organizing theme of the petition, Cotler said. "Human rights is part of the Canadian DNA."

Muslims rally on Facebook against anti-Semitism

JTA

NEW YORK — Muslims placed personal messages against anti-Semitism on the Facebook page of a Canadian Muslim reformist and author.

The hundreds of personal messages on Irshad Manji's Facebook fan page were a thank you to the European Union of Jewish Students for the group's statement earlier in the month condemning the Swiss vote to ban minarets in Switzerland.

Following the Dec. 2 EUJS statement, Manji, the New York-based author of *The Trouble with Islam Today: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith* and the producer of the Emmy-nominated film *Faith Without Fear*, asked her Muslim fans to post personal statements against anti-Semitism.

"The move by Irshad Manji and EUJS has shown how successful and meaningful the Jewish and Muslim connection can be on a grassroots level. We hope that this connection is only the beginning of a springboard for further dialogue, co-operation and collaboration between Jewish and Muslim groups," read a statement from EUJS in its December newsletter.

Haredi conversion rabbi resigns under cloud

By YAIR ETTINGER
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

TEL AVIV — A haredi organization that describes itself as a standard-bearer in the fight "to protect the Jewish people and sincerely committed converts from fraudulent or unacceptable conversions" is finding itself in an embarrassing situation as its founder and former head faces allegations of sexual impropriety.

Rabbi Leib Tropper, who resigned from the group Eternal Jewish Family in early December, is alleged to have promised to smooth the conversion of a woman in exchange for sexual favours.

A report in the *New York Post* late last month said that "a prominent Orthodox rabbi has been caught on tape discussing his apparent love affair with a [woman] he was converting to Judaism."

The woman involved is 32-year-old Shannon Orand of Houston, who still seeks to convert from Christianity to Judaism. The bulk of the report deals with embarrassing comments made in a phone call, during which the rabbi was allegedly recorded demanding Orand perform sexual services for him and his friends in exchange for helping her to secure a conversion certificate.

Only at the very end of the *Post* story is it mentioned that at the start of December, the Monsey, N.Y.-based Rabbi Tropper resigned from his position as head of Eternal Jewish Family, which promotes halachic conversions.

Rabbi Tropper's stated goal in founding Eternal Jewish Family was to "fortify the walls of conversion," amid an ideological debate between the haredi and national camps in Israel. While functioning as a well-known rabbi in New York and head of the Kol Yaakov yeshiva, Rabbi Tropper enlisted wealthy Jews in a fight against non-haredi conversions, especially those carried out by special conversion courts in Israel headed by Rabbi Haim Druckman.

The doors of senior haredi officials were thrown open to him, including those of Rabbi Shalom Elyashiv, a leader of the Lithuanian haredi sect. Rabbi Tropper himself also had the title of gaon ("most learned") bestowed upon him by the haredi press, all because of his efforts against conversions by Israel's Conversion Authority and the "infiltration" of gentiles into the People of Israel.

When news of his alleged affair broke last month, posters denouncing Rabbi Tropper were plastered across the haredi city of Bnei Brak. Its title said: "Leave impurity." The text's anonymous authors threatened that if he didn't quit the group, "We will publicize our voice aloud, accompanied by pornographic pictures and shocking video clips."

The rabbi did announce his resignation, but he failed to hush up the affair.

It was leaked to U.S. Jewish bloggers, audio was posted on YouTube and the *Post* ran its story, under the headline "Tal-mood for love: Sex-tape rabbi tries to 'share' hottie," referring to one of the rabbi's alleged demands on the tape.

Couple out of hospital after South Africa attack

Compiled by CJN Staff

Martin and Janet Stern, the Toronto couple who were attacked and robbed Dec. 22 while hiking in South Africa, are recovering from their injuries after being released from hospital.

The South African natives, who moved to Canada in 1986, were stoned, stabbed, tied up with shoelaces and left bleeding in a remote area during a robbery.

The two attackers robbed the Sterns of Janet's engagement ring, as well as watches, cellphones and a digital camera.

Speaking to South African reporters, Stern, an investment adviser and first vice-president of CIBC Wood Gundy, told reporters they nodded to the men as they passed them on a hiking trail in the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, located in the Hermanus mountains about 150 kilometres from Cape Town, and the pair then returned and attacked them from behind.

"The next thing we knew, we were being stabbed in the back. I was stabbed next to my kidney, and they stabbed Janet in the arm," he said.

A sign at the entrance to the reserve warned visitors that due to recent attacks to be vigilant, and not to carry valuables on hikes, including passports and credit cards. Martin Stern said the couple had not seen the warning, and would have avoided the area if they had.

He said that during the attack, his wife said to him in Hebrew, "'We're going to pray to God' and then they left us."

The Sterns have made annual visits to the Cape Town area, where Martin Stern was born and where his wife's parents live, for the last 10 years or so. He told local media that they were overwhelmed by the treatment they received after the attack and would continue to visit South Africa.

The attack made front-page news across the country as it prepares to host the 2010 soccer World Cup.

Michigan-Israel group forged

Continued from page 1

"Going forward, Michigan will always be an automotive state – people are looking at hybrid vehicles and electrical vehicles and have put a stake in the ground worth a billion dollars of federal funding," said Perry, who is a consultant on water technologies, biotech, clean tech and security.

Some $1.3 billion in U.S. federal stimulus money has been channelled into batteries to make Michigan the battery manufacturing capital of the world. Dow Chemical is getting into batteries, Perry said, adding that its batteries that will bring Michigan and Israel together.

"We've made a call out to Israel – to many Israeli companies and researchers in universities developing advanced battery technology for vehicles, energy storage and energy conversion.

"These are all things the state of Michigan and its universities are seeking. There are Israeli companies that are developing the infrastructure for electric vehicles, such as Better Place and ETV, that are developing new engines for the electric vehicle world," Perry said.

Israel's ETV Motors recently raised $12 million to fuel its engine, described by *USA Today* as "a jet engine for a Toyota Prius."

The Michigan-Israel group has also connected with Prof. Doron Aurbach of Bar Ilan University's department of chemistry. Aurbach is a leader in the battery storage field. He collaborates with key players at other Israeli universities, including Tel Aviv University (which developed the battery storage company Enstorage) and the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology.

The Michigan Israel Bridge has developed two forums over the last couple of years that have led to some concrete business exchanges.

One exchange led to a partnership with a Michigan organization called Automation Alley, which connected Michigan businesses – OEM and others – to Israeli companies.

It was accomplished "speed-dating style," said Perry, who won't divulge specifics about the partnerships forged until the companies announce details.

"Customers sales were made, as were new customer acquisitions and a couple of strategic alliances between Michigan and Israeli companies," he said. "We are helping them to further develop their business.

"Even though they have been selling to Detroit, historically [Israeli companies] have a hard time getting their foot in the door. Many of these companies have for years been trying to get to the right business development people, even if they have local reps. We've helped open doors for some companies who weren't able to open them before."

Some of Israel's automotive technology comes from the military and telecom industries and includes Raval, a company based in the Negev Desert near Sde Boker. Raval supplies fuel-tank systems for cars to prevent fuel reflux.

Another Israeli company working with America is Mivrag from the Galilee region, which supplies cold-formed metal parts to companies, among them GM, Volkswagen, Delphi and Opel. There is also Tadir-Gan, which provides precision-moulded aluminum parts.

Some Israeli companies have been unsuccessful in entering the U.S. market.

MobilEye, which has commercialized military technology to provide warnings for safe lane departures on runways, has been having difficulties transforming its technology to the automotive industry for fleet safety, Perry said.

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Canada Israel Experience

May the family be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

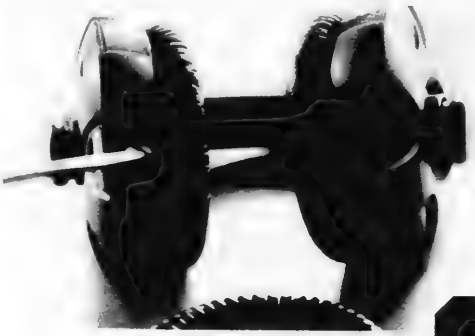
And now for something completely different: **HEEBONICS**

Entrepreneur is a DJ of all trades

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to The CJN

When Abby Tobias was 15, he wanted to be the next Jim Carrey.

But one night Corey Mandel, the owner of a local DJ company, spotted him performing standup comedy at an open mike night, and offered Tobias a job.



From then on, Tobias knew he had found his real calling.

"I was always a jokester, but also very passionate about music," Tobias said. "So the DJ business was really my first business. At the time, you would make $50 a night, and at comedy no money, so it seemed like an amazing thing... And I was never very good at standup."

Soon Tobias was performing at weddings and bar mitzvahs, as well as bringing his skills as a turntableist into the clubs. But as much as he loved performing, he discovered that he also had a natural entrepreneurial spirit.

Today, the 31-year-old Toronto native is not only a DJ himself, but also manages DJs and other artists, owns a club, an event production company and runs Canada's first DJ school, the Scratch Lab DJ Institute.

Tobias' career as an entertainment entrepreneur got off the ground when he was only 17 and still a student at Thornlea Secondary School. He was managing the Boogie Brats, one of Canada's premier break-dance teams. By the time he was 20 years old, he had travelled the world with them, including a stint touring with Missy Elliot, and had helped three of their members join Cirque du Soleil.

In the meantime, Tobias also started attending Ryerson University, where he studied radio and television broadcasting, which he managed to balance with his budding professional career.

"I was never very scholarly, but it wasn't taking up enough of my time that I couldn't do it all," he said. "In my second year, I actually tried dropping out of university, but my school admissions were very supportive and were able to work around it."

When he graduated in 2003, he started his first business, Sole Power, while living in his mother's basement. An event production company, Sole Power has grown to produce close to 400 events each year, employing over 100 performers. This February, Tobias will be able to claim one of his greatest successes with Sole Power– he will produce several events at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

In addition to running Sole Power, Tobias also manages Keys N Krates, a DJ trio that combines old-fashioned instrumentation with turntableism and live sampling, as well as the five-member group, the Eh! Team DJs.

Not content with merely performing, managing and producing events, however, Tobias started what would become his true labour of love in 2005, the Scratch Lab DJ Institute. Together with DJ Grouch and DJ Starting from Scratch, two of Canada's top DJs, he wrote the school's curriculum and began teaching both amateur and professional DJs of all ages. Today, the Scratch Lab DJ Institute is an accredited school offering a high school music credit, and has almost 2,000 students.

"It's my biggest labour of love, to be able to teach my class. We've written the rule book on how to teach DJing," Tobias said. "It's recreational, but we also have a lot of active DJs who want to be better coming to take classes."

With so many businesses to attend to, Tobias' hands are more than full.

"I'd be lying if I didn't say that my life was completely chaotic and that it's a struggle to complete my tasks for each day," he said.

Still, Tobias takes time out to help out with numerous charitable causes. Each year, Sole Power provides entertainment for the Walk With Israel, as well as for many other UJA Federation of Greater Toronto events throughout the year.

"As I've gotten more successful, it's made me want to be more charitable," he said. "I can help with expertise in certain areas, where people would otherwise have to spend substantial amounts of money."

Tobias also puts his money where his mouth is, donating to causes he cares about, including a fund he started at the Hospital for Sick Children to provide young patients with musical instruments.

"I tend to choose quite a few charities that are child related. I have a soft spot for kids, so I do what I can," he said.

Tobias' concern for kids isn't limited to hospitals. He also goes around to schools and community centres, speaking to students about his life and what makes him successful. He is modest, crediting his coworkers with much of his success, but also says that the main ingredient is hard work.

"I recognize that I definitely have the entrepreneurial spirit, but I couldn't do what I do if I didn't have amazing teams working beside me, so I can take only a certain amount of credit," he said.

"But the easiest piece of advice is to work hard. I always hear that people are grinding and hustling, when really they're sleeping until noon. You still have to be smart and make the right decisions and get lucky. But it's the type of work that everybody would want to be in, and if you're not working 12 or 14 hours a day, someone else is."

Abby Tobias, 31, found his true calling as a DJ in his teens. The Torontonian now runs the Scratch Lab DJ Institute, Canada's first school for DJs.

World music project rooted in Jewish liturgical music

By JORDANA DIVON
Special to The CJN

The Huppah Project, like many great ideas, began accidentally.

When Toronto-based musician Aaron Lightstone got married in 2004, he naturally wanted music to play a key role in the ceremony. So he called up his friend Aviva Chernick, a well-known cantorial soloist, and asked if she would lend her voice to the day.

Added to the mix: an Indian tabla virtuoso and several other versatile world musicians who blended together to create a contemporary fusion rooted in the traditional Jewish liturgical music.

The result was even better than Lightstone could have imagined.

"I think it was very moving for me in particular, and my wife," he recalls. "But after the ceremony, there were a lot of people who came up to me and told me they felt this should be taken elsewhere and not just the wedding."

Lightstone and Chernick had already been working together musically; they had started an ensemble, Jaffa Road, shortly after meeting in 2001, which fused sacred and secular Jewish songs in English, Hebrew and Ladino.

But after witnessing the powerful response to Lightstone's wedding ceremony, the duo saw potential for a new musical endeavour.

"We started out by doing [other] weddings," says Lightstone, who also works as a music therapist, "and it developed into a concert. And then seeing as how we can't really do anything without a CD, we decided to make one."

The Huppah Project released their debut disc, *Under the Canopy*, earlier this year. Buoyed by Chernick's bright, diaphanous voice, the album features 13 contemporary and traditional liturgical tracks associated with the Jewish wedding ceremony, but flavoured with a blend of multicultural sounds.

Aviva Chernick and Aaron Lightstone

Standards such as *Erev Shel Shoshanim* are wrapped around gentle bossa nova rhythms, while the sitar, traditionally associated with Hindustani music, adds an eastern element to *Heviani el beit hayayin*.

Although Toronto, famed for its multiculturalism, may seem like an obvious place to spawn this type of Jewish world music movement, Lightstone insists both the Huppah Project and Jaffa Road are unique to the city, and his early influences came from overseas instead.

"The first time I heard other groups do this, particularly in Israel, I was very moved by it, both musically and spiritually," he says. "I felt I would like to be involved in something like that for a bunch of different reasons."

One of the main reasons was Lightstone's desire to connect to Judaism in a way that felt more meaningful to him.

"You had things like youth groups with particular political agendas or affiliations with particular synagogue movements that didn't really speak to me very much," he says. "I was looking for other avenues on a very esthetic musical level and was being inspired by people who had done this before us, and I thought I wanted to contribute in that way."

Something in the Huppah Project's formula appears to be working. The group recently received a Canadian Folk Music Award nomination in the World Music category at a gala held last month in Ottawa.

The significance of the nomination was not lost on Chernick or Lightstone. At a time when criticism of Israel – particularly within certain artistic circles – has never been higher, the inclusion of an all-Hebrew album felt like a triumph in itself.

"We don't wave political flags in our work purposely," says Chernick. "We just sing from the heart and what comes will come and everybody will interpret it in their own way. And yet it felt very comforting to be included, and for once, just for once, for it not to be contentious and for it to be just about the music."

Although the award went to world musician Jayme Stone, Lightstone says he feels validated by the project's success.

"There's all this potential to say, 'You know, they don't really want to hear Hebrew, they're not ready for Jewish music to be part of this bigger movement of world music,' but I think this kind of recognition really validates and confirms that if the music is good, then people will listen to it and hopefully enjoy it."

Under the Canopy is available in select Judaica stores and online at thehuppahproject.com.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

KOFFLER SHOW TO OPEN IN DOWNTOWN GALLERY ON BEVERLEY STREET

A group of non-Jewish artists reflect on "the fluidity of Jewish identity in North America, taking as departure points the shared experiences of community, individuality, displacement, continuity and assimilation to examine connections and differences" in an exhibition hosted by the Koffler Gallery and set to open next week in a downtown location.

Lori Starr

Habanot Nechama

Nikki Yanofsky

Chava Rosenfarb

Guest curator **Cyril Reade** has assembled the works of **Rita Bakacs**, **Susan Lakin**, **Ross Racine** and **Allen Topolski** in a show titled "how good are your dwelling places," set to go on view at 23 Beverley St. for two months beginning Jan. 14. The Koffler Centre of the Arts "is thrilled to present this unique exhibition that focuses on the heart of Jewish life – the home," said Koffler executive director **Lori Starr**.

Incidentally, the location is a few doors up from the childhood home of architect **Frank Gehry**, born **Ephraim Owen Goldberg**, designer of the splendidly revitalized Art Gallery of Ontario. In the old days before the Jewish community moved uptown, Beverley Street was an important address for diverse Jewish societies and organizations in the city.

* * *

Habanot Nechama in Performance: Habanot Nechama, the celebrated Israeli singing trio, perform one night only in Toronto as special guests of the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation. Tickets $25. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave. Wednesday, Jan. 13, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca

* * *

Nikki Yanofsky in Mississauga: Teenage musical prodigy **Nikki Yanofsky** made her debut at the 2006 Montreal Jazz Festival and hasn't looked back. She's a jazz aficionado who sings in a style reminiscent of **Ella Fitzgerald**, and her concerts have earned deserved raves. She performs at Hammerstein Hall, the Living Arts Centre, in Mississauga on Jan. 15, 8 p.m. Tickets begin at $35. 905-306-6000.

* * *

Fakes & Forgeries: More than 100 real and fake objects are presented in the new show of this name that opens this week at the Royal Ontario Museum. Pieces run the gamut from historical specimens and cultural artifacts to household items and designer name brands. Visitors learn how to tell authentic pieces from sly forgeries and discover the fascinating lengths forgers will take to hoodwink the unwary. The exhibit also includes modern details about pirated computer software and counterfeit currency. At the ROM, Jan. 9 to April 4. www.rom.on.ca

* * *

Diaspora Roots Music: Koffler Centre of the Arts and Small World Music Society present *Musical Melding*, a night of world music with **Jaffa Road** and members of **Eccodek**. The event is the first in a proposed series featuring collaborations between eclectic musicians and the Canadian band Jaffa Road, specialists in "Diaspora roots music from the global crossroads." $12, $15. Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. W. Wednesday, Jan. 27, 8 p.m. www.ticketweb.ca, 1-888-222-6608

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Ted** and **Marion Outerbridge** present *Magical Moments in Time*, a fusion of magic, dance, comedy and theatre. This "world-class illusion show" is suitable for everyone, including children, and has received standing ovations across Canada and Europe, where the Outerbridges were called "champions of magic." $28. Sanderson Centre, Brantford. Saturday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m. 519-758-8090, www.tedouterbridge.com

• *The Aluminum Show*, an Israeli theatrical sensation combining special effects, acrobatics, jazz, modern dance and puppetry, has embarked on an American tour. Reminiscent of shows put on by Cirque du Soleil or Stomp, the made-in-Israel extravaganza is making stops in Schenectedy N.Y.; Charlotte, N.C.; Lawrence Kan.; Dayton, Ohio, and various other cities.

• A selection of works from the art collection of Canadian architect-philanthropist **David J. Azrieli** are on view at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. This is the first public presentation of Azrieli's collection, which consists of some 350 works, mostly by 20th-century artists.

• Fans of Yiddish literature, either in the original or in translation, should check out the website of Canada's own **Chava Rosenfarb**, author of *The Tree of Life*, *Survivors* and other acclaimed works. www.chavarosenfarb.com.

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Arts & Travel

Kafka story reveals unease over anti-Semitism, translator says

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL – Is Franz Kafka's last short story, written shortly before his premature death in 1924, a prophetic allusion to the plight of the Jews of Europe, and in particular to those who were German-speaking like him?

A new English translation of *Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse*, as *Josephine the Singer or The Nation of Mice*, has been published by the Concordia University's Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies, as part of its Hungry I chapbook series.

The translators are Karin Doerr, a professor of German culture, language and literature at Concordia University, and Barbara Galli, who teaches at Concordia and McGill University and has expertise in religion and the arts and modern Jewish thought, with Gary Evans, a communications professor at the University of Ottawa, who has previously collaborated with Doerr, his wife, on the subjects of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Doerr has written an afterword to the new translation in which she argues that Kafka's final story has a hidden Jewish subtext revealing a deep concern for the place of the Jew, and especially the Jewish artist, in gentile society. This is striking because Kafka was assimilated, had avoided Jewish references in his work, and aspired to being a great German literary figure with universal appeal before his demise at age 40. His best known work is the novella *The Metamorphosis*, in which a cockroach is the central character.

But, in Doerr's estimation, the Jewish history of persecution "echoes throughout" the story, which on the surface is about anthropomorphic mice in thrall to a mouse named Josephine that stands apart from the pack, who sings, or more accurately, whistles tunefully. A sense of resignation and melancholy permeates the story, as if Kafka realized the Jew will never be fully accepted by gentiles and had a premonition that Jewish life in Europe was doomed.

Other critics have read into this tale a parallel between Josephine's relatively brief glory, at least in her own mind, before she dies, to the terminally ill Kafka's review of his own artistic achievement and insecurities about how others regard what will soon become his legacy.

Doerr does not dispute that there may be truth in that, but makes a plausible case that there is more.

Doerr is well qualified to delve into the story. Not only has she translated Holocaust survivors' accounts and written on literary responses to the Shoah and on anti-Semitism in German literature, she is a scholar of how the Nazis used jargon and euphemisms to smooth over the horror of the persecution and extermination of Jews. She is the co-author 2002 *Nazi-Deutsch/ Nazi-German: An English Lexicon of The Language of the Third Reich*, which chillingly illustrates the many nuances of the language.

She has translated the title as *Nation of the Mice* rather than say, the mouse people, because that more closely matches Kafka's grammar, she says. By choosing the more formal "*der Maüse*," rather than *Mäusevolk*, he is denoting a greater formality, as befits a nation.

At this time, a Jewish sense of nationhood was gaining momentum, as the spectre of danger grew.

Moreover, *Volk* is a loaded word. "Anti-Semites used *Volk* for Jews with pejorative connotations, as with *Judenvolk*, meaning Jewish 'pack,' 'rabble' and the like," Doerr writes.

Kafka avoids the anti-Semitic characterization of Jews as vermin by his humanistic portrayal of the fictional mice.

"They are like ordinary people and very human in the common, affectionate sense of the word," she writes.

Even the choice of the name Josephine may have been inspired by Josefov, the old Jewish quarter in Prague, where Kafka was born, Doerr proposes.

At the launch of *Josephine the Singer or The Nation of the Mice*, Doerr thanked Norman Ravvin, who holds the Canadian Jewish studies chair and edits the series, for accepting the book, noting that its publication represents a rare collaboration between German and Jewish studies programs at a Canadian university.

Doerr said she hopes the new translation and analysis will make a contribution to the study of Kafka's life and work.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Montreal Hebrew Orphans' Home, one of two Jewish orphanages in Montreal in the first half of the 20th century, Myer Gordon, an alumnus of Montefiore Home, the other orphanage, recently presented a cheque to Montreal's Agence Ometz (formerly Jewish Family Services – JFS), representing the proceeds from the sale of two books written by his wife, Judy Gordon, about the two homes, *Four Hundred Brothers and Sisters*... All proceeds from book sales since 2002 have been given to JFS Montreal. Accepting on behalf of Agence Ometz is Natalie Cutler, flanked here by the Gordons. Books are available in Montreal from Coles Cavendish and in Toronto from Negev bookstore.

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CJN Profile

Model train company on the fast track to success

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

"I'm nuts about trains," said Jason Shron. "When I sleep, I dream about trains. It's a lifelong interest. It takes over your life."

Though he is not necessarily an obsessive compulsive person, he is uncommonly interested in trains.

A smile crossing his bearded face, Shron said, "It's possible I have a mild case of Asperger syndrome."

With tongue in cheek, he added, "My wife will kill me if you publish this."

As founder and president of Rapido Trains Inc., Canada's largest manufacturer of model trains and accessories, Shron has good reason to be fascinated by and drawn to this universal mode of transportation.

Shron, 34, has been a train aficionado since the age of two, when he his family boarded a Canadian National Railway-Turbo train in Montreal bound for Toronto

"I was just enthralled by the whole experience, by the sounds, smells and sights," he recalled. "I fell in love with trains. Train buffs love the history and the equipment."

Jason Shron stands next to one of his model trains. *[Sheldon Kirshner photo]*

He established Rapido Trains in 2004, after deciding to follow his dream. Shron seemed destined for a career in academia after earning a BA degree in fine arts and an MA in art history from York University.

"I was planning to be a professor."

But a year into a PhD at the University of Birmingham, he concluded he was on the wrong track.

"I realized I was not happy. I wanted to make trains," said Shron, who travels on commercial trains as often possible, even for recreational purposes.

"I will never pass up an opportunity to ride the rails. I feel totally relaxed on a train. I love to stare out the window and watch the countryside glide by. I love to converse with strangers, and I love the physicality of the machinery."

After finding a silent financial partner and taking out a loan, he founded Rapido Trains, which now manufactures a line of products from passenger cars and cabooses to complete trains and wired telephone poles.

This year, he will start churning out stand-alone locomotives and tracks.

The model train industry is a risky one, he admits. Prior to receiving his initial order, he and his partner had already invested $500,000, not knowing with any real certainty when the first customer would come calling.

Since model trains cannot be developed in less than 12 to 18 months, Shron had to wait for about two years before he could finally ship his first order.

Much to his relief and delight, Rapido Trains has grown exponentially. In the first year, sales reached $50,000, and have since topped the $1-million mark.

Not surprisingly, the current recession has affected him to some extent. "U.S. orders are lower than they should be," he explained. "American customers have stopped ordering inventory."

In response, Shron has modified his business model and is not producing inventory anymore.

Aside from this blip, he has ridden out the slump without a major mishap.

"A lot of our American competitors have suffered," he noted. "We haven't." Indeed, advance sales of Rapido's new coach have been quite brisk.

As a manufacturer, Shron is different from his competitors in Canada and the United States in two respects. As he put it, "My models are geared for adult hobbyists. We base our models on Canadian trains."

To say he has an affinity for Canadian trains would be an understatement.

Shron was a mere toddler when he and his older brother, Greg, and their parents, Van and Sonia, boarded a Turbo train in Montreal.

In retrospect, the trip to Toronto was a turning point.

"I probably had no idea that the smell of lighter fluid, the roar of the turbines, the clunk-clunk of the single axles over the rails would change my life forever," he writes in his self-published book, *TurboTrain: A Journey*.

Shron fell hard for the Turbo, a sleek, light-weight, high-speed train that was commissioned in 1968 and pulled out of service in 1982.

"I drew pictures of the Turbo. I wrote stories about the Turbo. I made paper models of the Turbo. I got into scale model trains." To Shron, the Turbo was the epitome of modernity.

Shron's father, a clothing manufacturer, encouraged his son's new hobby. "He bought me my first model train set when I was four years old."

When the Turbo was terminated, Shron took its demise personally. As he observed in his book, "I cried for days. I was determined to own a model of the Turbo. I started Rapido Trains with the express aim of producing the first accurate model of the Turbo."

To ensure accuracy, Shron studied the Turbo at great length, even going to the trouble of manoeuvring his bulk under Turbo passenger cars to examine the intricate layout.

"I made sure that every detail possible was included, from the microwave in the café to the padded armrests on the coach seats."

He was certainly enamoured.

His office in Concord, Ont., is dotted with discarded red and blue Canadian National Railway coach seats. "They're extremely comfortable," he said.

Shron's model trains are designed in Concord but made in the southern Chinese city of Dongguan, a two-hour train ride from Hong Kong.

"My partner in China has been making model trains for years. A whole industry, with all the necessary skill sets, has arisen in southern China."

He chose China as his manufacturing base after discovering that Canadian companies could not meet his technical requirements.

Shron visits the plant once or twice a year, but thanks to the convenience of e-mail, he is in daily touch with his Chinese principals. "Twenty years ago, I would have had to live in China for six months of the year."

Thinking long-term, Shron began learning Mandarin three months ago. He plunged into weekly language lessons after missing a ferryboat connection in China due to his inability to read Chinese characters.

"I figure I'll be fluent in several years. Mandarin is very hard to learn. In Chinese, you have to reverse your order of thinking."

Shron hopes to expand Rapido Trains into a $3- to $5-million business within a few years.

Always the joker, he said, "I'll be able to feed my family and pay for Jewish day school. But seriously, we're doing OK. We're comfortable."

Shron's wife, the published Winnipeg-born novelist Sidura Ludwig, has been supportive. "Sidura is happy if I'm happy. She is glad I've fulfilled my dreams. She has fanned the flames of my passion since the day we met."

They have passed on their enthusiasm to their children, Nachmani Boaz, 4, and Dalya Rivka, 2.

"Boaz loves trains and Dalya is getting into it. Boaz is helping me build a slice of a 20-foot-high railway coach in our basement. It's a 25-year project. I try to work on it every morning for an hour before I go to work. It's a great way to begin a day."

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Ostrich feather trade was dominated by Jews

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Ostrich feather hats were all the rage in women's fashion from the 1880s to the outbreak of World War I in 1914. "A well-dressed woman nowadays is as fluffy as a downy bird fresh from the nest," wrote an observer during that period. "If you would be fashionable, you would be beplumed."

Sarah Abrevaya Stein

Considered chic all the year round, ostrich feathers were popular millinery accoutrements for women old and young and all sizes and complexions. With at least 14 varieties and countless grades available, ostrich feathers' appeal also crossed class lines.

The trans-Atlantic ostrich feather industry was mainly in the hands of Jewish farmers, dealers, wholesalers and manufacturers, many of whom were Yiddish-speaking immigrants from the Russian Empire.

At its height, the industry was truly an international one, supplying gainful employment for entrepreneurs and workers in South Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the United States.

It is the subject of Sarah Abrevaya Stein's fascinating book, *Plumes – Ostrich Feathers, Jews and a Lost World of Global Commerce*, published by Yale University Press.

Drawing on a vast array of archival sources, Stein, a professor of history and Sephardi studies at the University of California in Los Angeles, has written a rigorous account of a "feather boom" that ended ingloriously with a "feather bust."

As she suggests, the feather trade originated in southern Africa, where the birds were hunted and killed for their spectacular plumes.

In general, the hunters were the indigenous inhabitants and white settlers of the area.

The ostrich – an obstreperous bird whose kick could injure or kill a handler – was domesticated in 1863 in the Western Cape district of South Africa.

By 1913, when the price of ostrich feathers reached its peak, the plumes were ranked fourth in value among South Africa's exports.

The industry, which also attracted Boer and British farmers, was centred in Oudtshoorn, a region that was deemed hospitable to ostrich farming.

Its semi-desert climate allowed feather handlers to pluck adult ostriches about every eight months and enabled farmers to easily grow alfalfa, which provided superb nourishment for the birds, says Stein.

The trade was profitable, permitting a farmer to earn five to six times more than a farmer who cultivated, say, wheat on the same plot of land.

Two additional factors contributed to its success: the existence of a cheap pool of wage labourers and the policy of the British imperial government.

The workers had the most physically taxing job, tending to the birds and plucking and sorting their feathers. In South Africa, workers of mixed races performed these roles, which were dirty and dangerous. But in North Africa, Britain and the United States, this task fell to Jews, who had experience as both artisinal and industrial workers.

The state, in South Africa at least, was essential to the industry's viability and success, building roads and railway lines that facilitated its expansion.

Interestingly enough, the European and North American side of the industry was characterized by a clear-cut division of labour.

Feather processing in London and New York was monopolized almost entirely by Ashkenazi Jews, while Sephardi Jews in these cities tended to be found in the manufacturing and wholesale sectors.

In the Middle East, wealthy Moroccan and Livornese Jewish merchants financed the conveyance of feathers to North Africa's ports via trans-Saharan camel caravans and ships plying the Red Sea and the Nile River, while working-class Jews in Cairo, Alexandria, Tripoli, Algiers, Tunis and Aden sorted and packed the feathers.

All too often, workers in the manufacturing sector toiled under sweat-shop conditions.

In New York City, for example, labourers in ostrich feather factories worked in hot and crowded spaces and breathed in tiny bits of feather fluff. The persistent ambient dust generated by feathers made ailments of the nose, throat and ears ubiquitous.

Stein writes that while the market was booming, observers compared feathers to diamonds in terms of their value as durable luxury goods.

She quotes one such observer, who declared that a fine ostrich feather "is an investment for life" and that the plume "has been in fashion for centuries past, and will probably be for centuries to come." As if to underline his argument, he added, "It holds its place like the diamond."

But, as we know, ostrich feathers did not share the fate of diamonds.

The De Beers diamond syndicate, in an an astonishingly successful advertising campaign, convinced consumers that diamonds were enduring and classy, a girl's best friend, in the words of one classic jingle.

The feather industry made similar attempts to influence buyers, but, as Stein points out, they were insubstantial, underfunded and ill-timed.

By 1915, she says, ostrich feathers were viewed as fragile, dated and even tawdry.

What accounted for their fall from grace?

Ostrich feathers had adorned the hats, fans and clothes of rich European and American women from the second half of the 18th century, but were not widely used until the 1880s.

But as the 20th century dawned, "bird preservationists," as Stein succinctly describes them, launched a campaign to phase out their usage. As a result, anti-plumage bills were passed in the United States and Britain.

Yet before this development, European and American women began demanding more utilitarian clothing as they were pressed into the workforce.

The popularization of the automobile had an effect as well.

As Stein puts it, "Enormous hats were impossible to keep in form or place in open cars. Elaborate feather accessories fared badly in such circumstances."

The resultant feather crash, which started in the winter of 1914, was devastating, bringing financial ruin to farmers, merchants, manufacturers, sorters, wholesalers and handlers from South Africa to the United States.

Stein, in this valuable volume of social and economic history, traces the trajectory of an industry that prospered and died on the whim of fleeting fashion.

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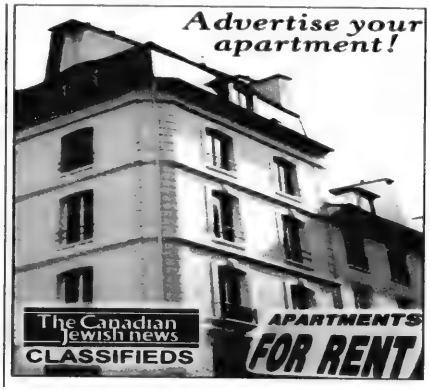

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Chess – you call that a sport?

By EITAN BEKERMAN
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

JERUSALEM — Chess grandmaster Boris Gelfand is one of Israel's greatest athletes of all time. This was true even before he won the Chess World Cup 2009 competition last month in Siberia, and yet few people know it. Only a few even know that Israel is the deputy world chess champion.

Even before the tournament – almost a month of head-to-head matches against the greatest minds – Gelfand was ranked sixth in the world. Had he been one of the 20 best tennis players, we would have heard a great deal about him. If he were among the world's top 50 soccer players, they'd give him his own television program. But chess? You call that a sport?

Such a question is laughable to countless people in countries from India (home of 2008 world chess champion Viswanathan Anand) to Iceland (which has the largest number of chess players per capita). If sports must entail physical movement, how do you explain prone rifle shooting, which is a recognized Olympic event? Why do sports superpowers such as the former Soviet Union and other east European countries consider chess a major sport, whereas Israel does not?

In general, this is a field where Israel excels (three weeks ago, Marsel Efroimski of Kfar Sava became the girls under-14 world chess champion). It's a game that so many people know on some level, in which fascinating competitions are held year-round throughout the world, with individuals of both sexes, local groups and national teams. Why, then, is it pushed to the sidelines?

The answer might lie, paradoxically, in the fact that chess is considered a "Jews' sport." The list of male and female Jewish champions may be as long as your arm, but our sabra is better off excelling at surfing, mastering a bow and arrow like the Maccabees, shooting a rifle or kicking a ball. What do we have to do with Boris, a bespectacled Russian Jew untouched by the Mediterranean sun? Give us a Gal or Shahar or Yael or Arik.

Don't misunderstand. The latter also deserve respect: windsurfers Gal Fridman and Shahar Zubari and judokas Yael Arad and Arik Ze'evi are wonderful athletes, in sports that likewise require high-level tactical thinking. And if some Alex of the House of Averbuch does come along, then let him be the highest pole vaulter, instead of messing around with queens and kings and pawns. He may also spend his time playing the violin or piano – we certainly respect every culture – but let him not presume to be called an athlete.

Chess is not what writer Max Nordau had in mind when he spoke of "muscular Judaism." Witness the fact that chess has never been included in gym class.

For whatever reason, Israel has a hidden treasure of thousands of top-quality chess players and instructors, many of whom came from the former Soviet Union, who would be capable of conveying their wisdom to tens of thousands of young people and adults, at a negligible cost. But this asset goes unused. The state institutions do not recognize chess as a legitimate sport deserving equal rights, because it is not "Olympic" – not part of the Olympic Games.

"No matter how hard we try, we cannot even figure out whether we need the Education Ministry or the Culture and Sports Ministry to give chess a boost," says international grandmaster Boris Alterman, a leader in the Israeli chess field. Alterman heads the thriving chess academy at Shevah Mofet High School in Tel Aviv, whose students include Efroimski and Gil Popilski, winner of the under-16 boys European Chess Championship. There is another chess program at the elementary/middle school in Savyon-Ganei Yehuda, but they are among the country's only programs.

"We can give hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren skills like developing thinking, perseverance and determination, improving memory," Alterman says, "but the feeling throughout the years has been that we are simply not wanted."

What can you do, Mr. Alterman? That's how it goes in a place that has difficulty seeing more than two moves ahead.

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Canadians spearhead effort for Israeli field of dreams

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A two-day delay in last summer's Maccabiah Games softball and baseball tournaments has prompted a couple of Canadian sports enthusiasts to look at building a new sports facility in Israel.

Morrie Frydberg and Lorne Swartz are spearheading an effort to construct a new permanent facility to host the softball and hardball events at upcoming Maccabiah Games.

At the 2009 Games, Maccabiah organizers rented space from the Baptist Village in Petach Tikvah. But that arrangement presented serious problems, Frydberg told *The CJN*. At the last games, local officials stopped the competition after a couple of days, when it turned out the host village did not have the proper permits for a large-scale event. "We lost two to three days" as teams sat idle, waiting for the problem to be cleared up, Frydberg said. "We don't want that to happen again."

In addition, the fields, though the best in Israel, fall short on a number of grounds. There is no outfield fence – hits can roll forever – and it is costly to rent for a short tournament. A new facility would provide the Maccabiah competition with a venue for future competitions and allow for the development of the sport among Israeli youngsters, Frydberg said.

Frydberg and Swartz are collaborating with Israeli partners in pushing the non-profit project. Three options are being considered. The first is to obtain a long-term lease for a parcel of land near Tel Aviv. The second is for a lease on land in northern Israel, while a third would be to purchase a property near the Baptist Village.

Frydberg, who was born in Israel but moved to Canada as youngster, said the first two options are more economical but even so, a ballpark figure is $1 million (US). That would permit the landscaping of two dedicated fields, construction of a facility that would house changing rooms, a snack bar, offices and storage area plus spectators' stands.

Organizers are working on a budget that is expected to be completed by the end of January. Most of the funds needed for the project are expected to be raised in Canada, the United States and Britain. Naming rights for lights and the field and the building are being considered, he said.

Frydberg, whose return to Israel as an adult felt "like coming home to me," said Canada performed well at the Maccabiah despite the difficulties. The men's open team took the gold and the men's masters team won silver, while the women's open team earned a bronze.

WELCOME TO ISRAEL

An Israeli soldier gives a welcoming hug to a new and very young immigrant at Ben-Gurion Airport last week. The tot was part of the last 2009 group arrival arranged by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

[Rachael Cerrotti/FLASH90 photo]

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2 12 oz. packages frozen squash purée, thawed
3 c parve soup stock

Pumpkin seeds:
1 tblsp olive oil
3/4 c raw green pumpkin seeds
3/4 tsp ground cumin
Pinch of cayenne pepper

Garnish: 1 tsp finely grated fresh lime zest, 1 tblsp fresh lime juice

Soup: In large saucepan over moderate heat melt butter. Add shallots; saute about 4 min. Stir in squash and stock; bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, until soup thickens, about 30 min.

Prepare pumpkin seeds: In small skillet over moderate heat, add oil and pumpkin seeds; cook, stirring constantly until seeds begin to pop, 1 - 2 min. Stir in cumin and cayenne pepper and continue to stir & cook about 30 sec. Transfer to bowl and season with generous pinch of kosher or coarse sea salt.

When soup has thickened, remove from heat; stir in lime zest and juice. Season with kosher or fine sea salt and ground black pepper. Ladle into bowls, garnish with pumpkin seeds.

REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

OSTROVTZER YOUTH ORCHESTRA

The Ostrovtzer Synagogue Youth Orchestra was conducted by the eminent violinist Yeshua Yankel Barsh, centre, who lived to be more than 100 years of age. This photo was taken around 1930. The Ostrovtzer shul was located on Cecil Street, just east of Spadina Avenue, in the heart of the former downtown Yiddish district. The congregation moved up north in the late 1960s and its former home still adorned with Hebrew plaques – is now a Chinese community centre.

When I write

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

"The reason one writes isn't the fact that he wants to say something. He writes because he has something to say." –F. Scott Fitzgerald

When I write, there are times the screen seems to just looks back at me, as dumfounded and blank as I am.

Other times, I have an idea, generally one I encountered during the week. Often, I will jot down ideas as they come to me, especially those packed with horseradish. As an example, I'm currently considering writing a piece on what goes into the making of a good speech. I have already sent out a few e-mails to colleagues and friends, asking them what they go through in order to eke out a good talk. I am in awe of fine orators and have a dream of one day being inducted into a speakers' hall of fame.

Oratory. Speech writing. Horseradish. Therein lie the potential for a good commentary.

Every person does indeed have a story. Some stories write themselves and others must be delicately picked from the minds and mouths of the protagonist.

Writing about someone is much harder than writing about something because the notes from an interview can be very detailed. My first draft might be 1,500 words, when the end result must be 600. The editing process can be a literary emasculation.

A favourite article of mine was one I wrote a few years ago about the late Neil Merrick, a good man, someone many of us knew and/or would see walking the streets of Toronto. I titled it "Walking man," after a James Taylor song and felt I was able to bring Neil's footprints to life through my words. I like it to this day.

A happy moment for writers comes when they can read their article after it's been published, and like it, as mistakes seem to abound once it's in ink.

I write a lot about Israel. One article was about Israeli parents and the moment their child walked out the door with a khaki bag and an M16 slung over his shoulder. The thought of a father and mother holding back tears, as they are supposed to do, inspired and saddened me as I wrote. That, and the misunderstanding of the new generation about the importance of Israel, make me write harder.

I write about the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. One of the biggest challenges for me is to write about something other than Jew hatred. I say this because I believe we are not preparing ourselves for another round of anti-Semitism, perhaps a very serious one. I therefore feel compelled to urge, warn and encourage every Jew to work more broadly, intelligently and quickly at creating a movement that would stymie anti-Semitism as never before.

So when I write about Noah and me at the store and laugh, I feel guilty for not being more serious about our troubles. When I compose a piece on a *glezel tay* (glass of tea), I feel as warm as the drink itself, but figure I'm letting us all off the hook from taking responsibility for our Jewish lives. I'm terribly worried about us. You?

This year, I hope to write about: buildings versus soul in the Toronto Jewish community, the absurd price of kosher olive oil, more of our community members who sing with character and experience – and yes, anti-Semitism. What else is new?

We do not write because we want to; we write because we have to. –Somerset Maugham

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This Week

National

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PRAYERFUL PROTEST FOR FALASH MORA

Israelis who emigrated from Ethiopia hold up family photos of loved ones still in Ethiopia during a protest prayer for the reunification of their families in Israel, near the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem on Sunday. *[Flash90 photo]*

Discovery could change Bible dates

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The earliest known Hebrew inscription yet found, dated to the 10th century BCE, should push back the accepted date of several books of the Bible by hundreds of years and confirm the existence of a kingdom led by the legendary King David, a biblical scholar at Israel's Haifa University, says.

Gershon Galil said an inscription uncovered 18 months ago at a dig at Khirbet Qeiyafa, west of Jerusalem, is clearly in ancient Hebrew and resembles the socially conscious prophetic text found in the Bible. The inscription mentions "the king," and the site's impressive fortifications suggest it was part of David's unified Kingdom of Israel.

Gershon Galil

In a telephone interview from Haifa, Galil said the find – Hebrew text on a 15 centimetre by 16.5 centimetre trapezoid pottery shard – "is clearly the most ancient Hebrew inscription ever known and the most important one. It's a prophetic text pointing out social problems."

Galil, who deciphered the inscription, argued that the date of the find coupled with its content suggest that some biblical books, such as Judges, Samuel and parts of the books of Kings and Deuteronomy, might be at least 300 years older than current mainstream scholarship accepts.

Parts of the book of Deuteronomy, for one, are considered the oldest biblical writings, dating from the seventh century BCE in the time of King Josiah. However, the inscription parallels some of the messages found in that book of the Torah. "A few chapters, verses from Deuteronomy might be very, very early, because you have here the same attitude toward the poor," he said.

Continued on page 38

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Iran said to be slowing down production of uranium – see page 37

The News in Brief

Canada

Secter Is Chancellor

WINNIPEG — Harvey Secter was elected the 12th chancellor of the University of Manitoba Dec. 8, becoming the second Jew to hold the post. Secter, who retired in 2008 as U of M's law dean after nine years, reportedly beat former Assembly of First Nations head Phil Fontaine in a closed-door vote by U of M senators and governors.

Firebombing Decried

TORONTO — B'nai Brith Canada condemned the Jan. 4 firebombing of the Hamilton Mosque. Police said an incendiary device was set off in the principal's office of the mosque's school, but the fire caused by the device burned itself out without causing serious damage. "The firebombing of any house of worship is despicable," said B'nai Brith executive vice-president Frank Dimant, urging police "to investigate this matter as a hate crime."

Linder Founded Spa

TORONTO — Mira Linder, founder of an eponymous day spa called Mira Linder Esthetics – Toronto's first, in 1973 – died in Detroit Dec. 30. She was 88. A Polish-born Holocaust survivor, Linder wrote a book called *Beauty Begins at Sixty: The Best Is Yet to Come* in 1989.

Ex-CARP Head Dies

TORONTO — Murray Morgenthau, co-founder and former executive director of CARP (originally the Canadian Association of Retired Persons) died Jan. 1 at Toronto's Humber River Regional Hospital at age 89. The Toronto-born Morgenthau co-founded CARP in 1984 with his wife of 60 years, Lillian, who survives him. He headed the 350,000-member group until 2007.

Barring Women Echoes Nazis, Group Says

TORONTO — B'nai Brith Canada recalled the 1936 Berlin Olympics in slamming the International Olympic Committee for barring female ski jumpers from the Winter Games and urging the IOC to reconsider.

The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada said the decision to have a men's ski jumping event only recalled the 1936 Games, when the IOC turned a blind eye to Nazi Germany's discriminatory policies against Jews.

Ruth Klein, the rights group's national director, qualified the comparison by saying that she considered the IOC's decision to be a violation of women's rights.

"There is no suggestion that the exclusion of women by the committee is the same as the exclusion of the Jews in 1936, but if you look back at the history – the corporate history – then this is a matter of concern," Klein said.

The IOC claimed women's ski jumping was not developed enough to have it included in the XXI Winter Olympics, which are being held Feb. 12-28 in Vancouver.

Committee members chose to ignore an overwhelming vote by the International Ski Federation calling for female ski jumping to be included in the Games.

World

Museum Shooter Dies

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The shooter in the attack on the U.S. Holocaust Museum died. James von Brunn, who shot and killed museum guard Stephen Tyrone Johns on June 10 in an attempted armed raid on the museum, died in prison Jan. 6 at age 88. Another guard shot Von Brunn in the face. He recovered and was awaiting trial on possible death penalty charges in a federal prison in Butner, N.C. He had a long history of white supremacist and anti-Semitic writings.

Chabad Threatened

MUMBAI — The Chabad house in Mumbai got a letter threatening another attack. The handwritten letter was received recently at the site where an attack more than a year ago killed six Jews, including Chabad Lubavitch emissaries Rabbi Gavriel and Rivkah Holtzberg, who ran the centre, Ynet reported. It read, in part, "Israel is dogs. We will strike again – heil, Hitler," and was accompanied by a photo of Adolf Hitler. Chabad's Nariman House was one of 10 sites under siege during a three-day attack that started Nov. 26, 2008, by an Islamist Pakistani group that left 166 dead.

No Charges Expected

CHISINAU — No charges will be filed against an anti-Semitic mob that tore down a menorah in Moldova. The prosecutor's office in the capital of Chisinau said it found no evidence a crime was committed, despite video of the Dec. 13 event that's been posted on YouTube.

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Russian Jews find a place in new Hillel group

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Inna Uretzki was a student at York University, Hillel was never a safe space for her.

It was, in Uretzki's eyes, a place for Canadian Jews.

"[Canadian Jews] are brought up together, they go to the same shul. There's not a lot of acceptance for outsiders," said Uretzki, 24, a Russian Jew. "I felt it. [Canadian Jews] will only let you get close so far."

Uretzki, along with her 20-year-old sister, Suzy, worked with Hillel to change this. The sisters started Jewski, a Toronto campus group aimed at Russian Jews aged about 18 to 26.

The new initiative, which was developed last summer, came out of I'm a Jew.ru, a social group for Russian Jews in the GTA that the sisters helped start about two years ago.

While it was originally aimed at 18- to 26-year-olds, the group began to attract an older demographic.

"There were a few internal issues. We wanted to focus on a different age group," said the older Uretzki.

Her sister agreed.

"There's a lot of difference in terms of interests between the two age groups," she said. "Older[participants] are interested in more cultural events. We don't limit it just to culture. We want to involve students."

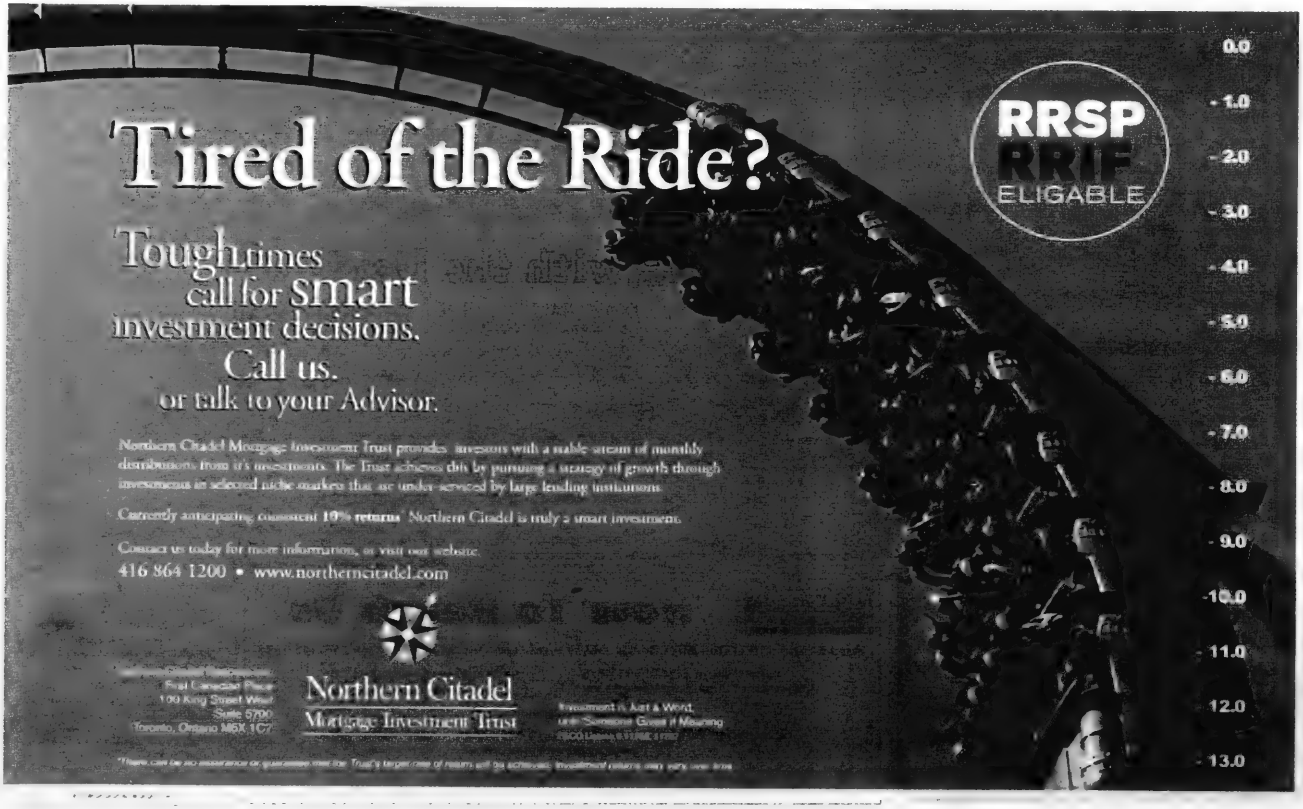
This led the sisters to leave Jew.ru and work closely with Hillel to focus on campus life.

"When I started this off, I talked to a lot of people… We [as Russian Jewish students] have different needs," said the younger Uretzki, adding that Jewski has opened her eyes to new experiences.

"You notice so many different people and stories you weren't aware of," she said.

Continued on page 15

After feeling out of place at school, Inna Uretzki, left, and her sister, Suzy, created Jewski, a Russian Jewish campus group.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Greater Toronto Area

The real story

From the editor's desk...

One of the major news stories in Israel over the weekend reported on the government's reaction to a statement by U.S. special Mideast envoy Senator George Mitchell that the United States might withhold loan guarantees to press the Jewish state to enact policies more to the American liking.

Speaking on PBS on Jan. 6, Mitchell told political commentator Charlie Rose: "Under American law, the United States can withhold support on loan guarantees to Israel."

The reaction in Israel was somewhat delayed but thunderous. The lead of the story in *Ha'aretz* was: "Israeli officials were up in arms Sunday after Washington's special envoy to the Mideast suggested the U.S. might impose sanctions on Israel and withhold loan guarantees to press it to make concessions in negotiations with the Palestinians, with Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz saying that Israel was 'doing just fine' without American loan guarantees."

The story also quotes reactions to the Mitchell statement from Israel's Education Minister Gideon Sa'ar and Environment Protection Minister Gilad Erdan, as well as from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office.

"Everyone realizes that the Palestinian Authority refuses to renew peace talks, while Israel took significant steps to advance the process," the prime minister's statement said.

I hold no brief for Senator Mitchell. Indeed, after I read the *Ha'aretz* story, I began this column by writing, "The default position of the American government regarding the impasse in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations seems to be to blame Israel."

In fact there may, nevertheless, be considerable truth in the statement. But if there is, it does not arise from the exchange between Mitchell and Rose.

Before committing to the theme that I had originally intended for this column I read the transcript of the entire interview. It is available at the following site: http://thepage.time.com/transcript-george-mitchell-on-charlie-rose

Mitchell made the loan guarantees remark near the end of the interview in which Rose essentially hectored him into giving a hypothetical example of the sort of "stick" that the United States could wield with Israel.

I reproduce the salient reference from the interview.

Mitchell: The reality is that, yes, of course the United States has both carrots and sticks. You have to be very careful about how and when you use them and apply [inaudible]...

Rose: When was the last time we used a stick?

Mitchell: [laughter] Afghanistan, [inaudible]

[talking simultaneously]

Rose: Well, I know, but that's not – I mean nobody's talking about the United States troops going in.

Mitchell: No.

Rose: They're not. Give me – I'm serious about this. You sit there and you say to Israel, if you don't do this, what?

Mitchell: I mean, under American law, the United States *can* withhold support on loan guarantees to Israel. [*My emphasis*] President George W. Bush did so.

That was the extent of Mitchell's reference to loan guarantees in his conversation with Rose. It is clear from the context that he is not threatening Israel.

There is, however, a different but also rather important story in the interview. The real story is how Charlie Rose, a prominent commentator on a prominent network (PBS), approached the interview with, what seemed to this observer, an attitude that required "standing up to the Israelis." It was as if he proceeded on the basis of the Palestinian narrative of the conflict.

Indeed, at times, Mitchell was actually vigorously defending Israel, trying to explain things from the Israeli point of view. There were many examples of this, but the exchange regarding Jerusalem was especially instructive. (The exchange has been excerpted due to space limitations.)

Rose: It [the construction freeze] does not include east Jerusalem...

Mitchell: Yes.

Rose: And it's in the midst of Palestinians.

Mitchell: The single most difficult issue amidst an array of extremely difficult issues is Jerusalem – and it is very complicated, difficult, emotional on all sides... But understand the different perspectives, Israel annexed Jerusalem in 1980.

Rose: Annexed is an important word... How many people recognize the annexation, how many countries?

Mitchell: To the best of my knowledge there aren't any. Immediately after the annexation, the United Nations – [talking simultaneously]

Rose: So you're going to let them go ahead even though no one recognized the annexation.

Mitchell: When you say let them go ahead, it's what they regard as their country. They don't regard – they don't say they're letting us go ahead when we build in Manhattan or in the Bronx or – [talking simultaneously]

Rose: But don't the international rules have something to do with what somebody can do to define as their country?

Mitchell: There are disputed legal issues. Of that there can be no doubt."

I repeat: I hold no brief for Senator Mitchell. But in the interview with Rose, he presented Israel's case to a challenger who seemed to have prejudged Israel's case – alas, like so many others in the media.

–MBD

See]N

PRESIDENTIAL TOAST

The new Rwandan ambassador to Israel, Joseph Nsengimana, exchanges a toast with Israeli President Shimon Peres last week at the president's house in Jerusalem.

[FLASH90 photo]

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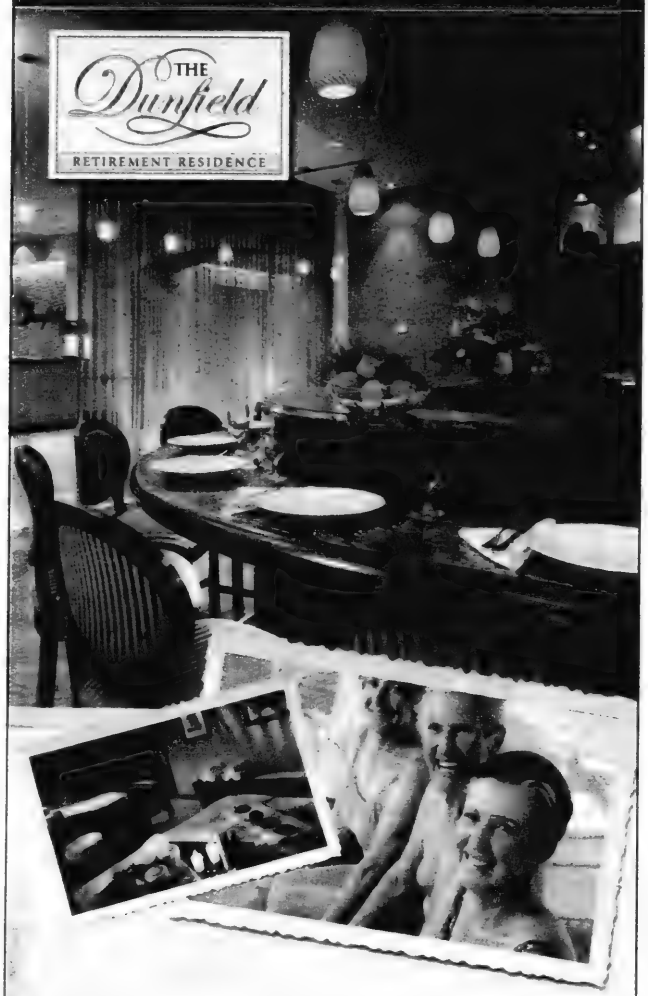

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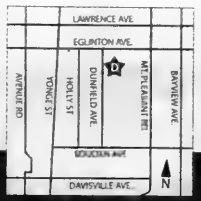

Greater Toronto Area

Jews ask Vatican to reconsider Pope Pius' beatification

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A growing chorus of Jews from around the world is cautioning the Vatican that interfaith relations could suffer if the Church moves to beatify Pope Pius XII before the Holy See's wartimes archives are opened.

Canadian Jewish Congress joined Jewish groups around the world urging the Vatican to take into account "Jewish sensibilities about Pope Pius XII's actions during the Shoah."

"It is not up to us to determine for the Catholic Church who is worthy of sainthood," said Congress president Mark Freiman. "We do, however, feel warranted to observe the process of beatification should not be surrounded by a cloud of controversy."

Beatification is a step that precedes the conferring of sainthood.

In raising concerns, Freiman noted that "in this regard, Congress has long expressed concerns both about what is currently known regarding the war-time conduct of Pius XII in not speaking out regarding the horrors of the Nazi genocide and about the continuing inaccessibility of the Vatican's secret World War II archives that might shed more light on these matters."

Congress repeated its longstanding request that the archives be opened and that "in the absence of the full historical record, we believe it is reasonable to raise objections to any potential acceleration of the beatification of Pope Pius XII."

In mid-December, Pope Benedict XVI issued a decree recognizing the "heroic virtues" of Pius XII, as well as John Paul II, an important milestone on the road to beatification. Critics of Pius XII have argued that he did little to speak out against Nazi atrocities aimed at Jews, although his supporters counter saying he acted behind the scenes to help Jews.

Rabbi David Rosen, former chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Inter-Religious Consultations, criticized Benedict's "insensitivity" toward Jews, while in Italy, the president of the Association of Italian Rabbis, Giuseppe Laras, called it a sad decision, because "this pope did not shout out loud his outrage and his opposition to the Shoah and against the extermination of people whose only crime was that of being Jewish."

The U.S. Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was also highly critical of Benedict's decree. An statement on its website said that it's "a denial of history. And it is an act of aggression against the Jewish people."

"Pope Pius failed to act in a saintly fashion in one very crucial respect: he did not give Jews the help he could and should have during the Holocaust," wrote Rabbi Eric Greenberg, the ADL's director of interfaith policy, and Deborah Dwork, professor of Holocaust history and the director of the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress, questioned the move to beatify Pius. "As long as the archives of Pope Pius about the crucial period 1939-45 remain closed, and until a consensus on his actions – or inaction – concerning the persecution of millions of Jews in the Holocaust is established, a beatification is inopportune and premature," he said.

The Vatican responded to Lauder's comments with a statement saying moves to beatify Pius should not be considered "an obstacle on the path of dialogue between Judaism and the Catholic Church."

And in what is being seen as an important development in Catholic-Jewish relations, Benedict is scheduled to visit Rome's main synagogue next week. That visit was scheduled prior to the December decree.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber said criticism of the potential beatification of Pius "should not be viewed as an attempt by the Jewish community to dictate regarding the beatification of Pius. That's their business, not ours.

"But friends can talk to friends" and caution them about steps "that could cause reactions or pain," Farber added.

Jewish organizations are concerned that until Pius' wartime role is fully revealed, questions will remain whether he did enough to stand up to the Nazis, he said.

Michael Marrus, professor emeritus of Holocaust studies in the University of Toronto's department of history, agreed that it's solely within the purview of the Church to determine who is elevated to sainthood. "But friends owe it to friends to explain what the consequences would be. Frankly, the consequences would not be good for Catholic-Jewish relations. Most people know it."

Marrus, a member of the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission, a team of scholars that disbanded after being denied access to Vatican wartime documents nine years ago, said the controversy over Pius is not simply an issue affecting Jews.

"Most critics of Pius XII are Catholic writers," he said, and the Church is divided between progressives and traditionalists regarding his pontificate.

There remains an important constituency within the Church that looks back fondly to the days before John XXIII's reforms of the mid-1960s, he said.

"The truth of the matter is that Pope Pius XII has become a symbol of a certain traditional church – highly centralized with a high degree of authority and reverence for the pope."

"It's not just Jews who would be unhappy if Pius is beatified," he added.

Marrus called for full access to the Vatican's archives during Pius' pontificate, which includes the period up to 1958. In addition to questions about the Church's role during the war, concerns have been raised about its postwar activities, including allegations it helped Nazis escape Europe.

"The Vatican is moving slowly, slowly to open its wartime archives," Marrus acknowledged.

"This is the way the Vatican operates" but "they're moving far too slowly."

Marrus said he remains optimistic that the Vatican will respond to concerns "and they'll decide not to advance this file as it would cause too much damage to the Church."

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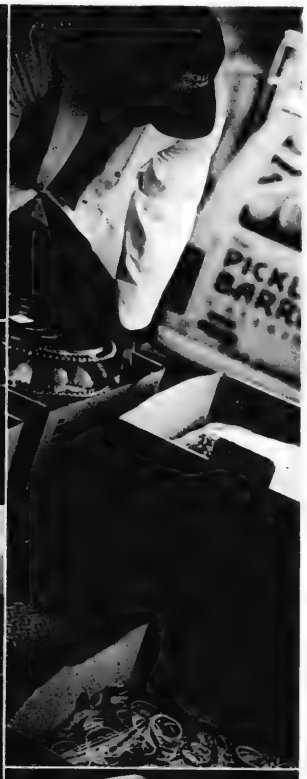

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The nightmare risk of schism

There is an nightmarish threat lurching awkwardly but ever so directly toward the Jewish people. It emanates not from the fiery fundamentalist hatreds of Israel's enemies in Iran, Gaza or Lebanon. It stems not from the competing national aspirations of the Palestinian people. Rather it comes from within, from the contentious factionalism of the Jewish people itself.

The CJN publishes in this issue a powerful *cri de coeur* from Rabbi Marc D. Angel, the founder and director of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals in New York, in which he pleads for a change in the manner by which the Orthodox world accepts converts into the Jewish fold.

Rabbi Angel notes that in 2006, the chief rabbinate of Israel opted for greater stringency regarding conversion to Judaism. "At a time when many thousands of people in Israel and the Disapora want to become Jewish, the Orthodox rabbinic gatekeepers are becoming ever more restrictive."

The Israeli rabbinate's more aggressive approach regarding conversion, of course, has reverberated throughout the Jewish world. Our own community in Canada has now joined the debate. A group of mainstream Orthodox rabbis in Montreal has recently publicly objected to what they have referred to as the delegitimization of conversions performed by rabbis of the Rabbinical Council of Canada, the association with which they are affiliated. (Please see the related story in today's paper.)

Ottawa's Rabbi Reuven Bulka, renowned, respected and even revered in some communities and a known battler on behalf of the Jewish people, told the *Ottawa Citizen* last month that he has decided to stop officiating and directing conversions to Judaism. The difficulties for potential converts are simply too great and too deeply personal for him to abide.

This burgeoning rift that has developed in the past few years has enormous implications for the Jewish People. If left untended, the rift could lead to a deep, irremediable tear and then, God forbid, to a schism within the people. It is with profound humility and with a pressing sense of urgency that we ask the rabbinic authorities within our own community first, and then within the wider Jewish world, to resolve this matter.

We pray and urge that the rabbis of today take their inspiration from Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Mandatory Palestine, who wrote (translated from the Hebrew *Shimu Ela'i Ami*):

"Harken, O My People/ From the very depths of my soul/I speak unto you… /That you, each one of you/All of you, the whole of you/Your very souls, your generations/ Only you are the essence of my life."

Rabbi Angel bids us to act wisely. The risk in failing to do so is a perilous nightmare that would likely make even God cry.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The judge in Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel's trial for spreading hateful material rejected his lawyer's attempt to have Jews and Freemasons – as well as their employees, relatives and friends – from serving as jurors in the case. The judge said there was no evidence that race or religion would prevent them from being fair and impartial.

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Discrimination against Israeli Arabs

Considering the editorial stance often taken by *The CJN*, my jaw almost dropped into the latke batter when I read the editorial take on the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("An anniversary sadly noted," Editor's desk, Dec. 10). It is a key international law milestone, one to which there was a large Canadian contribution.

For years now, *The CJN* has paid little attention to the Jewish belief that yes, "all human beings are deserving of equal dignity and respect." This lack concerns the 20 per cent of the Israeli population that is not Jewish. The non-Jewish Israelis receive less funding for municipal, educational and health services, and there is job and housing discrimination. Rights that Jews bravely fought for in western democracies are abused, by any democratic standard, in Israel today. *The CJN*, editorially, rarely condemns the complete disconnect between occupation and rights.

Jews have been active in the human rights movement because, as a discriminated against minority, they suffered from and developed empathy for those suffering injustice. It is time to apply that sensitivity to questioning Israeli policies. How many West Bank settlements will the Israeli government foster in land that no international law sanctions as Israel's and that Israel claims to be negotiable? How many checkpoints, far beyond security needs, designed to humiliate an indigenous population, will be tolerated? How many Arabs are denied permits when it comes to their desire to build to accommodate "natural growth" in their communities?

We Jews, when considering Israel's policies, have allowed a dangerous amalgam of triumphalism and fear to dilute the important human rights tenets of our religion. The cry that I cherish, *Am Yisrael Chai*, should not be uttered with ethnocentrism but with an inclusive humanity as represented by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Brian Rothberg
Ardoch, Ont.

* * *

Grateful to be a realist

I object to the characterization your reporter made of two speakers at a debate in Toronto ("U of T profs debate Palestinian statehood," Nov. 26). In the article, the speaker who touted a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict is labelled an "optimist," while his opponent, who questioned Arabs' readiness for peace, is labelled a "pessimist."

My opinions most closely resemble those of the latter, yet I do not consider myself to be a pessimist at all. Rather, I am extremely grateful to be a realist who recognizes the Arabs' continuing hatred of and incitement against Israel and is not duped by the illusion that still more Israeli concessions somehow will win Arabs' good favour or that creation of a Palestinian state will suddenly bring peace. I am optimistic that an improving Palestinian economy in the West Bank, where most Palestinians reside, eventually will lead to demands by Palestinians for better leadership prepared to make concessions necessary for a lasting peace.

Those who cling to failed peace paradigms such as "land for peace," which have brought Israel only more violence and done little to encourage more pragmatic Palestinian leaders, are themselves the "pessimists" who would condemn the peace process to continued failure. I suggest your reporters report what is news rather than what they may think of the newsmakers.

Jess M. Sadick
Vice-President for Operations and Policy
Endowment for Middle East Truth
Washington, D.C.

* * *

God or G-d

As a religious Jew, I find it gratifying to find G-d mentioned quite frequently in your pages. Yet I am puzzled as to why you use the full spelling of this word, instead of the traditional "G-d." Surely Jews across the religious spectrum are familiar with this spelling. Furthermore, using "G-d" avoids the issue of *shemos* or names of G-d, which, according to halachic authorities, would enjoin readers against recycling used newspapers, or bringing the paper into the washroom. For reasons of respect as well as ease of disposal, I urge you to switch to "G-d."

Andy Rechtshaffen
Toronto

Editor's note: G-d is by no means a name for God. It is simply a generic appellation like Lord, or Divine, or Providence. We try assiduously to avoid at all times the publication of any of the names that appear in the Bible for God.

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Return conversion to local rabbis

By RABBI MARC D. ANGEL

For centuries, rabbis steeped in Torah and Halachah have served as the gatekeepers of the Jewish people. They have determined which non-Jews may join the Jewish people as converts.

Halachic literature provides a wide array of opinions and attitudes relating to conversion. In recent years, however, the more extreme views espoused by the haredi rabbinic establishment have gained predominance – and those Orthodox rabbis who don't share these views have been increasingly marginalized.

Rabbi Marc Angel

In 2006, Israel's chief rabbinate announced that it would no longer accept conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis in the Diaspora, unless these rabbis were on a pre-approved list (i.e., they were deemed sufficiently haredi in their approach). The mainstream Orthodox rabbinic group in the United States, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), essentially went along with the dictates of the chief rabbinate. The RCA set up regional rabbinic courts to oversee conversions. The individual Orthodox rabbi — even if a member in good standing of the RCA – generally won't have his conversions accepted by the rabbinate in Israel, unless the convert has gone through the RCA's conversion bureaucracy.

The result of this shift in authority has been profound. Good, talented and well-intentioned Orthodox rabbis in the Diaspora have been eliminated as recognized gatekeepers to the Jewish people. Power has been concentrated in fewer hands. The more restrictive views on conversion have become universalized, leaving rabbis with little leeway in dealing with candidates for conversion who are not ready to become fully Orthodox Jews. Rabbi Ben-Zion Uziel, who was the first chief Sephardi rabbi of the State of Israel, sought halachically valid ways to bring such individuals into Judaism and the Jewish people. The current rabbinic hierarchy shuts the door on them.

At a time when many thousands of people in Israel and the Diaspora want to become Jewish, the Orthodox rabbinic gatekeepers are becoming ever more restrictive. They adopt new stringencies not required by the Talmud, the Rambam or the *Shulchan Aruch*. There are women whose conversions have been denied because they wear pants — loose-fitting, modest pants. I know a woman whose conversion was rejected because the rabbinic court did not think her boyfriend was sufficiently Orthodox. A number of would-be converts have been told that they will not be accepted for conversion unless they first move to more religious neighbourhoods — even though they currently attend an Orthodox synagogue in the neighbourhood where they presently reside. Meanwhile, rabbinic courts in Israel have annulled conversions when converts lapse from a stringent observance of mitzvot.

These restrictive policies are not mandated by Halachah. They reflect a deep xenophobia and a narrow view of Jewish peoplehood. These policies prevent and deter many people from converting to Judaism according to Halachah. They cause unspeakable pain and frustration to numerous individuals who want to cast their destiny with the Jewish people – but who are rejected, humiliated or threatened by the rabbinic bureaucracy.

In recent months, we have witnessed scandal after scandal involving haredi rabbis. In a particularly notorious case, Rabbi Leib Tropper – who set himself up as the head of an influential haredi conversion authority, the Eternal Jewish Family – has resigned his position due to allegations of particularly heinous and repulsive behaviour, reportedly involving sexual coercion of a prospective convert.

These high-profile scandals should be cause for alarm. But we should also be concerned about the scandal of what is being foisted upon the public as "true Judaism." At an Eternal Jewish Family conference, Rabbi Nachum Eisenstein stated that Rabbi Yosef Sholom Elyashiv, one of the haredi world's leading authorities, holds that any rabbi who believes the world is more than approximately 6,000 years old should not serve on the rabbinic courts that perform conversions. (Rabbi Elyashiv is not known to have disputed this characterization of his views.) Indeed, the Eternal Jewish Family includes a question on "the Torah view of the age of the universe" in its testing of would-be converts. Knowing that we have perfectly legitimate traditions in Torah Judaism that allow for belief in a universe billions of years old, should we allow the obscurantists to disqualify all rabbis who dare to accept the clear findings of science? Do we want such people as the gatekeepers of Jewish identity?

The Orthodox rabbinate has become narrower and more extreme, exactly at a time when world Jewry is very much in need of responsible, creative, sensitive and inclusive religious leadership. Can the State of Israel afford to have a bureaucracy of rabbinic gatekeepers who seem more interested in keeping people out than in letting them in? Can world Jewry afford to leave halachic conversion in the hands of a rabbinic hierarchy that refuses to draw on the inclusive opinions within Halachah, that insists on creating higher and higher barriers, that values restrictiveness as a sign of religiosity? Can we really trust a haredi-dominated rabbinic establishment that does not inspire our respect as a model of morality, idealism and intellectual vitality?

The Jewish People needs and deserves an effective and inclusive halachic framework for accepting converts. The current gatekeepers have not served us well, and there is no sign that they will change their ways if left to their own devices. We would do much better by dismantling the current rabbinic bureaucracy and leaving conversion in the hands of local Orthodox rabbis – as had been the practice for centuries. Let each rabbi draw on the halachic sources that best apply to each situation and not have his hands tied by an inflexible and restrictive hierarchy. Let each halachic convert be fully accepted as a Jew in the State of Israel and throughout the Diaspora.

If some in the haredi world will not accept the Jewishness of such converts, then that is a problem for the haredim. The Jewish people as a whole should not be held hostage to the extreme views of the rejectionists.

Halachic conversions performed by local Orthodox rabbis will draw many more converts into the Jewish people more efficiently, more compassionately and with more halachic integrity. Every bona fide member of a reputable national or international Orthodox rabbinic body should be empowered to perform conversions. Each rabbinic organization must ensure that its members conduct conversions according to Halachah, with the highest ethical standards, and without financial remuneration.

The Torah describes the People of Israel as a wise people. Let us, then, act wisely.

Conflicts with the haredi community in Israel have flared this year. Left, demonstrators protest haredi violence in response to the opening of a parking lot in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. The sign, pointing to a haredi enclave, reads "Tehran is there." Above, an Israeli argues with a group of observant youngsters who called him a Nazi.

[Flash 90 and Israel Sun photos]

Rabbi Marc D. Angel is founder and director of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals and rabbi emeritus of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York. He is a past president of the Rabbinical Council of America and author of Choosing to Be Jewish: The Orthodox Road to Conversion. *This article is reprinted with the permission of the author. It first appeared in* The Forward.

One-eighth full

I'm a rabbi, and I'm an optimist.

Optimism is awkward for the Jewish community. Every year, we get chronologically – and perhaps spiritually – further away from the events of the Bible. Contemporary assimilation is predicted by the theological concept of *yeridat hadorot*, the decline of generations, which affirms that each generation is spiritually inferior to the previous one. *Yeridat hadorot* can leave Jews with the melancholy feeling that we have missed the boat historically.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

The unprecedented tranquility that Jews now have has sped up our spiritual decline. We were always prepared for the challenges of persecution, but we've been woefully unprepared for the challenges of prosperity. Affluence has brought with it a soul-numbing materialism that leaves people uninterested in religious values and spiritual depth. At the same time, Jews are so well accepted into North American society that the engagement of former U.S. president Bill Clinton's daughter to a Jew went unremarked in the national press.

Considering the powerful forces for assimilation, it's easy to imagine the gradual disappearance of the Jewish people. Jewish optimism seems impossible. There are just too many things for a Jew to worry about.

But Jewish pessimism is costly. Worrying too much leads to anger and distrust. Paranoia magnifies concerns about anti-Semitism to the point that a president who is less supportive of Israel than his predecessor is seen as an anti-Zionist, and his Jewish aides are branded self-hating Jews.

In this culture of pessimism, disagreements become exaggerated, and ideological rivals are no longer opponents, but rather enemies. (Yitzhak Rabin's assassination is the prime example of this, but that same hatred can still be found today in too many groups on both the left and the right.) Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Berlin astutely predicted that constructive criticism can morph into unhealthy condemnation and create a paranoid atmosphere where anyone to one's right or left is hated for their fanaticism or heterodoxy.

Jewish pessimism makes sense, but that's precisely the point: Jewish survival is based on absurd optimism. So each year, in the frigid darkness of the Montreal winter, I light a candle of optimism. This candle, the light of the menorah, contains the lesson of Jewish survival: that miracles are possible, if you're optimistic about the possibilities that one jar of oil has.

The menorah's lesson is that Jewish survival requires optimism, and that it's time for Jews to stop looking for the worst in their fellow Jews. It's time to celebrate the possibilities of the Jewish future, because when it comes to Jewish destiny, the jar is never seven-eighths empty, it's always one-eighth full.

Tory attacks on Cotler must stop

Although enemies of Islamism, anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism must make common cause against the terrorists, the appeasers and their apologists in the world today, some Canadian conservatives are making partisan hay out of these defining issues of our time. In so doing, they have foolishly targeted MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler as a way of condemning the Liberal party for its weak response to the challenge of terror when Jean Chrétien was prime minister.

Gil Troy in Montreal

It doesn't make sense. Conservatives shouldn't be making support for Israel, rejection of anti-Semitism, the fight against Islamism and the push for human rights partisan issues. Democracies work when not everything is reduced to partisan warfare, when patriots can distinguish between areas of disagreement and those arenas where they share common values, methods and goals.

As someone who denounced Chrétien's snivelling policies regarding Islamist terrorists as well as his moral paralysis in the face of anti-Israel terror, and as someone who continues to combat anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism today, as well as someone who has frequently thanked the Stephen Harper government for its courageous stands on these issues, I am appalled that Conservatives are fighting Cotler rather than Canada's real enemies.

We must confront the appeasers and apologists, the new anti-Semites and the terrorist Islamists who threaten us today. But Cotler has led the fight worldwide against anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism and illiberalism, serving as an invaluable ally during the darkest days of former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat's war of terror, and pushing Liberals to evolve better policy stances – which most of them did.

We should be celebrating Canada's non-partisan support for Israel and anti-Semitism as one of this government's achievements, rather than making it a divisive, partisan issue. The Jewish community must stand strong, both defending Cotler and sending the message that we can't be played for fools.

In the ultimate absurdity, the indictment against Cotler hinges on accusing him of failing to stand up when he actually took political risks to stand strong. Accusing Cotler of complicity in the 2001 Durban hatefest is like claiming the Canadian Mounties were never interested in getting their man. When historians look back on the Durban debacle and its aftermath, they will put Cotler front and centre in the story. Since that awful conference, Cotler has done more to highlight its abuses than almost any other living person. He has been the conscience of the Liberal party, as well as of Canada and of the human rights community.

For the record, I am a colleague, friend and fan of Prof. Irwin Cotler of McGill University, a Canadian hero, a Jewish hero and one of the great men striding across the world stage today. These attacks have inspired me to do what I have long thought of doing – in this new year, I am asserting one of my few powers as an academic and nominating Cotler for a prize he has long deserved, the Nobel Peace Prize.

For decades – as a lawyer, law professor and legislator – Cotler has stood up for the world's downtrodden. He has represented dissidents fighting for their lives in dictatorships and has prodded democracies to remember that human rights begin at home but are universal. He has freed prisoners of conscience and been the world's conscience, most recently confronting the Iranian government's calls for genocide, its nuclear ambitions, its support for state-sponsored terrorism and its unholy war against its own people.

He's dedicated his life to protecting the rights embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fulfilling the universal ideals that united democracies in the fights against Nazism, and guaranteeing that "Never again" is a watchword for us all. He has protected the Canadian patrimony while embodying Canada's noble commitment to being a force for good in the world.

I am thrilled that Harper's Conservative government has returned Canada to its role as the world's conscience. But I also acknowledge Cotler's role in making many of these issues non-partisan and all-Canadian. In this new decade, let's co-operate to defeat our enemies, remembering that, even in election years, the core values uniting us should override the policy differences that may occasionally divide us.

My Chanukah that wasn't

I admit that when my kids were growing up, I was the "one present every night and a really big one on the last night" kind of Chanukah mom. That was the family tradition in which I was raised, along with numerous tinselly window decorations and a huge "Happy Hanukkah" banner across the front door. It made me proud to be so visibly Jewish at the most otherwise-invisible time of year.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Jerusalem

I felt like "one of the crowd" with my peers and friends, even the Jewish ones. It was joyous, festive and somewhat Christmasy, to be honest. My mom tried very hard to compete with the secular culture around us, and most years she won. I have very fond memories of those years, and Chanukah with my own kids was always something of a treat, even if we didn't go "all the way." And while I'm generally a Christmas Scrooge – I go grocery shopping with headphones on, listening to Israeli music so I don't get jingle-belled into oblivion – I never really minded if the "holiday spirit" started creeping into Chanukah.

So imagine my surprise when Chanukah came and went in Jerusalem without any hoopla at all. It was so understated that one could practically have missed it.

"That was Chanukah?" my kids asked at the end of the eighth day. I mean, Yom Kippur was so quiet you could hear a pin drop, even in secular neighbourhoods. Sukkot was a major deal, with kiosks full of decorations, instant pop-up sukkah marts on every corner and public sukkot at every restaurant. Even rosh chodesh gets its own "Have a good month" banners in restaurants and special services in shul.

I did notice electric menorahs on every lamppost on King David Street, buses that flashed "Chanukah Samayach" on their front panels, and glass-covered chanukiyot outside people's homes. (First prize goes to the house that made its outdoor chanukiyah out of eight beer bottles and a Scotch-bottle shamash hanging on a tree.) We went to lots of latke dinners. We heard Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* in the Jerusalem Theatre. (The same concert also featured Handel's *Messiah*. Go figure.)

But there were very few chanukiyot in store windows – except those for sale – and very little Chanukah music on Israeli radio, and nobody buys anybody presents, except for really little tchatchkes for really little kids. When I went to a store and ordered something for my 20-year-old son, she asked me when I needed to pick it up. I said, "In time for Chanukah, of course," and she looked at me as if she didn't get it at all and I was nuts.

It was, to be honest, weird to have Chanukah be "just" Chanukah, exactly the way we Diaspora rabbis talk about it every year in the "Chanukah isn't Christmas" battle. In Jerusalem, it's really "just" Chanukah, as we keep insisting it should be. It's liberating, but at the same time a little lame.

I have to confess: I missed the hoopla.

Does it have to be all or nothing? It's like Israel has gone the other way: since we don't have Christmas (except in the Old City), let's not have Chanukah either? Because "they" – the Anglo North Americans, the Russians, the foreign Thai workers – have Christmas-Chanukah confusion, and they still celebrate "New Year's Eve," which we know isn't the real thing (and which is shunned by kosher hotels for fear of losing their hechshers), let's not confuse them by making Chanukah a big deal? Even Tu b'Shvat gets more press here.

So the kids get their "winter break" at Chanukah and everyone goes to Eilat, where you can light a chanukiyah in the hotel lobby.

Maybe what we needed was some snow to get in the mood. I don't know, but now that the darkness of December has passed, I'm waiting for Tu b'Shvat for some fun.

The Kirshner File

Palestinian doctor transcends tragedy

Izzeldin Abuelaish, a Muslim Palestinian physician whose life and family history have been punctuated by tragedy, could easily have been a prisoner of the past, consumed by bitterness, hatred and vengeance.

Consider the facts.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

His parents were evicted from their farm in Israel by the Israeli army during the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948. Last winter, amid Israel's war with Hamas, three of his six daughters, as well as his niece, were killed when Israeli shells inexplicably struck his home in the Gaza Strip.

Nevertheless, Abuelaish, a 54-year-old gynecologist and obstetrician, does not accentuate the negative. "We have to look forward and build a common future," said Abuelaish, who has worked in Toronto since last summer. "That's the message. Israel is there, the Palestinians are there. Let's find a way for Israel and the Palestinians to live in peace and mutual respect, without violence."

It is supremely ironic that he was a victim of what he brands as "a crazy war."

A longtime advocate of Arab-Israeli coexistence and amity, he completed his residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva after studying at the University of London and Cairo University.

A doctor who practised medicine in Gaza and served as policy adviser to the World Health Organization in Afghanistan, he was thrust headlong into the maelstrom of the three-week Gaza war at exactly 4:45 p.m. on Jan. 16, 2009.

On that fateful afternoon, his home near the Jebalya Palestinian refugee camp was hit by two Israeli tank shells.

"I remember the dust, the darkness and the flashes of light," he said.

Most of all, he remembers the carnage. The first projectile killed his daughters Bisan, 20, Mayar, 15, and Aya, 13, and their 14-year-old cousin, Nour, leaving scattered body parts, and badly injured another daughter, Shatha, 16, and her cousin, Ghaida, 13.

The second bombardment injured two of his brothers and another niece.

In desperation, Abuelaish – a fluent Hebrew speaker who had recently lost his wife to the ravages of cancer – contacted an Israeli television journalist, Shlomi Eldar. Abuelaish's anguished pleas for assistance were broadcast live on Channel 10, in one of the most publicized tragedies of a war that claimed the lives of 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis.

Eldar arranged for the wounded to be transported to the Sheba Medical Center, part of Tel Hashomer Hospital in Tel Aviv, an institution that had employed Abuelaish as a health policy researcher since January 2008.

Remarkably enough, the tragedy has not dimmed his ardour for reconciliation, though he has retained a lawyer and insists that the Gaza war increased Arab animosity toward Israel and proved that military solutions are futile.

"The Palestinians and Israelis are like conjoined twins," said Abuelaish, the Michael and Amira Dan professor of global health at the University of Toronto's Dalla Lana School of Public Health. "We have a common destiny and future."

In honour of his late daughters, he has created a foundation, a living legacy, to promote education and leadership programs for girls and women in the Middle East.

"I had two choices," he explained. "The path of light or the path of darkness."

Tammie Ronen Rosenbaum, one of Abuelaish's Israeli friends, was not surprised that he channelled his anger and grief into a constructive project.

"He is very positive," said Rosenbaum, the director of the Renata Adler Memorial Research Center for Child Welfare and Protection at Tel Aviv University's Bob Shapell School of Social Work.

"He has an ability to look at the bright side of things," she added. "As we say, if you get lemons, you make lemonade. He really believes in peace and tries to understand both sides of the conflict. If you examine his personal history, you see a story of coping and self-control."

Abuelaish was born and raised in Jebalya, a densely populated Palestinian refugee camp in northern Gaza where the first Palestinian uprising erupted in December 1987. Since then, it has been a Hamas stronghold.

The Abuelaish family hails from the Palestinian village of Huj, which was situated in the northern edge of the Negev Desert and sat astride a road that connected Gaza to Be'er Sheva.

Founded in the early 19th century, when the Ottoman Turks ruled Palestine, Huj was visited by the American biblical scholar Edward Robinson in 1838 when its 200 to 300 inhabitants dwelled in mud buildings. During World War I, Ottoman and British forces fought near Huj. By the mid-1940s, Huj had a population of approximately 800.

The farmers of Huj cultivated a variety of crops, mainly grain, fruit and almonds.

Izzeldin Abuelaish
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

"My father, Mohammed, had a farm," said Abuelaish. "He was a simple worker. My grandfather was the *muhktar*, the mayor, of Huj."

On May 31, 1948, two weeks after Arab armies invaded Palestine in a bid to wipe out the newly proclaimed State of Israel, the Israeli army's Negev Brigade entered Huj, which was close to the Egyptian front, and ordered its residents to leave.

According to Israeli historian Benny Morris, the villagers were driven into Gaza and their houses were looted and blown up. Huj was one of more than 400 Palestinian villages in what is now Israel that disappeared during the fighting.

Although some Israeli officials believed that Huj was a "friendly" Arab village, others claimed that it was "unreliable." Eventually, exiled villagers petitioned Israel to be allowed to return, but their appeal was in vain.

Huj's land was appropriated by Kibbutz Dorot, which was formed in 1941. Today, Dorot – a lush oasis amid barren hills – manufactures irrigation valves and is apparently Israel's largest single producer of carrots, which are exported to the United States, Europe, Russia and Persian Gulf emirates.

To Abuelaish, as to the vast majority of Palestinians, the 1948 war, including the destruction of Huj, was nothing less than a *nakba*, or catastrophe.

Yet unlike many Palestinians, Abuelaish is extremely reluctant to dwell on this disaster, which caused the flight of approximately 700,000 Palestinians from Palestine.

He prefers to talk about the present, with all its problems and challenges.

"We go from crisis to crisis," he said in a reference to Israelis and Palestinians. "From *nakba* to *nakba*. We have to move forward and build the future. Palestinians are eager to fulfil their potential. Give us a chance."

An arch realist, he is confident that Israel and the Palestinian Authority will resume negotiations, and that a two-state solution is still possible. He claims that his views are representative of most Palestinians."If there is a will, there is a way. Everything is possible. Did you think that a black guy, Barack Obama, would be president of the United States?"

He calls on Israel to agree to a total settlement freeze in the West Bank if it is serious about peace. "The ball is in Israel's court. Netanyahu can make a difference."

Abuelaish, who carries a Palestinian Authority passport but describes himself as a citizen of the world, intends to remain in Canada for at least the next five years, the duration of his contract with the University of Toronto. His contract entitles him to an office, a house, a car and a research assistant.

He is glad to report that his surviving children – Dalal, 20, Shatha, 18, Raffah, 10, Mohammed, 13 and Abdallah, 7 – are thriving in Toronto. "They have a future. They are not tied to the past, with all its pain. I raised them on love, not hate."

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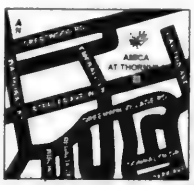

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Greater Toronto Area

Members of ECRUSY and USYers from northern New York spend time together in Union Station in Chicago.

USYers meet in Chicago

Compiled by CJN Staff

Fifteen Canadians were among the delegates last month as Chicago played host to United Synagogue Youth's 59th annual international convention.

The teens were there representing ECRUSY, the eastern Canadian region of USY – the high school affiliate of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – which covers Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces. As well, this year's event was co-chaired by David Wallach of Thornhill, the immediate past-president of ECRUSY, along with Chelsea Wagner of Rochester, N.Y.

The convention, held Dec. 27 to 31 at the Chicago Marriott Downtown Hotel, located on the Magnificent Mile, is the largest yearly gathering of its kind and gives Jewish teens from across North America the opportunity to enjoy exciting activities with a blend of education, social action and fun.

The ECRUSY delegates began their trip on Dec. 23 with delegates from the TZAFON region (northern New York) on an overnight train trip before joining delegates from metropolitan New York at Moriah Congregation in Deerfield, Ill., for a few days of fun, sightseeing and a restful Shabbat prior to the convention.

"The pre-convention time allows our USYers to really get to know other Jewish teens before the impact of opening ceremonies, which is akin to the Olympics," said ECRUSY director Rabbi Jennifer Gorman.

Convention participants explored the theme "Love Your Neighbour, Love Yourself." In workshops, informal classes and group activities, delegates explored the value and importance of friendship, the power of words, and how their behaviour affects people they interact with every day.

Convention delegates also heard from Ronald Wolfson, author, Fingerhut Professor of Education at the Americam Jewish University in Los Angeles and president of Synagogue 300. Wolfson, who also led a special staff session, urged delegates to help create more welcoming communities within our synagogues. After his speech, Wolfson, who grew up attending a USCJ shul in Omaha, Neb., was given the USY Alumni Award by international youth chair Paul Kochberg of Toronto.

Another highlight was a ceremony recognizing the hundreds of couples who met through USY summer programs, including Rabbi David Seed and Lori Seed of Adath Israel Congregation.

As part of a longstanding tradition, delegates spent one day of the convention taking part in a social action project to benefit the convention's host city. This year, USY hosted a carnival and holiday party for children from the Chicago area.

Delegates brought gifts, ran booths, and acted as chaperones, giving the visiting children much-needed attention. Participants in USY's summer Mission Mitzvah program used clowning skills they learned as hospital clowns to entertain.

At day's end one mother, while offering thanks, reported that her child had never received a gift before.

Convention director Karen Stein emphasized the importance of community projects to USY's educational goals. "Part of our objective is to teach the Jewish values of gemilut chasadim, performing acts of loving-kindness for others, and tikkun olam, literally, repairing the world. It's also nice to make a positive impact on the surrounding community while teaching our youth the importance of helping others, regardless of their faith or race."

David Helfand of Leawood, Kan., the 2009 international USY president said the convention helps teens network.

"USYers come to the international convention because it's a tremendous opportunity to see old friends and make new ones from all over North America," he said. "It's a great place to exchange ideas about successful USY programs. There's a good chance that what works in Toronto can help someone's program in Dallas."

Added Stein: "The impact can last for months, even after convention is over. When USYers go back to their regions and chapters, they give a real boost to the level of programming and involvement in USY."

ECRUSY received an award for highest percentage membership increase during the past year. As well, ECRUSY came in second in the Tikkun Olam Coin Challenge, raising $900 (US) for tzedakah at the convention, and it received an honourable mention in the International Israel Challenge, a program that educates youth about Israel through programs and information in the regions. Beit Rayim Synagogue in Thornhill was also honoured as a nominee for chapter of the year.

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New generation revives Yavne Zion

'Marlee Shul' expands outreach

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Congregation Yavne Zion, established about 125 years ago in downtown Toronto, has undergone a renaissance of sorts in recent years.

Housed since 1963 in rented space at the Toronto Zionist Centre on Marlee Avenue, the congregation hired Rabbi Yehuda Oppenheimer, a Grade 10 Jewish studies teacher at Yeshiva Darchei Torah, to be its spiritual leader in 2004. The shul hadn't had a rabbi in about two decades, since the death of his predecessor.

Rabbi Oppenheimer's first few years with the congregation were "pretty lonely," given its aging and diminishing membership and the small number of attendees. "In January and February, we shut down, because people went to Florida."

In contrast, in the 1980s, there were as many as 100 people at Shabbat morning services, said the rabbi in a recent interview.

Things started to pick up again when some of his students began to attend services, said the 36-year-old native of New York's Lower East Side. About 40 new families joined the shul last year.

A resident of Toronto for the past eight years, Rabbi Oppenheimer studied for the rabbinate in Israel before moving here.

Now there are about 50 men at a typical Saturday morning service, he said. A smaller number of women sit behind a mechitzah at the back of the room. Only a handful of older members are still able to attend.

Zalman Goldman, a new member who is in his late 30s and who also belongs to two other shuls, wants to support Yavne Zion, but in addition, he said, "we're liking the energy."

Longtime president Abram Kaufman, a native of Poland who immigrated to Canada in 1953, told *The CJN* that it was "very hard to get a minyan" before Rabbi Oppenheimer joined the shul. Now, he said, the service is "*ungelebt*" (lively), because of the number of young people. "It's a relief. We're very happy with them."

Recent programming at the shul reflects its changing demographic. About three dozen children and their parents attended a Sunday morning Chanukah program featuring D Jay the Clown. Also, a Saturday evening Chanukah event for adults featured a hypnotist, as well as Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner of Zichron Dov Yeshiva University Torah Mitzion Beit Midrash speaking about the holiday.

Rabbi Yehuda Oppenheimer

Although some of the younger shul-goers refer to the congregation as the "Marlee Shul," its name remains Yavne Zion, Rabbi Oppenheimer said. "We're not two congregations… We want to keep the official name."

Younger members don't receive cemetery privileges, however, because there are no more plots available for them, and dues are allocated accordingly.

Also, said the rabbi, the younger attendees are all Orthodox, while most of the older members are not, although they wanted the synagogue to continue being Orthodox.

There are about 65 original members, but most of them don't attend services, said the rabbi.

Although the shul has expanded its reach both by attracting new members and expanding its programming, Rabbi Oppenheimer notes that it's still "only a weekend shul." Hence its relatively low membership dues, at $325 a year per family.

Yavne Zion offers Shabbat services on Friday night and Saturday, as well as on Sunday mornings and Jewish holidays, as well as Jewish learning sessions.

Jewski fills important need on campus

Continued from page 3

The main difference that separates Jewski from other Hillel initiatives is the way in which Judaism is viewed by most Russian Jews, the sisters said.

"We were brought up with Judaism being a culture rather than a religion," Suzy said.

Her sister agreed.

"A lot of [Russian] people don't practise [Judaism], a lot of people don't know the rules," Uretzki said. "I'm not religious at all, but seeing the lighting of the Shabbat candles, [it's] a beautiful tradition."

For the sisters, the tradition is spiritual, but not necessarily religious.

This is reflected in many of Jewski's events. While the group has Shabbat dinners and recently organized a Chanukah party, they were careful not to impose.

"We recognize that there are a bunch of people who are [religious]. We do as much as we can," Uretzki said. "We're primarily a social group. People are not necessarily going to go for something religious."

The sisters first began working with the Russian Jewish community after attending a Shabbaton in Chicago about two years ago, where they were exposed to the city's Russian Jewish population.

For Suzy, it was a "bull's-eye" moment.

"I finally understood what being a Russian Jew was," she said. "I wanted to give some people the opportunity to have that aha moment."

Alona Geysman, Hillel's Russian Jewish programming administrator at York, is working with both Uretzkis to meet this goal.

As a Russian Jew, Geysman understands the importance of Jewski.

"When I was on campus, I wasn't necessarily attracted by something that was too Jewish. I thought the Thornhill crowd would be there – people with Canadian Jewish backgrounds," she said. "I feel like the Russian Jewish students should be able to go to Hillel and Jewski is a way to pull them in."

For Alex Goldstein, 23, a recent York University graduate who immigrated to Canada from Ukraine in 2000, the group is filling an important need.

"It's really something good for Russian Jews to have," he said, adding that he attended both Jew.ru and Jewski events.

"It hits the spot. We are unique in our experiences. We need something that represents us specifically. We're not a small group to ignore or disregard. We can't be merged with other Jews."

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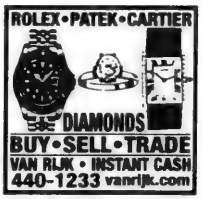
The last Jew in Beirut

By SAM MEDNICK

Chain-smoking, she strokes her cats, coddling them with one hand while dumping copious amounts of sugar into her Nescafé with the other. Liza's eyes comb the alleyway outside her apartment in downtown Beirut, and keeping her voice to a whisper, she motions for me to dispose of the video camera.



"*Cache la camera!*" Quickly throwing it inside my translator's backpack, I continue looking inconspicuous. The 50-something, feisty, red-haired Beirut veteran, was, to say the least, slightly paranoid. But as I sat sipping my *café* on the newly reconstructed cobblestone street with the "last Jew in Beirut," I wondered how much of her wariness was justified and how much was habitual.

Strong, independent and very matter of fact, Liza Srour wouldn't tell me exactly how old she was; only that she'd lived through the 1967 war, Lebanon's civil war and had seen Beirut's Jewish quarter evolve from a thriving 100,000-person community to less than 50 registered "closeted" Jews today.

But when I first met Liza, we couldn't discuss the past. Sitting outside her apartment, just a stone's throw from the prime minister's lair, she's surrounded by guards. Although somewhat famous and highly regarded among the guards as the last Jew in the city, Liza remained focused on her cats and her coffee until we changed locations.

"It's just not something we talk about in Beirut. We don't speak about religion. Nobody talks about these things in Lebanon, only in private," she later explains after we'd switched scenes. Yet even in her friend's apartment on the other side of town, Liza was hesitant to speak freely.

Born and raised in Beirut and having lived all her life in the city, Liza watched her parents pass on, her brothers move overseas and her Jewish neighbours emigrate to Paris and Montreal. Today, she lives alone in Hayy el Yahoud, now called, Wadi Abu Jmil. What used to be Beirut's Jewish district is now being converted into the city's financial sector. When asked how she feels being known as Beirut's last Jew, Liza shrugs it off.

The author, left, and Liza Srour

Continued on page 17

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Majority of community left after 1967

Continued from page 16

"That's what people say, but I'm not the last Jew. There are maybe another 100 Jews living in other quarters in Beirut. I just don't know them and don't see them."

And that's because for the most part, it's still not cool to be Jewish in Lebanon.

"I don't think any Jew in this country has worn a yarmulke since the civil war," says Ronnie Chatah, a Lebanese native and founder of Walk Beirut, the city's only tour company. "I think it became unpopular," says Chatah, explaining that the history of the Jews in Lebanon is a "missing chunk" that usually remains unknown unless specifically explored.

And so in 2006, as part of his company's five-hour city walking tour, Chatah decided to include a visit to the old Jewish quarter and the 1923 synagogue currently under reconstruction. It's people's favourite part of the tour, he says.

"Imagine, you're in Arab Middle East, walking around Lebanon and suddenly you discover that there's a synagogue next to the prime minister's office. It's a big synagogue, and you won't know it unless you walk up right in front of it. I think this makes people think a little more about the country's history and maybe even challenges them to think about what Beirut was just 50 or 60 years ago."

And when it comes to Jews in Lebanon half a century ago, things were very different. After the creation of Israel and before the Six Day War in 1967, the Jewish population of Lebanon actually increased. It was the only Middle Eastern country, other than Israel, in which the Jewish numbers rose. With the onset of the 1967 war, however, the majority of Lebanese Jews took flight, most never to return. That's why, says Chatah, the synagogue is so shocking for both tourists and locals.

"They're not expecting it. It's like finding a spaceship in the middle of somewhere."

Engraved above the doorway with the Hebrew words, *Beit Haknesset Magen Avraham*, the synagogue is surrounded by a fence and secured by a guard who allows onlookers no more than two minutes to peek in from the outside before hurrying them along. Although there have been a few bomb threats, the renovations are scheduled to be finished in early 2010. Chatah says it will most likely be used as a Jewish history museum, rather than a place of worship.

When asked about her feelings toward the new synagogue, Liza's face remains expressionless. "It's just like rebuilding a church or a mosque." A few seconds later, she softens her gaze long enough to add, "But when they open it, I'd like to go in."

The inside of Magen Avraham synagogue.

And although she still might not feel comfortable discussing her roots in open alleyways with North American strangers, perhaps the resurrection of a piece of her past might entice the last Jew in Beirut to feel a little more at ease in her own home.

Sam Mednick is a freelance writer who lives in Barcelona.

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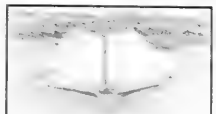
Jewish Life

From intention to action

By RABBI AARON LEVY



I recently returned from a conference for rabbis and rabbinical students organized by American Jewish World Service (www.ajws.org), an international, grassroots development organization dedicated to alleviating poverty, hunger and disease among people in the developing world. The central subject of the convention was integrating social justice work into our rabbinates – which is to say, into the ongoing lives of our congregations, campuses and organizations. We discussed methods for engaging our communities in issue education, direct service, effective tzedakah and political advocacy.

I came away from this conference inspired, but inspiration is insufficient. As Jews and as Jewish communities, we – and I include myself in this – talk a great deal about social action and tikkun olam (repairing the world). Our intentions are noble, but good intentions are not enough. To those who need our help for their very survival, it's not thoughts that counts, but our deeds.

In *Sifrei Devarim*, a third-century CE halachic midrash on Deuteronomy, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah teaches that if someone loses a coin and a poor person finds it, the person who lost the money is actually considered as if she had given the coin as tzedakah. Although the accidental donor was completely unaware of her own donation – and could not have had any intention whatsoever with regard to this circumstantial contribution – she has still helped support a needy person and thereby performed the mitzvah of tzedakah. The converse is true as well: intention without action doesn't help anyone and isn't a mitzvah.

So where does *kavanah* – intention, one's inner focus – fit into all this? *Kavanah* is certainly significant in Judaism, and ideally, we go about our lives constantly fusing action with intention. Furthermore, thoughtfulness and understanding are often practical prerequisites for efficacious action. "A fool cannot be pious," Hillel declared. *Kavanah* is particularly crucial in prayer, as mindless prayer borders on the meaningless. Maimonides, in the *Mishneh Torah*, stated it strongly in the 12th century: "Any prayer without *kavanah* is not prayer."

But in the final analysis, if we must choose one or the other, Judaism clearly values real-world acts over our internal, yet unrealized, plans. "A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of thought," wrote Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel – the prominent 20th-century philosopher and civil rights activist on whose yahrzeit (18 Tevet) I'm writing this column.

In the spirit of Shammai's exhortation to "Say little and do much," I'd like to suggest that we each resolve to spend less time talking about social action and more time doing it, and that we bring the same message to the communities in which we're involved. We each need to ask ourselves: how will I translate my inspiration into action? What am I actually going to do to help alleviate the very real suffering that is widespread both around the globe and in my own backyard?

Unfortunately, the world is beset with so many vast problems, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and abandon any hope of making a difference. But as Ruth Messinger, AJWS' president, often rightly retorts: "We cannot retreat to the luxury of being overwhelmed."

In order to have a real effect in others' lives, we need to pick a limited number of critical issues or organizations in which to get involved in meaningful ways and on a sustained basis. Next, we need to figure out a plan for doing this work. And then, individually and collectively, we need to leap into action.

Rabbi Aaron Levy is spiritual leader of the Kiever Synagogue in Toronto and founding director of Makom: Creative Downtown Judaism.

Not a Jewish Arbor Day at all

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

In a few weeks, we will celebrate the Jewish holiday of Tu b'Shvat. More and more, Tu b'Shvat is being referred to as the Jewish Arbor Day, probably because environmentalism is politically correct and the "greener" religion can become in the modern world, the more politically correct it is.

What seems almost ironic is that when it comes to environmentalism, the modern politically correct world has not yet caught up to Judaism's awareness of nature and its commandments to protect and guard creation. The Jewish obligation toward the environment is constant and not singled out for one day of celebration.

Arbor Day, which usually occurs in April, is a national holiday in the United States founded by J.S. Morgan in 1872. It's traditionally celebrated with picnics, raising the flag, planting a tree, outdoor school bands and collecting paper for recycling. It's a day to raise awareness of the trees.

Tu b'Shvat is a Jewish festival. It's not a day to raise awareness of the trees, but to mark the date on which to count another year passing for the trees. This is why it's sometimes referred to as the Birthday of the Trees.

We count these years because the Torah forbids us to take fruit during the first three years of the tree producing a harvest. For three years, we are to not intrude into its existence, but must respect this new growing creation and allow it to establish itself away from us. The fruit produced in the first three years is called *orlah*, and it's not kosher for eating.

In many Jewish homes, this commandment has resulted in not cutting a child's hair for the first three years of life, since our children are our fruit and we allow the new creation to establish itself with life and strength.

Once the tree has entered its fourth year, we are commanded to tithe the fruit and bring some of the tithing to Jerusalem and give some of it to the poor. Because there is no Temple today, tithing is affected, but the prohibition of eating *orlah* remains in place. We need Tu b'Shvat to give us a birthday for the trees, a reference point.

This reference point of counting and then tithing allows us to place ourselves in relation to the trees, to nature, to each other and to God. We may plant the tree, but ultimately it's an independent creation and we're barred from interfering while it establishes its life and its seed. Before we partake of its fruit, we must remember our connection to God and our obligation to each other. Only afterward are we permitted to benefit from the natural bounty.

As is true for any birthday, it can be a day for parties that comes and goes, or it can be a reference point on which we remind ourselves of our maturing relationships and priorities in connection with nature, our spirituality and our fellow human beings.

Our connection to the trees starts on the very day that we are created. We can't resist eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and we're barred from Eden, lest we also eat from the Tree of Life. But even exile from Eden doesn't keep us from being drawn to the trees as we sing of the Torah: "She is a Tree of Life to those who hold her with strength."

On Tu b'Shvat celebrate the trees by remembering the Jewishness of the day and our symbiotic Jewish relationship with trees. There's time for Arbor Day – April is just around the corner.

Jewish Life

Ashkelon was a Philistine city

By ALEX GROPPER

Ashkelon has long been an important archeological site along the southern coast of Israel. Although most people associate Ashkelon with the Philistines, it has a venerable history stretching back over five millennia, to the dawn of civilization in the Near East.

Past Forward

The site was mentioned in a number of ancient Egyptian texts, the earliest being the Execration Texts, which date to the early part of the second millennium BCE. Ashkelon is also mentioned in the famous Amarna Letters, the archive of the heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten, who has been called the first monotheist in history.

However, the most famous Egyptian text that mentions Ashkelon is the Merneptah Stela, an inscribed tablet commissioned by Ramses II's son and successor, the pharaoh Merneptah. In this text, Israel is mentioned for the first time in a non-biblical document. It shows us that there was a group called Israel living in the Judean Highlands by the end of the 13th century BCE.

It is around this time that Ashkelon became part of the Philistine pentapolis, or five cities of the Philistine confederacy. It is this confederacy that would be involved in a life and death struggle with the Hebrews as they attempted to take over Canaan. It is as a member of this group that Ashkelon features prominently in the story of Samson and other accounts in the Book of Judges.

Even after its conquest by David, Ashkelon's continuing importance is shown by the fact that it is also mentioned in Assyrian texts of the eighth and seventh century BCE. In the seventh century BCE, Ashkelon was part of what some historians have called the world's first major free-trade zone, the Assyrian Empire.

Ashkelon's strategic location along the southern coast of Israel has made it a crucial site in the power struggles that have convulsed the region since the dawn of civilization. The numerous excavations at Ashkelon over the past century have verified its historical significance.

It was in the 1920s, under the British Mandate, that large-scale excavations of the site were first undertaken. The person in charge was John Garstang, who would become famous shortly thereafter as director of excavations at Jericho, where he claimed to have found evidence of Joshua's destruction of its walls. That was disputed in the 1950s by the renowned English archeologist Kathleen Kenyon.

Interestingly, I was almost involved in excavating Ashkelon. In the early 1980, my friend, the eminent Egyptologist Donald Redford, was interested in excavating a site in Israel with strong Egyptian connections. Ashkelon would have fit the bill perfectly. Because of my involvement at the City of David excavations in Jerusalem and Redford's reputation, the director, Yigal Shiloh, who would become the head of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, lobbied on our behalf with the department of antiquities. However while Redford was considering the possibilities, Lawrence Stager of Harvard University made his move and got the excavation permit.

Stager would come up with some spectacular and intriguing discoveries. Among his finds was an intact city gate from the Middle Bronze Age, circa 1700 BCE. It was an amazing discovery.

Stager also came up with an interesting thesis regarding the Philistines. He noticed that during their habitation of the city, the amount of pork consumed increased dramatically, while in the Judean Highlands, where the Israelites were settling down, there was virtually no consumption of pork. What makes this so intriguing is that the highlands were covered with oak forests at the time. The oak seeds, or acorns, are the natural and preferred diet of pigs.

It's fascinating to see that more than 3,000 years ago, the prohibition of pork had already emerged as a cultural marker that would set us apart from other nations.

Cholent: recipes and more, Pt. 2

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Last week we looked at the history of cholent, the uniquely Jewish stew that is traditionally cooked on Friday and left to simmer that night to be enjoyed on Shabbat afternoon. Although cholent may not seem to be exotic fare, there are countless varieties and many closely held recipes. Thankfully, on the web, people share their cholent.

The Jewish Highway

Start off at the RFCJ Archives, where you'll find a variety, including North African T'fina Speenak, Kurdistan Hamin, Rib-Sticking and Lo-Cal **[bit.ly/chol08]** From there, continue to the bubbe of all cholent lists, the Jewish-Food Cholent Archives. At last count, there were enough recipes for every Shabbat for a year. There's Moroccan Dafina, Hungarian Shalet and Nyana Choma. But if you're really daring, why not try Chocolate or Yogurt Curry Cholent! **[bit.ly/chol09]**

George Erdosh has a lovely – and loving – history of enjoying his family cholent in Hungary before World War II. He also offers great tips about the ingredients and flavouring, and ends with practical cholent advice I hadn't seen in other sites. **[bit.ly/chol25]**

It's not uncommon to enjoy a cholent while downing an alcoholic beverage or two. But instead of washing down your cholent with a drink, why not pour it into your cholent? Cantor Joel Kessler of Adas Kodesch Shel Emeth in Wilmington, Del., has graciously supplied his recipe for Beer Cholent. **[bit.ly/chol26]**

Or you may want to try *yaptzok*, a Polish potato cholent where nary is a bean is found. (I grew up on *yaptzok* and it is dear to my heart. So I don't even want to get into the controversy over whether this is a genuine cholent or merely a variation of a potato kugel!) **[bit.ly/chol15]**

For more mouth-watering variations, take a look at Oded Schwartz's Cholent (Hamin) – The Ultimate Shabbat Food. **[bit.ly/chol16]** And if you're game for something a bit different, try a Bison Cholent. **[bit.ly/chol17]**

The Cholent Mix blog is "written by cholent enthusiasts for cholent enthusiasts." Blogger Velvel shares his Cholent Philosophy: "There are four necessary ingredients in my cholent. If any of these are missing, it's not cholent: meat, beans, barley, potatoes. I prefer the addition of the following ingredients, but Weight-Watchers dietary restrictions, spicy-heat tolerance and common sense of my wife may limit these: kishke, bourbon/beer, hot peppers, liquid smoke and maple syrup or honey." **[bit.ly/chol18]**

While some people wouldn't deem their cholent worthy to eat unless pieces of chicken are floating in it, non-carnivores have not been forgotten. You can try a vegetarian version with lima and kidney beans, cauliflower and zucchini. **[bit.ly/chol10]** There's another that calls for tofu and shiitake mushrooms. **[bit.ly/chol11]** and a vegan variety, too. **[bit.ly/chol12]**

Although it is certainly handy to be able to print out a recipe, nothing beats watching an expert cholent-maker at work. There are plenty of cholent how-to videos on YouTube **[bit.ly/chol19]** as well as some cholent-related musical performances. **[bit.ly/chol21]**

It sounds perplexing to me, but it seems there are instances when Shabbat ends yet some cholent remains uneaten. Amotherinisrael.com has recommendations for cholent leftovers:

- In soup. Small amounts of cholent, raw or cooked vegetables, gravy and other tidbits can be stored in a container in the freezer and added to from time to time.
- In calzones. Put a spoonful of cholent in a square of pizza dough. Fold the dough over to make a triangle, and bake.
- The following week. That is after heating the cholent to boiling, putting it in a jar, letting it cool and screwing the top tight. **[bit.ly/chol27]**

Food writer Claudia Roden tracked down a poem titled *Princess Sabbath* in which 19th-century German poet Heinrich Heine extols the transcendent qualities of the mighty dish.

Cholent, ray of light immortal!…
For this cholent is the very
Food of heaven, which on Sinai,
God Himself instructed Moses
In the secret of preparing. **[bit.ly/chol23]**

Cholent has withstood the test of time and may very well be immortal. You, however, should be more vigilant, lest you succumb to Death by Cholent. **[bit.ly/chol24]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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The Challenges Facing the Sephardic Community In Israel Today

Professor Yifat Bitton is a leading legal activist and founder and current co-chair of Tmura Center – The Israeli Anti-discrimination Center. An expert in antidiscrimination law and utilizing civil cases and private law for nation-wide social change, Bitton is Associate Professor at the School of Management Law School in Israel. A Yale Law School alumnae with a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Bitton has been visiting researcher at Harvard University Law School. Professor Bitton is a New Israel Fund board member and co-founder of several civil society organizations in Israel.

Thursday, February 4, 2010, 7:30 PM
Adath Israel Congregation, 37 Southbourne Avenue, Toronto

Media looks to Israel on airport security

According to Reports

By **PAUL MICHAELS**

Two-and-a-half years ago, Israeli analyst Manfred Gerstenfeld wrote an essay for the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs titled *What the West Should Learn from the Assault on Israel and the Jews*.

This was at a time, Gerstenfeld noted, when European leaders, confronting mounting threats from Islamists, were starting to rely increasingly on Israel for its expertise in security-related matters.

Gerstenfeld wrote: "European security models in many places are often partly based on Israeli ones, because Israelis have frequently been targeted.

"For instance, in the West not so many decades ago, one could board a plane without a security check. At the time, such checks were already the norm in Israel. El Al's security approach has become a model for many other airlines… In anticipation of the summer 2007 travel season, directors from a variety of American airports visited Israel to study its successful passenger-screening system. Such visits are frequent, but only few make the newspapers."

But that certainly changed after Christmas Day, when a Nigerian, allegedly working for Al Qaeda, tried to blow up a Detroit-bound airliner, resulting in a massive security clampdown at airports in the United States and around the world. The chaos caused during the busy holiday travel season prompted an outpouring of media stories on how the West might benefit from Israel's security expertise.

Attempted Christmas Day bombing changes perceptions

In "What Israel can teach us about security" (*Toronto Star*, Dec. 31), Cathal Kelly began his article with the following contrast: "While North America's airports groan under the weight of another sea-change in security protocols, one word keeps popping out of the mouths of experts: Israelification. That is, how can we make our airports more like Israel's, which deal with far greater terror threats with far less inconvenience."

Drawing upon the expertise of Israeli airport security consultant Rafi Sela, Kelly described Israel's approach to co-ordinated intelligence gathering and the multiple layers of security checks at Ben-Gurion airport that screen for suspicious individuals while allowing the vast majority of air travellers to move relatively quickly through the lines and onto the planes.

Why isn't the same system used in North America, he asked. Sela's answer: a rigid bureaucracy that relies on the wrong security concepts.

On CTV National News Jan. 4, anchor Tom Clark introduced a similar report: "While many countries look to toughen up airport security through body scanners and baggage searches, some suggest there's a lesson to be learned from Israel. It has faced countless threats since it came into existence more than six decades ago. CTV's Scott Laurie looks at why Israel has been so successful in stopping terror in the skies and whether its methods could work here."

Laurie noted: "Instead of just relying on technology, wands and scanners, security [in Israel] involves up-close and personal interrogation."

Laurie interviewed airport security consultant Rafi Ron, who spoke about the successful screening technique used at Israel's Ben-Gurion International Airport: "What we are looking for are people that exhibit a behavioural indicator that may be related to their intention to carry out a violent act… We've developed a program called behaviour pattern recognition."

Contrary to popular misconception, this is not, strictly speaking, racial profiling. On several U.S. news programs, Ron explained that many years ago, Ben-Gurion airport was attacked by Japanese and German terrorist gangs working on behalf of radical Palestinian groups. So Israeli experts are aware of the fact that a terrorist threat can come from people of various backgrounds and nationalities, which is what "behaviour pattern recognition" is meant to detect (in addition to the pre-screening inquiries that are routinely undertaken of all passengers on a flight list).

These measures could be adopted at airports in Canada and around the world. This point was made in "Focus On Passenger Behaviour: Israeli Expert," by Glen McGregor (*National Post*, Jan. 4).

McGregor also turned to Sela, who explained that an airport can't function if its security systems treat the vast majority of travellers as potential terrorists: "You have to actually look for the things that are dangerous and not just scan everybody… This calls for a total change in approach to the transportation security issue," Sela said.

Israel is showing the world what this total change involves. Some, as Gerstenfeld noted back in 2007, have started to pay close attention. Others, one would assume, are sure to follow now.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

An unlikely reunion after sixty years

By Dan Horowitz

Television has been referred to as a "vast wasteland". But for 84-year-old Torontonian and Holocaust survivor Gerda Frieberg, television recently served as a portal into her past.

It was 5 a.m. when Gerda, a past chair of Canadian Jewish Congress Ontario Region, a member of United Jewish Appeal's Atarah Division and, in 1985, the founding chair of UJA's Holocaust Education Centre, unable to sleep, turned on the set to help pass the time from dark to light.

It was then, sitting on the couch, that she began flipping from channel to channel when, suddenly, she saw a face - a face that took her back more than 60 years.

It was the face of renowned artist Samuel Bak, now 76, a man who Gerda had first met during her time in a Displaced Persons Camp in the German town of Landsberg from 1945 to 1949.

She still remembered Samuel as the fresh-faced young boy of 12 or 13 who accompanied his mother on her regular visits to Gerda - the camp's consummate seamstress - who made many of her clothes.

With every visit to Gerda, Samuel's mom expressed how she yearned for him to be able to showcase his remarkable gift as a painter. She worried that he might never have the opportunity to fully tap into his talents as the times were uncertain, to say the least.

"She was always talking about her son," remembers Gerda. "She would tell me how talented he was and how she was determined to get Samuel into an art school in Munich. Nothing was more important; she just knew he would become a great artist given the opportunity. I often wondered over the years what ever happened to her son."

Now, thanks to the show on Bravo early that morning, which highlighted Samuel Bak and many of his paintings depicting the Holocaust, Gerda's questions were finally answered.

But it was one painting in particular that caught Gerda's attention.

One of the last paintings shown was, as Samuel explained to the host, from that same Landsberg DP Camp where Gerda first met little Samuel.

"This is when I first realized that the artist on this television show could be the son of my old customer," recalls Gerda. "That prompted me to wait for the credits to roll where I found the artist's name and the gallery that represented him."

For the past 40 years, many of Bak's works have been on display at the prestigious Pucker Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts.

"Would you by any chance be the young boy I met in Landsberg?" Gerda wrote in a letter to Samuel after seeing the show. "If so, then your mother's dream came through; she must have been so proud of you, as any mother would be. I would very much like to hear from you...."

This summer, soon after sending the letter, Gerda was on a plane to Boston to connect with the successful artist.

Toronto's Gerda Frieberg recently reunited with artist Samuel Bak after 60 years.

"I had always thought about Samuel, and wanted to reconnect with him after all these years," says Gerda. "But, until that television show, I couldn't remember his last name. Every time I saw a painting depicting the Holocaust, I thought it might be his. I was never sure, but always curious. Now, I finally knew for sure."

Gerda, so impressed with her friend's work, is in the midst of trying to bring Bak's exhibit to Toronto.

And what did Samuel think of seeing his mother's former seamstress after more than six decades?

"Gerda has the most exceptional energy; her incredible spirit and energy are jaw-dropping," says Bak. "Very few people could have gone through what she did and then go on to live the extraordinary life she did. She is truly an exceptional lady."

"Samuel could have been one amongst the millions to perish in the Holocaust, but instead, look what he became; look what he has contributed," marvels Gerda. "He became an important, famous painter, relaying the essential stories of the Holocaust through his paintings and what could be more important than that?"

High school students offered a head start

By Sally Szuster

High school students readying for their first year of post-secondary education now have a unique opportunity to explore their personal relationship with Israel and prepare for the challenges of campus life.

Students in their final two years of high school can sign up for a six-session program that will engage them in an in-depth exploration of current issues, giving them the resources they will need to effectively deal with anti-Israeli sentiment and anti-Semitism on campus. The program, called Campus Ahead, will be launched on Monday, January 18 at 6:30 pm at Beth Sholom Synagogue in Toronto and will include a performance by acclaimed beat poet, the Hebrew Mamita. Other sessions will include speakers addressing the new anti-Semitism, including Jeff Robbins, a former member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission.

"Jewish students on Canadian campuses have encountered alarming incidents of anti-Semitism and hostility towards Israel which can often make them feel deeply uncomfortable," said Susan Davis, executive vice president of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA). "Our goal is to empower them before they arrive on campus, so that they are prepared to fully engage in student life with confidence."

"We often encounter students who, upon arriving on campus during their first year, feel conflicted and distressed by deliberate attempts to demonize Israel and antagonize Jewish and Zionist students," said Zac Kaye, executive director, Hillel of Greater Toronto, UJA Federation's campus organization. "This proactive approach will certainly ease students' transition onto campuses."

The initiative is part of a national collaboration between Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues, Hillel of Greater Toronto, Hillel Montreal, National Jewish Campus Life (NJCL) and the University Outreach Committee (UOC) of CIJA. Sessions will take place in both Toronto and Montreal.

Students attend a pro-Israel rally at York University.

University and college campuses have, over the past several years, faced growing anti-Israel campaigns such as Israel Apartheid Week, attempted boycotts of Israeli academics, and conferences designed to undermine Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. Jewish students, supported by the coordinated efforts of Jewish organizations, many of them affiliated with UJA Federation, have been on the frontline of countering these efforts.

Daniel Ferman, city-wide student president of Hillel of Greater Toronto, knows first hand how important it is for Jewish students to be engaged in campus life. "It's very important for students to be informed even if they don't feel strongly about becoming politically engaged," said Ferman. "Being informed means that they will feel more confident, knowing where they can turn to when they encounter anti-Semitic and anti-Israel behaviour."

"Campus Ahead is a wonderful opportunity for high school students to develop their leadership skills and discuss challenging issues in an inclusive and safe environment," said Morley Goldberg of the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues.

A special briefing for parents of students who are preparing for university with community leaders will also be offered on February 7 at the Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life.

For more information or to sign up for the Campus Ahead program, please visit www.campusahead.ca

We must stand up for Israel

By DANA GOLD

I've been asked by many people where my passion for Israel comes from. I've joined clubs on campus and political movements, and I spend every summer in Israel. That passion may seem a little crazy, but it isn't.

Guest Voice

I'm honoured to have been raised for most of my life in Canada. But I feel proud and privileged to have been born in Israel.

I was born on April 10, 1988, in a hospital in Afula, where my mother worked as a doctor. Afula was close to our home in Nazareth Illit, the small, mostly Jewish city adjacent to the mostly Arab city of Nazareth. My family now lives in Haifa.

As new immigrants from Romania still in their 20s, my parents were building a family and finding work. They weren't prepared for what was to come, namely, the difficult period of the first intifadah from 1987 to 1993.

There was a great deal of tension between the Arabs of Nazareth and the Jews of Nazareth Illit. On occasion, the Arabs came into our community, threw stones, chanted slurs and verbally, and even physically assaulted Jewish residents.

My parents, too, were victims of that behaviour. Because they were still recent immigrants, they did not quite know how to deal with the situation, even though Romania was well-known for its rampant anti-Semitism.

In 1990, Israel was dragged into the Gulf War by Saddam Hussein. Although Israel was not directly involved in the war, Iraq launched SCUD missiles against Israel to goad the Jewish state into retaliating and thus try to break up the American-led, mostly Muslim, coalition against him.

It was feared that the Iraqis would use biological and chemical weapons. Israeli citizens had to be prepared. Like all Israelis, my parents taped over the doors and the windows, to ensure that no outside and potentially lethal air would enter the apartment. We would sit for hours enclosed in a small space, listening to the radio and watching the television. We couldn't leave until the government said it was safe to do so.

We also had to wear gas masks during the war. It is a memory I still retain. Since I was a young child at the time, my mask was quite different than those worn by adults. It covered most of my body, had a disgusting smell, and I could hear myself breathe.

I was only three years old. I refused to wear the mask.

My dad would tell me, "Dana, you have to wear it." But I was stubborn; I still refused. Finally, he would say, "If you don't wear it, you will die."

I suppose that persuaded me, because after that I put it on and kept quiet.

I am proud of my Jewish heritage

During the war my father served in the Israel Defence Forces, in the Totkhanim, the artillery division. One night, without warning, he was commanded to pack his bags and go to the base. He wasn't allowed to tell my mother or me where he was going or what he was doing. He didn't even really know himself. He was told only to inform his family that he would be gone for a while. He was worried about leaving us alone.

To this day, I remember the sirens sounding during the war.

I didn't know why they went off, nor do I recall now how often they went off. The sound was distinct, not like an ambulance or firetruck, but slower and much louder.

Eventually, my father did return home. But it was a worrisome time for everyone in Israel. No one knew then what the outcome of the war would be.

Luckily, Israel didn't go to war, and apart from the SCUD rockets that fell on the country, the Jewish state emerged relatively unharmed.

A few months later, the rest of my family moved from Romania to Israel and settled in Haifa. My parents and I joined them. We lived in Haifa until we came to Canada.

As a small country situated among enemies, Israel needs international support. Especially with the threat of Iran, Israeli soldiers need to know that they are risking their lives for a cause. They are fighting terror not just for themselves, but for Jews around the world.

I have always felt a close connection to Israel, and I will always do my utmost to assist it in its survival, no matter what others say about it.

When someone asks me why I defend Israel, I know what to say. I am proud of my Jewish heritage and of Israeli identity, and I will never forget that I must stand up for both.

Dana Gold is a student at the University of Western Ontario.

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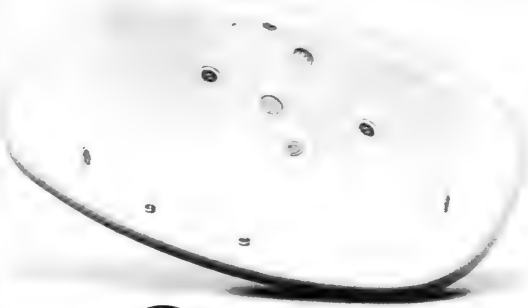

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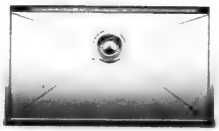

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Class Acts

KIDSPIRATION: Andrea Glassman's Grade 5 class at the Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus stand next to their Wall of Fame bulletin board, called Kidspiration, with Ellen Schwartz (back left) founder of Project Giveback, a year-long program designed for elementary students to develop empathy and build character and to create community-minded citizens. For Kidspiration, each student focused on an accomplishment of a friend or relative that was inspiring to him or her. Students will fundraise for several organizations, including the Hospital for Sick Children, Sunnybrook Hospital, Make-a-Wish Foundation and Jacob's Ladder.

The Canadian Jewish news

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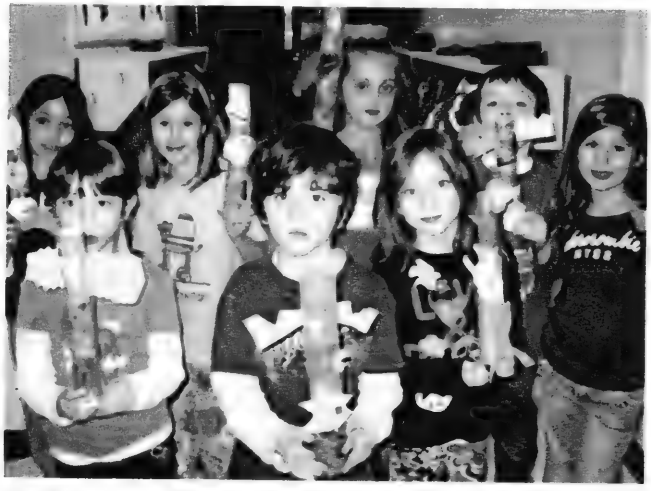
Class Acts

LITERARY WINNERS: Bailey Solomon and Jared Cohen of United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tzedec branch earned awards at the zone level of the Royal Canadian Legion Literary Competition. Writing on the theme of remembrance, they competed against finalists from several Legion branches. Bailey won second prize in the essay division, and Jared won first prize in the poetry division. His poem will go on to further competition.



NATIVE STUDIES: Grade 2 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School display totem poles they created after reading a story about native peoples as part of their social studies unit on Canada and other world cultures. Pictured, from left, are Orit Mourad, Carly Taylor, Liora Golden, Morrison Reback, Hailey Stern, Nicole Moskovitch, Daniel Lester, and Elle Simmons.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov on the wedding of Shoshi (Shoshana), daughter of Ena & Moshe Greengarten, to Adam, son of Sharon & Jerry Cooper, on Dec. 27.

Happy 97th birthday to Rose Wexler! Love always, Allan, Ora & Adam Wexler, Joe, Marlene, Elyse, Melanie, Jason & Marlene Flicht, and all your great-grandchildren.

Happy 10th Anniversary Mommy & Daddy (Corinne & Adam)! Love from your daughters Tarah and Caleigh, and your parents.

Margot & Gary Marcus & Cathy & Stewart Indig are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children Dara & Lorne. Mazel Tov!

Mazel tov to Sandy & Joe Rotman, who carried the Olympic torch in Toronto on Dec 17.

Mazel tov to Danielle Cohen & Kevin Card on their engagement. Aug. 1 is the happy day when they become husband and wife. Best wishes to all.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!
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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines: Monday, Jan. 18, is the deadline for the Jan. 28 issue, and Monday, Jan. 25, for the Feb. 4 issue. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman

Thursday, Jan. 14

HEALING JEWISHLY

The Jewish Healing Alliance presents "Healing in the Kabbalistic Tradition," with **Rabbi Gedalia Fleer**, 8 p.m., Pine Villa, 1035 Eglinton Ave. W. $10. RSVP, 416-208-0610, www.jewishhealthalliance.com.

Saturday, Jan. 16

B'NAI SHALOM

B'nai Shalom of Halton-Peel, a Conservative egalitarian congregation, holds its monthly Shabbat service in Oakville. Kiddush following. www.bnaishalom.ca or 905-901-9889.

SUSHI AND SCOTCH

Savour delectable sushi, sip rare Scotches while listening to profound Kabbalah with **Rabbi Avraham Plotkin**. Thornhill location to be announced. Call **Pauline Renard**, Chabad Lubavitch of Markham, 905-886-0420.

Sunday, Jan. 17

TORAH SEMINAR

Adath Israel Congregation's Torah seminar with **Hana Werner** features guest lecturer **Prof. Barrie Wilson** of York University, who will speak about his book, *How Jesus Became Christian*, 10:30 a.m.

BREAKFAST SERIES

Shaar Shalom Brotherhood's breakfast series features guest speaker **Anna Press**, who will discuss taking courses at York University about the Holocaust. Shacharit 8 a.m., breakfast 8:45, speaker 9:30 a.m. Call **David**, 416-224-9494.

SHAAR SHALOM SINGLES

Susan Jackson, executive director of the Latner Centre for Jewish Knowledge and Heritage/UJA, and a humorist, will speak 8 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Mix and mingle follows speaker, $6. Call **David**, 416-224-9494, for information.

Tuesday, Jan. 19

BOOK AND FILM REVIEW

Adath Israel Congregation's book and film review series continues with the book *Through Black Spruce* by **Joseph Boyden**, 8 p.m. Facilitated by **Heather Kassel**. Members, $10, non-members, $15. Call 416-499-6920 or 416-493-3626.

SPICE UP SHABBAT

Valerie Toledano will introduce ingredients and show how to create an Exquisite Moroccan Shabbat feast, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda. Members no charge, guests $5. Call 416-633-3838 to reserve.

SINGLES FOR SINGLES

Sasson V'Simcha presents Coffee night, 8 p.m., Second Cup, Sobey's Plaza, $10. Orthodox singles ages 26-38. RSVP 416-256-4497 or 416-729-4598.

Thursday, Jan. 21

ORAYNU CONGREGATION

Adult education series, Texts and Traditions with **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**. Second session, "Rabbinic Wisdom and Folly." $15 per session. 18 Wynford Drive. **Roby** 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org or www.oraynu.org.

Other News

JEWISH HEALING SERVICE

Jewish Healing Program presents a healing service, Sunday, Jan. 24, 3-4 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue chapel. Facilitated by **Rabbi Jarod Grover** and **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Child. Call 416-638-7800, ext. 287. No charge.

KOHN SUMMER INTERN

Applications are being accepted for the 10-week summer program for college and university undergraduates and graduates who'd like to work in the Jewish community, sponsored by JVS Toronto, with Hillel of Greater Toronto. For more information, call 416-787-1151 ext. 259.

Continued on page 27

The South African Sale
World record prices achieved at auction

South African paintings are currently fetching record prices at auction. Bonhams in London is the market leader in achieving these remarkable prices in the bi-annual auction 'The South African Sale'

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Continued from page 26

LODZER CENTRE

Dr. Brian Goldman, CBC Radio One's House Doctor, presents "New Players on Medicine: Alternatives to seeing a doctor." Lodzer Centre Congregation, 12 Heaton St., Sunday, Jan. 24, 2 p.m., $5. Light refreshments. Also Introductory Mah Jong evening, Monday, Jan. 25. Call **Sarah**, 416-636-6665. Wednesday nights, parshah of the week study, 7:30 p.m. Free. Details at www.lodzercentre.com for all programs.

JF&C GROUP SERIES

Effective Parenting: a 4-session group to show parents of children 2-11 years how to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. Starts Wednesday, Jan. 27, 7-9 p.m. 4600 Bathurst St.

New parenting workshop: Survivor – the Teen Years is a 2-hour workshop to teach skills "to parent your adolescent without losing your sanity." Led by **Ted Borovoy**. Thursday, Jan. 28, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

Workshop on When You're About to Separate: what to tell the kids, for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation. How and when to tell the children, how to handle moving day, and more. Thursday, Jan. 28, Lipa Green Building, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Registration required.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides hand-knitted hats and mittens to inner-city schoolchildren. Call 416-630-9313 to donate.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents a Shabbat Shirah of Music and Fun: Friday, Jan. 29, Carlebach Kabbalat Shabbat; Shabbat davening Jan. 30 with elaborate melodies; Motza'ei Shabbat kumzitz featuring Shema Koleinu, at 8 p.m. Wine and cheese. No charge. For information, call **Carol Handelman**, 416-789-3213, ext. 204.

CHORALAIRS

New members sought for Choralairs, a non-audition choir that sings show tunes and popular songs. Reading music not essential. Rehearsals Tuesdays, 7:15-9:45 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre, Room 2. Call **Sally**, 416-636-8247 or **Brian**, 416-631-0029.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. "Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity" begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are reliable, friendly, and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for winter/spring courses at the Prosserman JCC, including: "Breathing Life into Torah with Hitbonenut Meditation," Mondays, Jan. 18-Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m. with **Chashi Skobac**; "Rebbe Nachman of Braslav's Wisdom," Thursdays, Jan. 28-Feb. 18, 9:30 a.m. with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**; "King David: Traitorous Serial Killer or National Religious Hero?" Wednesdays, Feb. 17-March 17 at 8 p.m., with **Prof. James Diamond** of the University of Waterloo, and "The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn," Thursdays, April 15- May 6 at 9:30 a.m. with **Prof. Paul Franks**. Courses at Shaarei Shomayim: "Trei Asar/The Twelve Prophets" with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, "Amos": Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., Jan. 12-March 16; "Yoel": Tuesdays 1:30 pm, from April 13-June 8. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca.

FOR SENIORS

Miles Nadal JCC Active Seniors presents "Jewish Ways to gain more energy and manage stress." Thursday, Jan. 14, 1:30 p.m. Learn how to add more energy to your life and manage stress, with **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Line dancing program begins Jan. 14 and runs Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Social bridge starts again Jan. 14, running Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 5. For more information, call **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

The **Association of Jewish Seniors** discusses the impact of the Harmonized Sales Tax on seniors, Jan. 14, Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 1 p.m. Speaker will be a tax advisory specialist from the Tax Advisory Services Branch of the Ministry of Revenue. Light refreshments. Members free, guests $2. Call **Tammy**, 416-635-2860, ext. 458.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Thursday, Jan.14, Nintendo Wii Bowling. Virtual bowling, no experience necessary. 1-2 p.m.

Creative writing classes with **Sylvia Warsh**, Fridays until March 26. Memoir, stories, poetry, $66 members, $122 non-members. Call **Ruth Cohen**.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Prosserman Jewish Community Centre, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Inquire about new programs at the Culinary Arts Studio, including Cooking Tech Demystified: Meat Jan. 14, 21 and 28, and Ode to Julia Child Series – French Onion Soup, Jan. 18. For more information or to register for any programs, ext. 235.

The Prosserman JCC's new Winter Program Guide is now available. Drop-by the centre or call 416-638-1881, ext. 0, for details.

The *Let's Talk* bulletin outlining all senior and adult programs is available now. Drop in or e-mail kareng@prossermanjcc.com. Programs include Ryerson/Chang courses, NIA, Zumba Gold, Memoir Writing, Tai Chi and many more! To register for a course, call 416/638-1881 ext 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Sundays on Bloor: The Four Faces of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: Times of family stress or times of family bonding? Jan. 17, 9:30-11:00 a.m. Speaker: Prof. Stuart Schoenfeld. Coffee & bagels served, presented by the Downtown Jewish Community School & the Miles Nadal JCC. Call Joan, ext. 112, joan@djcs.org

Sundays on Bloor, Jan. 17, 2 p.m. Jazz Publishing & Recording with **Mark Barnes**, publisher, *CODA Magazine*. Drop in: $9, ext. 133, co-presented with JPEC.

Israel's Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts and Toronto's JazzFM91 Youth Big Band, presented by the Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, Jan.17, 3 p.m., Al Green Theatre, suggested $10, tickets available at the door, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca, info: music@mnjcc.org, ext. 133.

Media Mondays: Hollywood and Society, lecturer: **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, Jan 18,7:30 - 9:30 p.m., "How Hollywood looks at Politics." Drop in: $12. film@mnjcc.org, ext. 606

Kolel at the J, "Doing Jewish." Jan. 27 – March 17, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. Kick Start your Jewish knowledge, or re-learn what you have forgotten. The basics of Jewish Life: holidays, life cycle, basic Jewish philosophy and the Jewish home, ext. 4106 or www.kolel.org.

KOFFLER CENTRE

Koffler Centre of the Arts, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, ext. 4228.

Koffler Gallery presents "How good are your dwelling places?" a new off-site group exhibition organized by guest curator **Cyril Reade**. Jan. 14-Mar. 14. 23 Beverley St. Four artists reflect on the fluidity of Jewish identity in North America.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

JUMP IN NYC: Forty-two young professional travelled with JUMP (Jewish Urban Meeting Place) to New York City, Dec. 20– 27. Shown at the Museum of Jewish Heritage are, from left, Shlomo Buzaglo, David Collin, Debbie Oziel, Robert Bielski, Talia Soberano and Eyal Goldfarb. *[Grant Valentine photo]*

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

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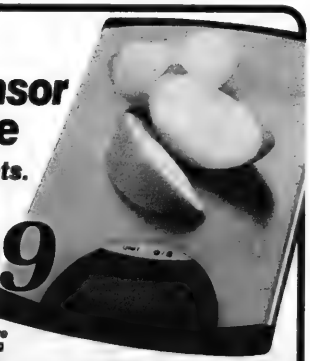

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OBITUARIES
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Steeles Memorial Chapel

Anker, Gordon Samuel	Dec. 18/09	260 Heath St. W.
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Riskeviz, Meir	Dec. 19/09	78 Foxfield Cres.
Zimmerman, Magda Miriam	Dec. 19/09	22 Midvale Rd.
Srebrnik, Esther	Dec. 19/09	80 Antibes Dr.
Greenwald, Doreen	Dec. 20/09	230 Searle Ave.
Eidelman, Arkadi	Dec. 21/09	309 Mascot Place
Solovitch, Albert	Dec. 21/09	Private
Borsa Braun, Julianna	Dec. 23/09	749 Briar Hill Ave.
Freedman, Sandra	Dec. 23/09	Private
Lager, Susan Sadie	Dec. 27/09	Private
Marcovici, Rachel	Dec. 27/09	33 Wilmington Ave
Teitelbaum, Baruch	Dec. 27/09	6040 Bathurst St.
Groszberger,Morris (Mor)	Dec. 28/09	5 Marwill St.
Moshkovich, Elka	Dec. 29/09	550 Cummer Ave.

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Minnie (Laytner) Davis	Dec 19/09	541 Finch Ave W
Mollie Finewax	Dec 20/09	11 Townsgate Dr
Paul Finewax	Dec 22/09	11 Townsgate Dr
Lynne Burnstein	Dec 19/09	89 Skymark Dr
Sylvia Waks	Dec 20/09	11 Frank Cres
Alice Kenner	Dec 21/09	160 Wellesley St E
Miriam Gill	Dec 22/09	42 Prestwick Cr
Philip Band	Dec 21/09	668 Briarhill Ave
Nikolay Goldis	Dec 20/09	11a Shaw
Frances Ross	Dec 23/09	1555 Finch Ave E
Eril Bilchik	Dec 22/09	50 North Meadow Cr
Felicia Valentin	Dec 24/09	3560 Bathurst St
Toby Frankel	Dec 22/09	1 Clark Ave
Grace Scharf	Dec 25/09	312-745 New Westminster

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North Americans and Israelis clash over haredi hegemony

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

A string of controversies has reignited the pluralism wars, prompting a loose alliance of U.S. and Israeli Jews to wage a renewed campaign against Orthodox control in the Jewish state.

Among the litany of developments making headlines: the arrest of a woman for wearing a prayer shawl at the Western Wall; protests by haredim against a parking lot open on the Sabbath and against the Intel branch in Jerusalem for working through the Sabbath; a battle over gender-segregated public buses; and the burial in Spain of a child converted to Judaism by a Conservative rabbi in a corner of a cemetery reserved for non-Jews.

In response, activists have organized protests in Israel and the United States against the perceived hegemony in Israel of haredi-aligned rabbis. Organizers say that their goal is to keep Jews caring about Judaism and Israel, despite what they describe as the increasingly alienating behaviour of Israel's Orthodox religious authorities and members of the country's haredi population.

"It's more of the same, unfortunately, and part of a much larger picture of the increased polarization and increased strength of the haredi groups that are creating enormous havoc in Israel," said Rabbi Philip Scheim of Toronto's Conservative Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

Rabbi Phillip Scheim

Rabbi Ed Elkin, spiritual leader of Toronto's First Narayever Congregation, a traditional egalitarian congregation, told *The CJN* in his capacity as chair of the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto that "we definitely stand for Jewish pluralism and tolerance and mutual respect."

Rabbi David Seed, associate rabbi of Adath Israel Congregation and president of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, Ontario region, wasn't aware of any protests taking place in Canada when contacted last week, but he said the movement offers support to Masorti shuls in Israel.

The recent incidents reflect longstanding issues, he said.

In Israel, however, "people are saying enough is enough," said Andrew Sacks, director of the Israel branch of the Rabbinical Assembly. "You have a segment of the American Jewish community that cares deeply enough to want to change it, but you have a second, less desirable effect, among younger people especially, that says if that's what Israel is all about, I don't want any part of it."

Rabbi David Seed

Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, who directs the Women's Rabbinic Network, helped organize a day of solidarity and support of Women of the Wall on Dec. 17 that encouraged Jewish women across the United States to hold meetings, read from the Torah or pray in support of women who choose to pray at the Western Wall, including those who wear religious vestments. Another group organized a similar protest in San Francisco on Jan. 10.

"It is not 'Love Israel, right or wrong,' or 'I can't be connected,'" she said. "We need to look at the complexities of this country that we love. We can't reject it, nor can we be silent when there are issues that require our involvement."

Activists on both sides see the Western Wall as something of a battlefront. In recent years, the site's government-funded Orthodox rabbinate has banned mixed groups from singing, an action that precludes Jewish youth groups from a tradition of bursting into *Hatikvah* to celebrate the wall's return to Jewish control in 1967.

One protest against the Orthodox monopoly took place in Jerusalem on the evening of Nov. 28. Protesters marched from Paris Square to Zion Square in Jerusalem's city centre, carrying signs that read "Iran is here – we're sick of haredi violence," "Jerusalem will not fall," and "We are sick of [religious] coercion."

Nofrat Frenkel, whose arrest at the Western Wall for wearing a tallit a couple of weeks before helped spur the demonstration, delivered a message that explicitly addressed the threat of the alienation of Diaspora Jews from Israel and religion.

Michael Oren, the Israeli ambassador to Washington, told an audience of Conservative movement leaders that Frenkel was "led away" from the Wall, not arrested, the *Forward* reported. He later issued a statement correcting the misimpression and confirming that Frenkel was, indeed, arrested.

The flurry of controversies in Israel come at a time when American Jewish pluralism has become more expansive than ever. Guests at the White House Chanukah party ranged from Chabad rabbis to Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, who heads Beth Simchat Torah, a gay synagogue in New York.

Some groups, particularly among the Orthodox, reject the activism as Americans imposing their mores on Israel.

Israel "is a country that has functioned with a certain understanding among its religious and not-religious Jews," said Rabbi Avi Shafran, spokesperson for Agudath Israel of America. "If the activists don't want to alienate Jews, they shouldn't thumb their noses at the traditional Jews in Israel."

Rabbi Shafran also noted that the most vocal haredi protesters were minorities within their own communities. Much has been made of the continued protests outside Intel's offices, but these were sharply reduced in number after a compromise in November that allowed non-Jewish workers to work through the Sabbath. But this has gone unnoticed, Rabbi Shafran said.

"The main haredi groups were in favour of the compromise, but there are always holdouts," he said.

Other American Orthodox leaders, however, fret about the possibility of alienation from Israel. They note that alienation could extend even to the modern Orthodox, because of a recent crisis in conversion policy that has threatened to discredit the majority of Orthodox converts.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler of Toronto's Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, prefers to say that there may be "an element of discomfort" in the modern Orthodox community. He feels the word "alienation" is too strong, and implies a lack of ownership.

"I'm not sure about other movements. I hope it's not true," he said.

Continued on page 29

Coast to Coast

'We should avoid provocation when it's not necessary'

Continued from page 28

The issues at the Kotel are specific to Israel, because, in the Diaspora, "we can each have our own shul," Rabbi Strauchler said.

He added that there is "something a little ironic" about about the fact that similar issues – *sinat chinam*, or baseless hatred – are said to have caused the destruction of the Second Temple when it existed.

Rabbi Strauchler advocates that all Jews should become more *machmir* (stringent) about *ahavat Yisrael* (loving one's fellow Jews).

"I think all too often we see good in ritual, not in day-to-day ethical decisions we have to make."

It's "not an obligation, but not a crime in any way" for a woman to wear a tallit, he noted. However, he added, "I wasn't there to know the full context."

He said he's in favour of "creative thinking" that would encourage tolerance. "We should try to understand that we are different, and avoid provocation when it's not necessary."

Rabbi Avi Weiss, who heads the Amcha activism group and Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, a liberal modern Orthodox seminary in New York City, called for dialogue. "The greatest threat facing us, more than external enemy, is a divisiveness within our people that is so dangerous, God forbid, it could lead to calamity," he said.

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

Weiss noted that Orthodox authorities defend their actions by citing *chumrah* – the strict application of Jewish law. "In a world of *chumrah*, there's got to be a stress on the *chumrah* of ahavat Yisrael," the love of the Jewish People, Weiss said.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said Israel was suffering periodic social pangs that arise when there is relative peace, and suggested that these need to be addressed from within, and not due to U.S. Jewish pressure.

"Every time there's a lull in daily threats of terrorist acts, normal life brings to the fore many of these unresolved social tensions," he said.

"Some of them impact on relations with Diaspora Jews, but it's more important for Israelis to deal with them because of their own need of religious tolerance than because of the Americans' need."

The New Israel Fund (NIF), a group that has long advocated for a role for Diaspora Jews in making the case for pluralism, welcomed the attention on the issues, said its Washington, D.C.-based spokesperson, Naomi Paiss.

In Canada, the situation is somewhat different. "We're independent," explained Jay Brodbar, executive director of the New Israel Fund of Canada. "A charitable organization in Canada, especially with respect to international activity, can't participate in anything that would be considered advocacy or political.

"One of the things we can do is educate Canadians about the issue. We do that. We make them aware that this is a potential issue that concerns them as well."

Speaking as an individual – "a Canadian Jew who cares about Israel and my own Jewish identity as well as those of my community – this is an example of something much bigger… a greater number of people is being affected by a smaller number of decision makers who are often arbitrary."

"The whole premise of the New Israel Fund is that you can love Israel and you can fix it," Paiss said. "The Israeli government has a special responsibility – what is made law in Israel signifies the closest we have to a religious ruling, even for those of us who don't live in Israel. We American Jews do take this personally, and we should."

An example was the 13-year-old boy who died recently in Madrid. The order to bury him in a segregated corner of the Jewish cemetery came from Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Israel's chief Sephardi rabbi.

NIF is currently organizing a petition drive among Jews in Israel and the Diaspora urging Yisrael Katz, Israel's transportation minister, to ban publicly funded buses from segregating male and female passengers.

"If he yields to haredi pressure, we expect to become louder in response both here and in Israel," Paiss said. "We will use every means at our disposal to educate the American public about the issue."

With files from Frances Kraft

Israeli women fight relegation to back of bus.... please see the cjnews.com

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Muslim paper apologizes for 'organ harvesting' article

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

A B.C. Muslim newspaper has apologized to Canada's Jewish community for posting an article on its website claiming that Israel kidnaps Ukrainian children to harvest their organs.

The article, which originated from Press TV, Iran's television network, appeared in *al-Ameen*'s print edition some three weeks ago and stated that Israel has kidnapped 25,000 Ukrainian children to be used for "spare parts."

Al-Ameen, a non-profit bi-weekly paper distributed for free in B.C. mosques and Islamic centres, was criticized by several Jewish organizations last week for publishing the article, which has since been removed from the paper's website.

"It's very disappointing when the editor of a publication in this country actually feels that there may be merit to a blood libel story," said Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada.

B'nai Brith issued a press release last week condemning the article and noting that Press TV was "the official mouthpiece of the terrorist-sponsoring Iranian regime."

"I think all Canadians should be very frightened to know that people in the media, in this country... would be willing to accept stories from other sources that are so vile, so racist and so untrue," Dimant said.

"We are absolutely disappointed that those who run the mosques didn't throw out the publication."

Mohammed Bhamji, *al-Ameen*'s managing editor, said he assumed the article from Press TV was factual.

"It's a mistake that we made. We took an article from some place assuming that it was true and fact," he said. "It was untrue. It's come to our attention... we've pulled it off our website."

The public apology, which was posted on the paper's website and in its print edition, states that *al-Ameen* "extends its honest and sincere apology to our fellow Jewish Canadians for any hurt which may have [been] caused by us publishing or communicating such a news article."

The apology goes on to say that *al-Ameen* won't defend the news article, because it would mean "causing further divide in our harmonious multicultural fabric – but it is needless to say that the issue of 'organ harvesting in Israel' was being discussed at the time of our last publication, by major media outlets, and not just *al-Ameen*."

Dimant said the apology was insufficient.

"The fact that he even thinks that there is any kind of legitimacy to this horrific blood libel is frightening," he said.

Len Rudner, Canadian Jewish Congress' Ontario regional director, called the article a "piece of lying garbage."

"Articles like this nourish small minds. It encourages people to believe the worst of other communities," he said.

In its news release, B'nai Brith stated that the members of *al-Ameen*'s editorial board are also members of the British Columbia Muslim Association's (BCMA) executive board, which runs eight mosques and a government-funded school.

Both the BCMA and *al-Ameen* have said that although some editorial staff may be members of the Muslim organization, the BCMA isn't affiliated with the newspaper.

Dimant said the paper's website had stated that the two organizations were linked, but the information has been removed.

Getting motivated in 2010

Everyone self-motivates for the New Year, and our resolve usually lasts a good two weeks if we are lucky.

So I was wondering; where does one find inspiration to truly change and to make your own world, as well as the world at large, a better place? Sometimes you don't have to look so far to find inspiration. The biggest role models might be right in front of you.

To read Masada Siegel's full article, please go to cjnews.com

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Orthodox conversion dispute goes public

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Mainstream Orthodox congregational rabbis in Montreal allege that the haredi-dominated Vaad Ha'ir is trying to undermine their authority in conducting conversions, dissuading prospective converts to Judaism from going to them and influencing the chief rabbinate of Israel that their conversions are not as halachically sound as those of the Vaad.

A dispute that has been brewing for a few years has become public with a letter signed by six rabbis of major Orthodox synagogues, including the Montreal president of the Rabbinical Council of Canada (RCC), and published in *The CJN* Jan. 7, that's critical of the U.S.-based organization Eternal Jewish Family (EJF), with which the Vaad is associated.

Vaad executive director Rabbi Saul Emanuel said he wasn't aware of any defamation of the RCC rabbis. "I see no bad feelings whatsoever," he said.

The letter was issued in the wake of the resignation last month of EJF director and founder Rabbi Leib Tropper, who reportedly had an improper relationship with a woman he was converting. Audiotapes of his phone conversations with the woman suggestive of sexual relations between himself and her, and possibly other men he knew, were posted on the YouTube website.

The six Montreal rabbis who signed the letter, as well as Rabbi Reuben Poupko, believe that this revelation is evidence that EJF is not a credible organization and that the Vaad, in Rabbi Poupko's words, shows "poor judgment" in aligning with it.

The Vaad's Rabbi Emanuel said the association is more accurately described as the independent EJF's "endorsing us, rather than the Vaad choosing to affiliate with EJF" and that approval is due to the Vaad having built up "an exceptionally good reputation around the world over many years. Its conversion program been used as a model by other communities."

He added, "We are not taking any instruction from EJF. All we've done is attend its conferences."

Rabbi Poupko, of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron, said the issue is not that the mainstream rabbis object to the Vaad doing conversions, it is that they want the "delegitimization" of those performed by RCC-affiliated rabbis to stop.

Rabbi Poupko feels the Vaad and EJF are co-operating to wrest Orthodox conversion out of the hands of the mainstream rabbinate. "EJF and the Vaad are working hand-in-glove. The Vaad has touted its endorsement by EJF like the Good Housekeeping seal of approval."

The mainstream Orthodox rabbis contend the dispute is not about standards, but rather politics and power.

Rabbi Michael Whitman, one of the signatories to the letter, said EJF began "bad-mouthing" the RCC's conversions almost immediately after the RCC's Montreal branch founded its own beit din for conversions. "Their agenda is not to improve conversions or to establish universal standards... It's to establish who is in and who is out. They want haredim in charge of conversions and no synagogue rabbis involved... Not only do they not accept us, they bad-mouth us."

They think it would be wise for the Vaad to reconsider its association with EJF, which was founded by Rabbi Tropper in 2005 as an independent organization in Suffern, N.Y., with funding from a private U.S. philanthropist. According to its public information, the EJF's goal is to standardize conversion procedures, ensuring that they strictly adhere to Jewish law and are acceptable to Israel's chief rabbinate, which has the power to deem who is a Jew in Israel.

The batei din of the Vaad, as well as of those headed by Rabbi Dovid Shochet in Toronto and Rabbi Avraham Feigelstock in Vancouver, are among the 19 rabbinical courts in the world endorsed by ETJ as meeting "universally accepted standards."

The EJF website page that listed endorsed batei din was altered slightly last week with the addition: "This list does not imply that other batei din are not reliable."

EJF's leading halachic overseer is Rabbi Reuven Feinstein, who has reaffirmed the organization's mission.

About six years ago, the RCC-affiliated rabbinate in Montreal formed its own beit din for conversions, Rabbi Whitman said, with the approval of the then-chief rabbi of the Vaad's beit din, the late Rabbi Avraham David Niznik. Up until then, most Orthodox conversions had been done by individual rabbis, Rabbi Whitman said, but it was felt a more centralized approach would be better.

RCC converts are accepted in Israel today, Rabbi Whitman said, but it may take some persuasion.

"The situation in Israel is terribly political and the chief rabbinate is not a bastion of integrity. If you ask someone there if our converts are accepted, they will say no. If you ask someone else they say OK. It takes repeated phone calls. The bottom line is they are accepted, but with effort."

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Winnipeg couple celebrates 70 years

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — It was the last day of the year in 1939, and David Peltz and Elka Lichtman, both from Zamosc in western Poland, were among a group of Jews fleeing eastward into Russia to escape the Nazis.

They were one of 12 couples who hurriedly married on Dec. 31.

Last week, with family in attendance, David, 94, and Elka Peltz, 98, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary at the Sharon Home, where they've been residents since June 2009.

David and Elka knew each other before the war, as Elka was friends with David's older sister.

When World War II broke out in 1939, the 23-year-old Peltz was in the Polish army. After Poland was defeated, Peltz went home to Zamosc.

"The Germans had occupied our town for a short period, then gave way to the Russians," he recalls. "When I heard that the Germans were coming back, I didn't feel safe staying there. I decided to take a train to Lvov in Ukraine, where I had relatives."

Elka had seen what the Germans were capable of when they occupied the town the first time and, therefore, also wanted to leave. She had two brothers living in Lvov, so David invited her to come with him. When they arrived in the city, they found that her brothers were sleeping on the floor of a poor woman's house.

"It wasn't considered proper at that time for a young woman to be sleeping on the floor with her brothers," Peltz says. "I asked my relative if Elka could stay, which she did, and she ended up sharing a bed with my cousin's daughter."

After a time, the Russians ordered all foreign nationals deeper into Russia. It was during that journey that the Peltzes were married, with a traditional ceremony and under a chupah.

"The officials told us they were going to relocate us to other cities," David recalls. "Instead, they dumped us in the bush. The group of us spent the winter of 1940 living in the bush. We were city people. We weren't used to the bush."

In the spring, the group tried to go back to the Polish border. The Communists took a dim view of such individual initiative. They loaded everyone into boxcars and shipped them off to Siberia, where David and Elka spent the next two winters.

Elka and David Peltz *[Myron Love photo]*

Their fortunes changed later in 1942, however, when they were moved to the city of Leninabad (now Khujand) in Tajikistan, in central Asia. "We had a beautiful life in Leninabad for a couple of years," David says. The weather was warm, and he found work in a tannery as a supervisor.

His father had been a buyer of rawhides, so Peltz knew the business. "I had eight or nine people working for me," he says. "We were producing 700 pieces a day."

At war's end, the Peltzes returned to Zamosc to search for surviving family members. David was the only survivor from his family. Elka still had two brothers, one of whom, Sam Lichtman, had been brought to Winnipeg by a relative. The other brother, Edward, ended up in Australia.

After the Peltzes spent some time in a displaced persons' camp in Germany, Elka's brother, Sam, brought the family, including three daughters, to Winnipeg in 1950.

For a short time, David worked in a tannery and then as a wholesale grocer, while Elka (now known as Ellen), a dressmaker, sewed jacket linings at home. Ultimately, they were able to scrape together enough money to buy a corner grocery store at Hargrave Street and Assiniboine Avenue in downtown Winnipeg. The family lived above the store, Ellen worked in the store with David, and the family kept a Jewish home.

In the mid-1970s, the Peltzes' building was expropriated by the city to build a highrise and David and Ellen moved to suburbia in north Winnipeg.

While not a religious man, David is a Yiddishist. He readily shares the many poems that he has written over the years. He has read some of them on a Jewish radio program.

Upon retiring, he became an active participant in the H. Leivick Yiddish-speaking B'nai Brith Lodge and the Mamaloshen Group. Enjoying singing lead him to the Stay Young (Jewish seniors group) and United Jewish People's Order choirs. For many years, he and Ellen participated and enjoyed the programs at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre.

Both Peltzes are in relatively good health and are still mobile. They raised four daughters, one of whom, Anne, was killed in a car accident in 1973. Sonia lives in Winnipeg with her husband, Harold Kaplan; Esther lives in Calgary with her husband, Sam Plucer; and Shelley lives in North Carolina with her husband, Steve Davis. The Peltzes have five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Though the Peltzes are still adjusting to their new surroundings at the Sharon Home, they say they feel grateful that there is such a facility available in the community where they can enjoy Jewish culture in a facility that offers kosher food.

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Seniors Scene

War vets need youth to continue legacy

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Sol Zulauf is a World War II veteran with dementia.

He can't remember every detail from the war, but he knows why his story needs to be told.

"It's important," he said in his Toronto home. Over and over again, he repeated the phrase.

Zulauf, 87, signed up for the war when he was 19 years old. He wanted to join the air force, but was colour-blind. Instead, he joined the infantry and later the Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps, where he helped with the supply and maintenance of weaponry.

Sitting on his couch, gazing into space, Zulauf slowly shared some of his memories.

"I forget a lot, I remember a lot," he said.

A few details take him awhile to remember, others, like his time on potato peeling duty, come with ease.

"I was peeling spuds in England," he said, later admitting, through giggles, that he was put on potato duty for running off to go skating with a girl.

"All of a sudden you hear a noise. I didn't know what the noise was. I thought it was a flying bomb," he said, adding that he jumped up from his seat to look out the window.

Debra Stuart is helping her father, Sol Zulauf, share his war stories through the Jewish War Veterans of Canada.

Zulauf turned out to be right. The force of the bomb knocked out the glass of the kitchen window. If the soldier hadn't moved from his chair, he would have been covered in glass.

Zulauf also remembered landing on Normandy Beach in 1942.

"I went on the beach from the landing craft," he said. "It was all bombed out by the American and Canadian aircrafts."

The veteran, who drove a tank in the war, eventually worked his way from Normandy into Belgium, Holland and, eventually, to Germany.

These are the stories that he has told his children and grandchildren over and over. And they are the stories that the Jewish War Veterans of Canada are trying to preserve. The organization works to commemorate Canadian Jewish war veterans. Currently, they're getting help from the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and are set up in the Lipa Green Building. Their newest project is a wall of memory, which would hold the names of Canadian Jewish war veterans. While the location of the wall has yet to be decided, the group has already collected about 356 names.

The Toronto district of the Jewish War Veterans has a board of nine people. In 2009, the group's Toronto branch had about 300 members, most of whom were war veterans. Only a handful of members or volunteers were part of a younger generation.

Without this generation, experiences like Zulauf's may never be heard, said Ev Bluestein, the committee's secretary.

"I'm 86. Health-wise, it's very difficult to get active people," he said. "The point is, if we can get the young people, somebody's son, somebody's grandchild… then we'll be able to branch out."

When asked what will happen to the organization if it doesn't get enough younger members and volunteers, Bluestein has a simple answer.

"We will," he said.

For Bluestein, who fought in World War II in an infantry battalion, the organization is about more than just memories. It's about pride.

"We want to give the Jewish population pride that we involve ourselves on a higher scale than any other type of person. We fought well, and we had our losses and we want to be remembered," he said.

Debra Stuart, Zulauf's daughter, also wants the veterans to be remembered. Stuart, whose father is a member of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, has started volunteering for the organization. As an expert in marketing and public relations, she's helping the organization with marketing and putting up a website.

Recently, she has become aware of the possibility of a decline of membership in the organization.

"It would be… attributed to the elderly members becoming ill. They're dying off. I, for one, really want to remember my father's stories," she said. "It's very meaningful to me."

Stuart understands the importance of commemorating veterans.

"They fought for our freedom. We want to make sure that children and grandchildren continue to feel proud of what these people did for their country," she said. "I'm proud of my father."

For more information or to become a volunteer, call 416-635-2883, ext. 5181, or e-mail Ev Bluestein at evblue@sympatico.ca.

TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS

BROTHERS

Brothers Dan and Aaron meet in Israel after many years apart, only to discover how different they have become. Dan is a secular Jew living on a kibbutz, while Aaron is an Orthodox lawyer and Torah scholar from the U.S. who has come to Israel to fight a court case. The conflict between the brothers is echoed in the legal battle, which highlights the issue of separation of state and religion in modern Israel. A fascinating argument that will certainly provoke discussion!

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Mozart's music mellows out at-risk preemies

By KARIN KLOOSTERMAN
ISRAEL21C

Studies have shown that listening to music composed by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has a positive effect on the brains of developing babies, but now a new Israeli study has found that Mozart's music also appears to have a positive effect on babies born prematurely.

Israeli researchers found that exposure to Mozart's music causes preemies to expend less energy, which results in faster weight gain and an earlier release home. Conducted at the departments of neonatology and pediatrics at the Tel Aviv Sourasky Medical Center, the study showed that just 30 minutes of Mozart a day can make a world of difference in the development of premature babies.

Published in the medical journal *Pediatrics*, the study, by Dr. Dror Mandel and his colleagues, was part of the international Newborn Individualized Developmental Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP), which looks at ways of improving infant welfare in neonatal units.

Environmental conditions such as light levels, tactile elements and diverse sounds may influence the rate at which newborns develop. Research involves seeing if there are optimal conditions in the hospital for a speedy release of prematurely born babies.

In hospital, pre-term babies may be susceptible to infections, but before they can go home, they must gain a certain amount of weight. Mandel and his colleagues have found that exposure to Mozart may speed up weight gain. This protects them not only early in life, but in later life, too, he said.

The researchers exposed 20 babies, with healthy and appropriate weights for their age, to the music of Mozart or no music on two consecutive days for a 30-minute period and measured their metabolic activity.

> ***'We think there is something in the organization of the cortex [of the brain] which resonates with the Mozart music'***

The study showed that listening to Mozart lowered the amount of energy that the babies expended, which means that they were able to gain weight faster.

While this is an encouraging result for the use of Mozart in neonatal units, it's an early study. "We don't really know what are the long-term effects of this music," Mandel said.

Studies such as this one are intended to scientifically quantify the hypothesis that the environment – and the use of music – can be optimized for rapid release of infants from the hospital. "We don't really know how the sounds they hear or how the tactile stimulations they get from the nurses affect development," Mandel said.

"They all have an effect on the development. NIDCAP is a program that looks at all these elements together. For example, it has been found that a bath and diaper change for the baby should be done at the same time. It is better for them if we cluster interventions."

The Israeli team chose Mozart over other classical composers such as Beethoven due to the "Mozart effect," which has been measured in college students. A study found that those who listened to Mozart before taking an IQ test scored higher. Mozart's music has also been found to positively affect epileptics. When the music of Mozart, Bach, Chopin, Wagner and Bartok were compared, the best effects were measured with Mozart's music, but researchers don't know why.

"We don't know if it's a music effect or a Mozart effect," Mandel said.

"We think there is something in the organization of the cortex [of the brain] which resonates with the Mozart music."

Mandel and his team are now investigating different types of music, including ethnic music, and its effect on infants after birth, compared to exposure to music in the womb.

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Our breast cancer tests accurate: JGH

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — The Jewish General Hospital (JGH) says an independent review has confirmed that its system of testing tissue samples for evidence of breast cancer is virtually 100 per cent accurate.

Those findings, announced Dec. 16 by Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services, should reassure women who have undergone breast cancer testing at the hospital in the past year, the hospital says.

Concern about the reliability of testing in the province was raised last spring, when a study done at the Université de Montréal found that 15 per cent of breast cancer tests were botched in 25 Quebec laboratories. The tests looked at were those done on the hormone markers in tumours that are used to determine how best to treat the disease.

"These results are a solid piece of evidence that women requiring treatment for breast cancer at the JGH have received – and will continue to receive – appropriate and effective care," said JGH executive director Dr. Hartley Stern. "This is due to the hospital's rigorous adherence to quality control, as well as its ability to satisfy the most stringent international standards in pathology."

"Quality assurance at the JGH is practised on many levels," added Dr. Gerald Batist, chief of oncology and director of the JGH Segal Cancer Centre. "Risk to our patients is significantly reduced because screening is conducted in a two-step process.

"First, the pathology of every breast cancer patient is reviewed by a breast-cancer pathologist. The patient's pathology then undergoes a systematic review by a multidisciplinary tumour board, to maximize the quality of care."

The key to the JGH success rate is the close connection among the different hospital departments, said pathology chief Dr. Alan Spatz. "In order to ensure the safety of our patients and to give them the best possible care, clear and constant interaction between the oncology and pathology departments – including quality management and data management – was and still is instrumental."

The Canadian Jewish news

CJN subscribers see it first!

A new section has been added to *The CJN*'s website, cjnews.com. Each week, Subscriber Premiums will include material of interest gathered from the pages of the upcoming issue, as well as items of interest from our various news sources. It will also include the paper's community calendars, What's New in Toronto and About Town in Montreal. To view this premium material, use your subscriber log-in and click on the various headlines. This material will be for subscribers only until Wednesday morning. At that time, they will be made available to the general public.

Health & Lifestyles

Hospital auxiliary to host fitness fundraiser

Compiled by CJN Staff

Mount Sinai Hospital Auxiliary will host a fitness marathon this spring to raise funds for breast cancer research at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute.

The second annual Yoga in Motion, which features yoga and Zumba, a dance-inspired cardio workout, will be held at the Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex on April 25.

The marathon is designed for yoga enthusiasts, fitness fans and beginners alike and includes four yoga classes and four Zumba sessions led by some of Toronto's top instructors.

Yoga in Motion will also feature gift bags, prizes, product vendors, healthy-lifestyle information, breast cancer screening and food samples.

Event ambassador Dr. Marla Shapiro, a health journalist and a breast cancer survivor, said: "I'm inspired to champion an event that will benefit breast cancer awareness, research and education. Together, we are in motion for a cure. Please join me and hundreds of others as we take part."

Yoga in Motion participants are asked to raise a minimum $250 each, with fundraising support tools provided through the Yoga in Motion website at www.yogainmotion.ca.

In October 2009, a collaboration between Dr. Bob Casper and his team at the Lunenfeld and Dr. Aaron Wheeler's team at the University of Toronto resulted in an innovative approach for measuring estrogen levels in clinical samples. It could lead to more sensitive diagnostic tests to assess the risk of breast cancer.

In February 2009, Lunenfeld principal investigator, Dr. Jeff Wrana, and his team unveiled new technology that can analyze breast cancer tumours to determine a patient's best treatment option and predict, with more than 80 per cent accuracy, a patient's chance of recovery.

Dr. Marla Shapiro

"Breast cancer devastates more Canadian women than any other cancer," says Ian Taylor, a PhD candidate at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute and a member of Wrana's research team.

"The advancement in breast cancer research since the mid-1980s has been substantial, and this would not have been possible without generous donor support. Researchers, healthcare professionals, donors and the community each have their part in improving breast health."

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Only those applicants chosen for further discussions will be contacted by the Search Committee, by the end of January, 2010.

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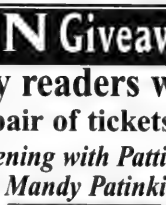

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Send your response to: Mirvish Contest, The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, North York, Ont. M3B 3K4 or fax to: 416-391-0949
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זיך בתן אית גיבּר, דעם זכרון פֿון א באָבעס.

יידיש דאַרף נישט קיין רחמנות. יידיש איז א שטאַרקע
וועלט. יידיש דאַרף בלעז נים נאָכצוגיבן. אַדער ב'אַהערשט עס ייִ
גרייבּיק. ייִ לאָזיק, ייִ יחידה חדיר, ייִ טעמפּעריש האַרבן
ענגלים־אַדער ב'לאָמ עס צירי.

דער ייִוואָ איז ניט־אַרק, די" מאָדענע ייִשוב" איז יסאַר־
שוין נאָכן אויסקום פֿון דער ט'פּער יידיש ייִידס־האָבן
אייַנגעשטעלט אַ פּאַראַם. א פּרעציזע אילוזיע: ריינע
סטאַנדאַרטן אין מאַרק בניינס. ייִאָ זיינען אָפּטער קיינאָ
נים געווען, אָפּילו אין דער יידישער בלי־צייַט. די זיינען
ביידע אַנטרוינען פֿונעם מבול אין זיך נעמאַכט ניט־ווינדיק.
נאָר געווישט האָבן זיי זייער גוט: זיי האָבן דאָך ביידע
נעקוקט דעם תהום אין די אויגן.

און ס'איז גוט אַזוי געווען. ווי גלאַסטיגן האָט גמזאָגט "שטילס אַ ביסל
אינ דעם פּיקו־פּאַרק, ביז ווּאַנען מיר, דער דור הבדבר,
וועלן אויסטאַרבן, זיכ נעזונדליק צו אונדז. פֿאַרשאַגוואַכט
איינער טרעם, זאָל מען מיינען אַז מיר וועלן אָנקומען."

אינטער, פֿערציק אָר שפּעטער (מיט אַ האַסטיק דערצו),
דאַרף מען זיך אָרומקוקן: קיין המשך איז ניטאָ. ב'דאַרף
נים מוטשן די קינדער. מ'דאַרף נים פֿאַרקאַכן די כּאַראַקטער.
יידיש איז געווען.

און אינטער איז יידיש געווארן.
נים קיין מעלאַדראַמאַ, פֿאַרטיטשט אויף ענגלישן שמאַלץ.
א פֿולזיטיקע, פֿערציקפֿיסיקע, פּראָקאָמע און פֿאַרפֿאָלענערטע.
א שימערירעוודיקע, קאָמפּליצירטע, לעבעדיקע וועלט, וואָס
שמייסט אויף אַלע צייטן.

אייב איר האָט נעדענקנקע וועגן אונדזער ווינקל לאָמיר וויסן. שרייבט דורך פּאָסט אַדער בליץ פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

*די פּאָעמע נעפֿינט מען אין די פּען, נעזונדענער הונדשלעכער הערצאָג פֿאַר לימפּראָווי, אפּריל 1996.
אידישענען דורך דער אקסאַרד א־נסטרשט פֿאַר יידיש נטאַיים.

Spice of Life

Family cookbooks a treasure-trove of memories

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

In the shade of an old maple tree, Betty Burkholder and a few cousins were swapping ideas for the celebration of their Mennonite family's Canadian bicentennial. Inspired by the little black notebooks filled with their great-grandmothers' recipe jottings, the group gave a new twist to the show and tell of family history: a heritage cookbook.

It's a cookbook that you'll only find in the kitchens of descendents of Fanny Reiff and Christian Reesor, whose trek with their children and kin from Lancaster County, Penn., to Ontario's Markham Township in 1804 gave rise to a presence that numbers 28,000.

Not just a culinary snapshot of the food (and folk remedies) that nurtured generations, the Reesors' cookbook is its own story, as shown by the family's logo, the Conestoga wagon, on each page. (The wagons held their possessions, but the journey from Pennsylvania was made on foot. According to Burkholder, it took six weeks and included a mother who carried a one-year-old child.)

"We were trying to capture for posterity the old recipes... we all had memories and we wanted to get those memories down for the younger generation, or else it would be lost," Burkholder recalls in an interview.

The cookbook crew cast their net far and wide, reaching out via e-mail, newsletter and old-fashioned word-of-mouth to relatives from Australia to Alberta and points in between. As news of the project spread, the Reesor women dug deep into old recipe diaries filled with the handwritten notes kept by grandmothers and great-grandmothers, and that were now in their hands.

What emerged as the final text was a glimpse into the kitchens of old – with recipes calling for "butter the size of an egg" or "a handful of flour" – featuring a range of dishes from soups and salads to desserts and preserves. And each recipe showcases a personal memory of the "source" cook.

Into the mix, for example, went a century-old recipe for Aunt Bertha's "lemon pie with strips," accompanied by an anecdote from a family member who'd known this woman, born in 1867, and eaten a piece of her refreshing pie as a little girl.

The cookbook was a big hit at the family's 2004 bicentennial reunion, selling out its several hundred copies. As shown by the Reesors, heritage cookbooks are attracting increasing interest as a low-cost, fun way to document family history. Numerous sites on the Internet now offer templates to create and print the texts, or will do it for you.

For those who prefer pen and paper, you can buy beautifully illustrated, inexpensive recipe "scrapbooks," whose blank pages are an open invitation to write your own culinary biography.

I received such a scrapbook as a gift last Chanukah from my husband, who noticed that I'd barely come up for air in two days of reading *Cooking Jewish: 532 Great Recipes From The Rabinowitz Family*, by noted California food writer Judy Bart Kancigor.

Tracing her grandparents' immigration from a Russian shtetl to the shores of America, Kancigor blends wonderful old black-and-white snapshots with family back stories and recipes. It's an irresistible mix of young and old, new and vintage, and its impact is evident by the kinship so many readers feel with the author's whole mishpachah.

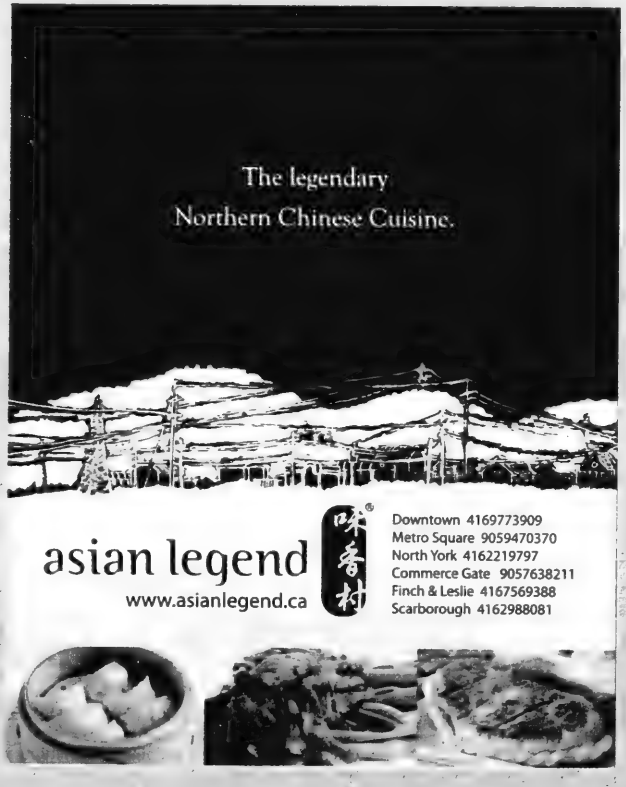
Swamped by submissions, Kancigor tested each recipe to determine which would make it into the book. At the same time, the project heated up phone lines from coast to coast, giving her the opportunity to mine memories from elderly relatives and catch up with far-flung family.

Elizabeth Driver, past president of the Culinary Historians of Ontario, suggests that reconnecting with the past drives the appeal of heritage cookbooks.

"In the past, one took these bonds for granted [because] everyone lived so close to each other," she says. "People want the recipes they grew up with. We want the keys to producing loving food in the kitchen using the recipes of people you care about."

And while technology has made it easier to pass on that traditional information, Driver recently received a box of blank recipe cards from a married daughter overseas, who asked that she write down family recipes to bring with her next time she visited.

Dining Pleasures



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Report: Iran slows down nuclear program

By YOSSI MELMAN
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

NEW YORK — Iran has suspended its uranium enrichment program for two months, Iranian media sources reported on Monday, saying the move was meant as a gesture of goodwill toward western powers.

The report has not been confirmed by any other sources.

Meanwhile, with or without connection to these reports, U.S. government officials have said that there was still a chance of striking a deal with Iran over its nuclear program.

The possible deal, according to the Washington-based newspaper *Politico*, would be based on the proposal formed late last September and early October in talks in Geneva and Vienna, between Iran and western powers. The agreement may still go through, even though the deadline that U.S. President Barack Obama set for nuclear talks with Iran, the end of 2009, has expired.

The United States is reportedly mulling new sanctions against Tehran, along with Germany and the four permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.

The new sanctions were meant to specifically target the country's Revolutionary Guard, in charge of Iran's nuclear program, as well as Tehran's economy.

At the moment, it remains unclear if all five Security Council member nations are in agreement on whether to intensify sanctions against Iran, as it seems that Russia is inclined to join the western powers on the issue, with China still objecting.

Catherine Ashton

UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reported recently that Iran has significantly slowed down the operation of the centrifuges in its nuclear enrichment facility in Natanz.

It had not been made clear whether the fact that Iran is operating only 60 per cent of the 9,000 centrifuges has to do with a conscious decision, or perhaps is the result of technical difficulties, or even sabotage by western intelligence agencies.

However, the IAEA report also stated that Iran's uranium enrichment levels have remained constant, indicating that Iran is in full control of its nuclear technology.

Many details of the agreement have not yet been made public, but the bits released to the public call for Iran to transfer about 1,200 kilograms of low-enriched uranium – about 75 per cent of its known stock – to Russia. There, it will be enriched to a level of 20 per cent and then transferred to France, where it will be processed into nuclear fuel and returned to Tehran for use in its research reactor, which makes medical isotopes.

Iran has offered a modification to the forming deal, under which it will deliver the uranium in stages, and would receive the enriched material in stages as well. However, the United States has rejected that offer, sticking to the original wording of the deal.

Iran has made mistakes in its relationships with the West and must work with the international community over its human rights record and its nuclear program, the European Union's new head of foreign policy said Monday.

Catherine Ashton is set to steer the EU's diplomacy over the next five years, making her a key commentator on the bloc's future relations.

Iran is "a country which is steeped in history, and I feel that it has made mistakes. If the country wants to be treated as I believe its history, geography and people deserve, it has to work with us," Ashton said during her confirmation hearing in the European Parliament.

Egypt to ban Gaza aid convoys

JTA

JERUSALEM — Egypt said it will ban Gaza-bound aid convoys from travelling across the country.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit made the comment Saturday to the government newspaper *Al-Ahram*, following the departure of the Viva Palestina aid convoy led by British MP George Galloway.

Abul Gheit said members of the convoy committed hostile and criminal acts in Egypt on the way to Gaza.

"Egypt will no longer allow convoys, regardless of their origin or who is organizing them, from crossing its territory," Abul Gheit said.

Galloway was deported last Friday from Egypt and declared a persona non grata.

Some 55 people were injured in clashes last week between convoy activists and police. Seven protesters were arrested.

Peer ousted in Kiwi tourney amid protests

JTA

SYDNEY, Australia — Two more pro-Palestinian protesters were arrested as Israeli tennis star Shahar Peer lost in the semifinals of a tournament in New Zealand.

Peer, 22 and ranked No. 30 in the world, lost last Friday to third-seeded Yanina Wickmayer of Belgium in the ASB Classic in Auckland.

Prior to last Friday's arrests, seven other members of Global Peace and Justice Auckland and Palestine Human Rights Campaign Auckland, including the organizer of the protests, were arrested.

Play had to be suspended on Jan. 6 as officials debated whether to continue Peer's match due to the small but noisy demonstration outside the tennis complex.

The protesters, members of Global Peace and Justice Auckland and Palestine Human Rights Campaign Auckland, used a loud speaker to chant "blood, blood on your hands," "freedom for Palestine," and "go home, Shahar," according to the *New Zealand Herald*.

One man was arrested by police and charged with disorderly behaviour, local media reported. Similar protests took place during Peer's match at the venue last Tuesday.

"I also want peace in the world," Peer said after the match. "But I don't think this is the place for this protest. I came here to play tennis. I know I'm from Israel, and I'm proud of my country."

Global Peace and Justice, which supports a sports boycott against Israel, staged a similar demonstration against Peer at the same event last year.

The organizer of the protests, John Minto, who called for Peer to withdraw from the tournament and for a sports boycott against Israel, told local media: "There will be bigger and bigger protests here in Auckland protesting against her presence in representing Israel's policies."

Meanwhile, Peer will be allowed to play in this year's Women's Tennis Association tournament in Dubai, starting Feb. 15, following a furor last year after she was denied a visa because of "security concerns" following Israel's military operation in Gaza.

The United Arab Emirate's Ministry of Interior has written to the WTA Tour confirming she will be granted a visa, London's *Telegraph* reported.

The UAE does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Shahar Peer

Ancient Hebrew inscription could push back date of Bible

Continued from page 1

Yaen Vered, the representative in Canada of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), an independent agency that regulates excavations and promotes research, was more cautious in evaluating the shard's significance.

"It was found in the Elah Valley and it is of substance, there is no question. As far as we know, it is of the time of the kings. That is as far as we know. More than that requires more research and more finds," Vered said.

"It's too early for jumping to conclusions. We're talking about one piece and we don't have another thing to put against it or for it. We don't have another piece to verify it."

The shard was discovered during excavations under Prof. Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The excavation in the Elah Valley, where the Bible says David fought Goliath, was conducted by Hebrew U under licence from the IAA.

Alex Gropper, president of the Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies at the University of Toronto and a *CJN* columnist, agreed the inscription could ultimately prove to be significant, but said it's too early to tell.

"The information is certainly interesting, but the verdict is not in. It's an exciting find, but it will take time to make the case," said Gropper, who has been involved in archeological digs in Israel for 40 years.

Galil said the sophistication and content of the Khirbet Qeiyafa inscription, written as poetry by local scribes, suggest that other "proficient writers" in Jerusalem at that time could well have composed biblical books.

The text calls on the people of Israel to help the poor, widows and orphans, as do verses in the Torah. The inscription, he said, is similar to the content found in Isaiah 1:17, Psalms 72:3 and Exodus 23:3.

"The text is a social statement, relating to slaves, widows and orphans. It uses verbs that were characteristic of Hebrew, such as 'asah' (did) and 'avad' (worked), which were rarely used in other regional languages. Particular words that appear in the text such as 'almanah' (widow) are specific to Hebrew and are written differently in other local languages."

Neighbouring peoples, such as the Assyrians and the Mari, never raised social issues such as helping disadvantaged people, but rather focused on placating their gods, he said.

A diagramatization of the inscription found on the pottery. *[Courtesy University of Haifa]*

Galil speculated that the text, written left to right unlike today's Hebrew, may have been penned by a scribe copying from a teacher or listening to dictation. There are two mistakes in the five-line inscription that suggest "it's a kind of exercise. He's listening to a teacher or copying a text."

The inscription reads:

1. You shall not do [it], but worship the [Lord].
2. Judge the sla[ve] and the wid[ow]/ Judge the orph[an]
3. [and] the stranger. [Pl]ead for the infant/plead for the po[or and]
4. the widow. Rehabilitate [the poor] at the hands of the king.
5. Protect the po[or and] the slave/ [supp]ort the stranger.

Galil said that unlike the mainstream view of biblical scholars, who date the Bible relatively late, the inscription clearly shows that Davidic-era scribes "knew how to write sophisticated verse in an early period. There is no need to claim the Bible came later.

"This changes the view of when the Torah was written," he said.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

Passover Supplement,
The Canadian Jewish News
1500 Don Mills Rd. Suite 205
Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4

Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.
Submissions can not be returned

CJN Purim Art Display

It's time again for your Purim artwork.

This year, however, we have changed our approach.
This is no longer a contest.
We have changed the format to a
PURIM ART DISPLAY.

Who can enter: Everyone.

How to enter: You may submit as many drawings as you like. Paint or draw bright, bold, colourful pictures. Along with the submissions, please send us your name, address, phone number, age (if you wish us to know your age).

You may mail or deliver your drawings to:
Purim Art Display,
The Canadian Jewish News,
1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4.

If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selctions based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

Prehistoric building uncovered near Tel Aviv

JTA

JERUSALEM — The remains of a prehistoric building, the earliest ever found in the Tel Aviv region, have been discovered in Ramat Aviv.

The building is estimated to be between 7,800 and 8,400 years old, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) said Monday.

The archeological excavation was carried out recently in the tony Tel Aviv neighbourhood prior to the construction of an apartment building.

"This discovery is both important and surprising to researchers of the period," said archeologist Ayelet Dayan, director of the excavation on behalf of the IAA, who said it was the first time that archeologists had encountered evidence of a permanent habitation that existed in the Tel Aviv region about 8,000 years ago.

The site is located on the northern bank of the Yarkon River, not far from the confluence with Nahal Ayalon.

"We can assume that this fact influenced the ancient settlers in choosing a place to live," Dayan said. "The fertile alluvium soil along the fringes of the streams was considered a preferred location for a settlement in ancient periods."

Also uncovered in the excavation were a fragment of a base of a basalt bowl and animal remains – hippopotamus bones, and teeth that probably belonged to a sheep or goat.

Mexican businessman killed in crash

JTA

JERUSALEM — A Mexican businessman was killed in a helicopter crash near Mexico City.

Jewish businessman Moises Saba Masri died early Monday morning when one of the rotors of the helicopter he was riding in struck a building due to heavy fog, according to reports. At least four other people, including two members of Masri's family and the pilot, were killed in the crash.

Moises Saba Masri

Masri owned real estate and medical companies, and had extensive holdings in Mexican telecom company Unefon and broadcaster TV Azteca. He also owned two hotels in Acapulco.

Israel's Zaka rescue organization was reportedly preparing to send a delegation to Mexico Monday afternoon to assist in identifying the dead.

Masri, one of the most influential businessmen in Mexico, was involved in businesses ranging from pharmaceuticals to telecom.

Israel Briefs

Israel strikes Gaza

Israeli warplanes struck four targets in Gaza last Thursday in response to a rocket that landed near Ashkelon. The Israel Defence Forces said the targets included several smuggling tunnels in southern Gaza, as well as a weapons manufacturing facility. The Thursday-night raid followed the firing of a Katyusha rocket at the southern Israeli city of Ashkelon that caused no casualties. Palestinians said one person was killed and two wounded in the Israeli strikes. The rocket attack near Ashkelon followed the launching of at least 10 mortar shells at southern Israel, also on Thursday. The earlier attack also caused no damage or injuries. Six shells landed in the northwestern Negev, three near the Kerem Shalom crossing and one landed in Gaza. The Popular Resistance Committees claimed responsibility, reportedly saying it was in revenge for the killing of two of its members Jan. 5 as they prepared to fire rockets from Gaza.

Missile defence passes tests

An Israeli defence system designed to shoot down rockets and mortars shot at Israel from Gaza was successful in field trials. The Iron Dome system intercepted several rockets during tests last week, the Israel Defence Forces said Jan. 6. Several missiles resembling Qassam and Katyusha rockets were shot simultaneously. The system, designed by the state-owned Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, is expected to be deployed near the Gaza border later this year.

Israel to compensate UN

Israel reportedly has agreed to pay $10 million (US) in compensation for damaging United Nations buildings in Gaza. Israel hit several UN properties, including schools, storehouses and vehicles, during its military offensive in Gaza last winter. Israel says the properties weren't targeted, but that Hamas terrorists were targeting Israel from inside or near the buildings. Israel says the compensation is for collateral damage. It's the first compensation Israel will pay for damage caused in Gaza during the offensive, the BBC reported. The compensation deal comes after several months of talks. Israel still must ink a final agreement, Bloomberg reported, but Defence Minister Ehud Barak reportedly told UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon of the decision.

Military officials cancel Britain trip

A delegation of Israeli military officers cancelled a visit to Britain two weeks ago out of fear they would be arrested on war crimes charges. The cancellation comes a month after Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni cancelled a visit to Britain after learning a London court had approved a warrant for her arrest on war crimes charges. The delegation of senior Israel Defence Forces officers had been invited by the British army. Their visit was cancelled after British authorities said they couldn't assure Israeli Foreign Ministry officials that the delegation wouldn't be arrested. The warrants seek to charge Israeli officials with war crimes in connection with Israel's war in Gaza last winter. In December, Hamas said that it was working with lawyers in Britain and other European countries to pursue war crimes cases against Israel. Britain has assured Israel it will try to implement measures to solve the issue.

Iraq to sue Israel

Iraq is planning to sue Israel for bombing its nuclear reactor at Osirak nearly three decades ago. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has instructed his foreign ministry to find out from the United Nations whether it can receive compensation from Israel. Israel's air force bombed the reactor, which had not yet gone online, in 1981. A UN resolution passed at the time condemned Israel's attack and determined Iraq had a right to demand compensation, the *Jerusalem Post* reported. Baghdad has demanded that the United Nations set up a committee to assess the damage caused by Israel's attack so it can calculate appropriate compensation.

As zero hour nears, differences emerge on sanctions

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

WASHINGTON — As long as the Iran conversation was broad and dealt only with "sanctions," the U.S. Congress, the White House and the American pro-Israel community seemed to be on the same page.

But now that Iran has rejected just about every bouquet sent its way and the talk has turned to the details, longstanding differences over how best to go forward are taking centre stage.

With the backing of many Jewish groups, Congress appears to be pressing ahead with a package that targets Iran's energy sector.

While the White House appears to support new congressional sanctions, it appears to favour more narrow measures targeting the Iranian leadership and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps, considered especially vulnerable because of the recent anti-government turmoil.

In part the debate is over which approach would do more to help opposition forces in Iran. But also playing a role is the Obama administration's continuing emphasis on securing international backing for tougher measures against Tehran, the idea being that sweeping U.S. sanctions aimed at the Iranian energy sector could turn off several key nations.

Additionally, the Obama administration hasn't counted out the prospect of engagement with Iran, although the Mahmoud Ahmadinejad government has put to rest any notion that it will entertain the West's offer to enrich Iran's uranium to medical research levels in exchange for transparency about the Islamic Republic's suspected nuclear weapons program.

"Our goal is to pressure the Iranian government, particularly the Revolutionary Guard elements, without contributing to the suffering" of Iranians, "who deserve better than what they currently are receiving," U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said in a news conference last week.

Opponents of the congressional sanctions, which target just about any investment anywhere in the world in Iran's energy sector, say they would be inhumane and rally support for the regime.

"Having opposed the adoption of crippling sanctions all along, Americans for Peace Now is glad to see further affirmation from the White House that it does not seek such crippling sanctions," said Ori Nir, a spokesperson for Peace Now, the only major Jewish group opposing the congressional package.

In defence of the proposed legislation, one insider from a centrist pro-Israel group recounted a much-repeated scenario: the cab driver who runs out of gas in the middle of a traffic-clogged street, gets out of the car, and raises his fist and curses – not the West as he might have just a year or so ago, but Ahmadinejad and the rest of Iran's leaders.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, earlier this year with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

"In tyrannies, the fiction that keeps people under control is the trust they have in government to take care of them and the fear they have of confronting the government," the insider said. "In Iran, the trust is gone, and the fear is still there, but going."

Concerns that the congressional package will lead to human misery are overstated, its backers say. The bills include provisions for presidential waivers and are meant first as leverage.

Similar sanctions packages passed by Congress in the 1990s also were never implemented by presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, yet they had an almost immediate effect because of the threat of being implemented. Major western traders pulled out of Iran, which is partly why the country's refinement capabilities are in disarray. Iran, a major oil exporter, still must import up to 40 per cent of its refined petroleum.

The principals in shaping the previous sanctions – in Congress, the Clinton administration and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee – now openly admit that they were playing a coordinated "good cop-bad cop" game: Republicans who backed the sanctions would quietly shape their criticisms of the Clinton administration in consultation with administration officials. Clinton officials then would cite that "pressure" in getting European nations to join in efforts to isolate Iran.

It's not clear now whether a similar dynamic is at work between the White House and Congress. Some insiders say it is. Others say the Obama administration is genuinely wary of punishing sanctions and is unhappy with the pressure from Congress and the pro-Israel community.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed its sanctions package in late December, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has pledged to attend to the Senate version as soon as the chamber reconvenes Jan. 19.

Senator John Kerry, chair of the Senate's foreign relations committee, has said he is willing to consider the White House's objections, particularly to a proposed blacklist of companies that deal with Iran and to sanctions that target third-party entities – companies and nations that deal with Iran.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration is moving ahead with the following actions:

- Pressing other major powers to back a proposed UN Security Council resolution that would expand existing sanctions on travel and business dealings to 3,000 individuals associated with the Revolutionary Guards;
- Intensify enforcement of existing U.S. sanctions on doing business with Iran;
- Intensify efforts to uncover and fine companies that cover up their financial dealings with Iran.

Holocaust survivor dies, leaving 2,500 descendants

JTA

NEW YORK — A 94-year-old Holocaust survivor died, leaving behind at least 2,500 descendants.

Yitta Schwartz of Kiryas Joel in New York was buried Jan. 4. She had five generations of descendants.

Schwartz survived Bergen Belsen, leaving the concentration camp with her family intact when World War II ended in 1945. Schwartz, her husband and six children moved to Belgium before settling in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, the *Times Herald-Record* reported.

The couple had 11 more children following the war. Her husband died 33 years ago.

Schwartz, who reportedly was reluctant to talk about the Holocaust, had about 170 grandchildren and knew all their names.

Should Israel be a model for U.S. airport security?

By GIL SHEFLER
JTA

NEW YORK — As U.S. officials try to figure out how to improve airport security in the aftermath of the failed Christmas Day bombing attempt of a Northwest Airlines flight to Detroit, many North Americans are looking to Israel as a model.

The *New York Times* opened a forum for readers to discuss the pros and cons of Israeli airport security. The *Toronto Star* interviewed an Israeli airport security expert who said the best way to nab a terrorist is to "look them in the eye."

David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, wrote a piece for the Huffington Post about the lessons U.S. airport security officials can learn from their counterparts in Israel.

"From the perspective of security, one is in a class by itself – Israel's Ben-Gurion Airport," Harris wrote. "In the wake of the thwarted terrorist attempt on Northwest Flight 253, it's time to revisit the Israeli model, as other countries ask what more can be done to prevent such near-catastrophes."

El Al, Israel's national airline, has been the target of more attacks and specific threats than any other airline in the world. After a number of shootings and hijackings by terrorists during the late 1960s and early 1970s, the government-owned company introduced a set of stringent security measures aimed at thwarting future terrorist attacks.

The enhanced security extended to Ben-Gurion International Airport, which also had been the site of terrorist attacks. Security

The Israeli Airport Authority is in the midst of a trial period for a new security system at Ben-Gurion Airport that relies upon a biometric security check. Passports are scanned. A photograph and fingerprint of the traveller are also taken. Travellers are issued a Unipass card. Travellers respond to questions on a computer screen while the Unipass is also scanned under the watchful eye of security officials.

[Israel Sun photo]

there comprises a number of rings, only some of which are visible.

Passenger profiling has been a major component of the security success. Security officials question passengers before sending their luggage and screen them based on their answers and backgrounds. Passengers considered a potential risk are taken aside for further questioning and thoroughly searched.

The Israeli approach has fuelled the debate about whether it is necessary for U.S. airports to introduce new security checkpoints and sophisticated machinery, including full-body scanners. While U.S. airport security relies primarily on technology, the Israeli system relies primarily on human intelligence and profiling.

Passenger profiling by Israeli airport security has been criticized heavily over the years. Many Arab passengers, including Arab Israelis, have complained of being forced to undergo excessive and demeaning security checks. Israeli civil rights groups and Israeli-Arab lawmakers have petitioned Israel's Supreme Court asking that it ban ethnicity-based profiling as discriminatory.

The failed Northwest Airlines bombing attempt spurred U.S. officials to institute new rules mandating special searches for passengers from 14 nations, raising the ire of U.S. civil liberties groups.

Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, founder and head of The Israel Project, a pro-Israel advocacy group, says profiling is not discriminatory. On the contrary, she says, in Israel it has benefited both Jews and Arabs.

Laszlo Mizrahi draws a parallel with the West Bank security fence, which she credits with drastically reducing terrorist attacks in Israel.

"The security fence has also been criticized but has saved lives on both sides, just like the airport measures have saved lives on both sides," she told JTA. "There are plenty of Arab citizens that are also being protected by these security measures. They may be inconvenient, but if they save lives, the end result is worth it."

Greek shul damaged in arson attack

JTA

ATHENS — The only synagogue on the Greek island of Crete sustained significant water and smoke damage in an arson attack.

Some 30 antique Turkish carpets also were damaged when the Etz Hayyim synagogue in the city of Hania was set ablaze night of Jan. 5 by unknown attackers. The synagogue's Torah scrolls weren't damaged.

The arsonists reportedly climbed over the synagogue's iron gate and made an improvised firebomb using stuffing from a couch in the shul's mikvah to ignite a canister filled with flammable liquid, then placed the firebomb under the wooden staircase leading to the women's section.

The upper floor of the women's section serves as the office of the director, as well as a library and reading room. Among its volumes are valuable books in various languages on Ottoman, Byzantine and Jewish art and architecture.

An Albanian immigrant who lives near the synagogue saw the smoke and called police and firefighters.

There is little security at the synagogue, according to reports. Situated in the heart of the Jewish quarter, the synagogue dates back to the late 15th century.

Also in the attack, a bar of soap was thrown against the outer wall of the synagogue to illustrate the common Greek anti-Semitic expression, "I'll make you into a bar of soap."

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Torch bearer 'spreads the pride with the flame'

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

For four minutes on an icy Tuesday morning, Tova Silverman turned into a celebrity.

Dressed in a white uniform and clutching an official Olympic torch in Blue Mountain, Ont., on Dec. 29, the 21-year-old student met her fans.

"The crowds started growing and growing and growing. I couldn't believe it. It was 8:45 a.m… Tons of parents, kids and grandkids were lining the streets. It was a piece of highway that wasn't important until that morning," said Silverman, who was one of some 6,000 people who will or have represented Coca-Cola in the Olympic Torch Relay.

Silverman spent months preparing for her turn as torch bearer. Maybe even years.

As a child, she would turn her toys into a make-shift torch and carry it around the house, from the top of the stairs to the mantelpiece, where she participated in her own Olympic medal ceremony.

"Growing up, the TV was on the whole time [during Olympic games]. No matter what time zone we were in, we were always watching the Olympics," said Silverman, an Ottawa native who is currently majoring in world religions at McGill University.

"[It's] just an exciting time that brings people together."

Some of Silverman's favourite Olympic sports to watch include luge and ski jumping. But, for the torch bearer, the Olympics are about more than just athletics.

"I think it's a great way for people to join together in peace," she said.

When Silverman found out that the Winter Olympics would be held in Vancouver this winter, she wanted to be involved. As a student, she couldn't afford to take the month off that was required for Olympic volunteers. Last summer, she heard about a torch bearer contest run through Coke's website.

"I got wind of a contest from a friend," she said. "I entered... in the middle of the summer and have been thinking about it ever since."

Silverman had to answer a skill-testing question and write a short essay on being environmentally friendly. She was working as a unit head at Camp Ramah in August when she heard from the contest organizers.

"Lo and behold, I got an e-mail that I had won a spot," she said. "I screamed a lot. I got yelled at in the camp office for being too loud."

Silverman isn't just an Olympic fan. She enjoys jogging and running, and is involved in her Jewish community in Ottawa.

"It's about giving back. It's a place where I grew up in… It's a place that really helped shape who I am," said Silverman, who worked with United Synagogue Youth and Hillel at McGill.

When preparing for the torch relay, Silverman began absorbing as many facts as she could.

"I knew every fact, I knew where the torch was going, what its roots were, how it came from Greece, everything about the torch uniform," she said. "It became the thing that people knew about me. I became almost a hub of information."

Tova Silverman, 21, was one of some dozen torch bearers in Blue Mountain, Ont., on Dec. 29.

About a month ago, Silverman received her torch bearer uniform in the mail. It was white, with a splash of blue and green on the arm that represented the Sea to Sky Corridor between Vancouver and Whistler during the winter.

But perhaps the most striking part were the red mittens.

"They are supposed to represent the mittens that every child wears when they're… enjoying Canadian winter," she said.

On the morning of Dec. 29, she pulled on the white suit and pants, put on her white toque and slipped on the mittens.

"I couldn't believe the day was actually here," she said. "It was cloudy and the snow was blowing a little bit, and it was really, really cold. But that didn't seem to matter. I didn't feel cold when I was out there."

The torch was white, about three feet tall and 3-1/2 pounds. It was heavier than she thought it would be.

"They lit a wick… and then lit my torch and suddenly this whole torch in front of me blew up," she said.

When thinking back on her four minutes of fame, Silverman remembers the crowd, with their Canadian flags and cowbells.

"Everyone had a camera out. Everyone was cheering. You could feel the excitement in the air," she said. "Tons of kids asked to touch [the torch]… I just felt this connection with them immediately. It wasn't about me. It was about spreading the pride that comes with the flame."

For Silverman, the torch relay was about connecting with her country.

"When the torch was lit, it was inspiring. It was this flame that had been passed around the entire country, originating in Greece. It was suddenly there in front of me. I felt like I was part of something. Part of a world event," she said.

"I was the only person in the world that was carrying the torch at the moment. When I passed it on, I saw another person's face light up. It was just this continuation."

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Arts & Travel

Interest in Nathanson's play spiked after G-G award nomination

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

Michael Nathanson, the artistic director and general manager of the Winnipeg Jewish Theatre, was surprised to learn he was nominated for a 2009 Governor General's Award for writing the play *Talk*.

The provocative, emotionally honest play about the collapse of a friendship between a Jewish man and his non-Jewish friend in the aftermath of 9/11, because of their opposing viewpoints about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, premièred in Winnipeg in 2007.

As a result of the award nomination, Nathanson, 43, said interest in the play has soared. "There are now 10 theatres looking at producing the play. The play will be put on by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company in Toronto [in March]...That is the upside of the nomination. It confers a legitimacy on the play that it wouldn't have otherwise."

Nathanson's engaging 80-minute play about two buddies, Josh and Gordon, whose friendship goes awry when the word "Palestine" is mentioned, is based on the playwright's own personal experience.

Michael Nathanson

Nathanson was in New York the day two planes plowed into the World Trade Center. He and his bride, Rebecca Brask, had been married the month before in Manitoba and wanted to tie the knot again stateside to jump-start her quest for immigration papers that would allow her to live in the United States. Convinced there were more deadly attacks to come, the pair fled New York within a week.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks, Nathanson received an e-mail from one of his pals in Italy loaded with anti-American and anti-Israel diatribes.

"I was dumfounded, given that he knew I was Jewish and what I had just lived through," Nathanson recalled. "When I questioned him, he went insane on me, accusing me of not letting him express his opinion and of being a fascist."

A confused Nathanson began to sort out his own feelings about the event by penning a dialogue about the situation. The thought-provoking and, at times, humorous debate in *Talk* has been fictionalized, although Nathanson said parts of the script resemble some of his actual conversations.

"Although the play deals with the Middle East conflict, its main focus has to be about the relationship between the guys and how it falls apart. If we don't feel their loss as friends, then the play doesn't resonate as well as it should," Nathanson said.

"It never occurred to me that I would be nominated for the [Governor General's Literary Award]. I didn't know that Playwrights Canada Press put it in for consideration. When my wife phoned to tell me *Talk* was a GG finalist, I didn't quite believe it... It was very surreal."

Nathanson added that he initially "pitched the play" to every Jewish theatre in North America, noting that it was a marketing challenge. He recalled that one rejection letter stated, "As soon as the conflict in the Middle East is settled, we'll be happy to present this show to our subscribers because it will be less controversial then."

Meanwhile, his relationship with his friend in Italy soured. "We had communication for a while and seemingly worked through our differences. However, when the *Winnipeg Free Press* published an article about *Talk*... he read about it online... I received an e-mail from him that was very angry... I have not heard from him since."

Currently, Nathanson is writing a comedy, *One of Ours*, which is set for a first reading in May 2010 with Winnipeg Jewish Theatre producing the world première in April 2011.

"The play has four characters and is set at West Hawk Lake. It's about a Winnipeg Jewish family. There are two brothers, a wife and one of the brothers brings home an unexpected guest. It deals with the issues of family businesses and generational divides."

Nathanson began his career acting on television at age 13. His plays have been staged in New York, Dallas, and at festivals across Canada.

In Winnipeg, Michael has written for Theatre Projects Manitoba, CBC Radio and the University of Winnipeg. He has written two animated, 50-episode Internet-based series for Little Fox, Korea.

Talk will run in Toronto at the Jane Mallett Theatre from March 3 to 20. For tickets, call 416-366-7723.

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Teen jazz sensation scats her way to the top

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Nikki Yanofsky was a kid, she used to bang on chairs to make music. Now she sings to thousands of people worldwide

Yanofsky, 15, who sings mostly jazz and some pop, made her musical debut at the 2006 Montreal International Jazz Festival.

Since then, the Montreal native has recorded a track for *High School Musical 2*, and was the youngest singer to record a song for an Ella Fitzgerald tribute album on Verve Records. She has also recently begun touring internationally.

"I was always listening to music since I was two years old," she said. "I'd always be attracted to anything that resembles music, whether banging on chairs or singing songs."

Yanofsky began singing jazz after hearing Ella Fitzgerald sing. It wasn't long until she was hooked.

"Ella kind of ushered me into jazz music. It became my first love," she said. "[Jazz] is so much fun to sing. I owe a lot to it."

To Yanofsky, singing jazz is a challenge. And the teen likes challenges.

"I kind of like to bite off a little more than I could chew. That's just in general. I enjoy things that make me work a little harder. I guess jazz kind of had that appeal," she said, adding that she also sings pop and hip hop.

When singing, Yanofsky will often lapse into scatting. One of her favourite moments onstage is performing *Airmail Special*, a scat song by Ella Fitzgerald.

"When I sing it, the audience, I don't know how they know, but they know it's more challenging and they start applauding midway. It makes it so worth it," she said.

"Scatting originated with jazz. It's so cool, your voice gets to take a solo… This year and last year, I'm making up my own scats on the spot [while performing]. It gives me freedom to do everything in [my] head. They say, 'It's jazz, anything goes.' It's OK if you make a mistake."

Nikki Yanofsky *[Barry Harris photo]*

But Yanofsky is a perfectionist. She'll spend several hours singing and practising every day, even if she's on vacation.

This preparation helps her feel comfortable on stage. While Yanofsky started performing at a young age, she's never had a problem with nerves.

"I get a rush of excitement, but I never get nervous. It's never like nervous, 'I'm scared,' it's nervous excited," she said.

"The trick to not being nervous is being really prepared, that's what I try to do. The best part is when you hear the audience really appreciate what you put your heart and soul into."

Whether in Montreal or Japan, it isn't difficult for the singer to connect with her audiences.

"If you don't [connect], you have to get them to connect with you," she said. "The audience feels your energy and gives it back to you."

Yanofsky will be performing in Mississauga on Jan. 15 and then in Saskatoon the next day.

"Toronto's one of my favourite cities. It's one of the most Canadian New Yorks," she said.

Apart from playing in New York and other American cities this summer, she toured Japan, and got to take her best friend along.

"It was so much fun. The days that we wouldn't be doing shows, we would go… shopping together. We have the funniest pictures," she said, adding that the country was a different cultural experience.

"The crowd is so different… They're a lot more reserved, but they're so respectful. They don't talk at all [at concerts]," she said.

Yanofsky has recently started writing her own music. She has an album called *New to Me*, with several original songs on it, coming out in the spring.

While writing music is new for the teen, she has been writing poetry since she was 10 years old.

"It's a way of expressing yourself. I'm very expressive. That's why I love music so much," she said.

Yanofsky will be performing in Missisauga on Jan. 15 at the Living Arts Centre and in Saskatoon on Jan. 16 at TCU Place. For more information or to order tickets, visit www.nikkionline.ca.

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Arts & Travel

Brothers examines secular-religious tensions in Israel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The palpable tensions between ultra-religious and secular Jews in Israel is the subject of Igaal Niddam's thoughtful and important Hebrew-language Swiss film, *Brothers*.

Scheduled to be presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea + A Movie series on Sunday, Jan. 17 at 5 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre, this nearly two-hour movie is set in Jerusalem and on a kibbutz.

The theme is skillfully fleshed out by Niddam. Two estranged brothers, originally from Buenos Aires, are reunited in Israel after a long, painful absence. They were separated in the 1970s, when Argentina was convulsed by a period of coups and political violence.

Dan, the older brother, was a left-wing revolutionary in Argentina. He immigrated to Israel with the police hot on his heels. Aaron, who was sent to an Orthodox yeshiva in Brooklyn by his single mother, settled in the United States.

Now, three decades later, the pair meet, but they are worlds apart in terms of their views, values and lifestyles. Dan (Micha Celektar), a kibbutznik, is thoroughly secular. Aaron (Baruch Brener), a Talmud scholar and lawyer, is profoundly religious. He looks and talks like a haredi.

From the moment Aaron arrives at the kibbutz after being picked up at the airport by Dan and his wife, the brothers seem destined to clash. Much to Dan's annoyance, Aaron declines to shake hands with his wife, or share their meals. But compared to the looming courtroom confrontation that will severely dent their already frayed relationship, these are really minor irritants.

Unbeknownst to Dan, Aaron has come to Israel to represent an Orthodox yeshiva in a contentious Supreme Court test case. The head of the yeshiva, a Holocaust survivor, has directed his students to ignore induction orders from Israel's armed forces. Not recognizing the authority of the state, they burn their draft papers, setting the stage for a legal challenge from the government.

Some of the most gripping scenes unfold in the court as Aaron, a revered figure in the eyes of the rebellious rabbinical students, locks horns with the government's lawyer, a staunch secularist named Shelly (Orna Pitussi). Essentially, they engage in a dialogue of the deaf.

Presenting his arguments on behalf of the yeshiva, Aaron delves into religious texts to prove that the students are not draft dodgers and have a right to evade army service.

In defence of this position, Aaron summons a Muslim kadi, who claims that they speak "the same language" in terms of their religious fervour. During his brief appearance in the court, the kadi hints that he does not accept Israel's existence. Is Niddam suggesting that the kadi and Aaron are both anti-Israel? Let the viewer decide.

In her rebuttal, Shelly contends that mandatory call-ups are necessary, because Israel is still fighting for its sheer survival.

The bitter court case, with its reams of newspaper headlines, further embitters Dan's relations with Aaron. "You represent everything I despise," Dan declares. Dan opposes religious coercion and compares Jews like Aaron to a "cancer" gnawing away at Israel's foundations. Aaron accuses Dan of being a self-hating Jew and contends that religion and state are inseparable.

Their philosophical disagreement, a source of acrimony in modern Israel, is encapsulated in a few lines of dialogue in which Israel is perceived by Dan as the Jewish homeland and by Aaron as the Holy Land. Niddam, an able director, mines these tensions to create an upstanding film.

Gripping scenes unfold in the courtroom in *Brothers*.

In the final scenes, *Brothers* makes an unexpected U-turn, with Aaron realizing that secular Jews are worthy of respect and that a corruption scandal has compromised the integrity of the yeshiva. As a result, Aaron angers and alienates his admirers at the yeshiva, particularly the violence-prone, headstrong son of its director.

Still more surprising, Aaron, a bachelor, finds himself inexorably drawn to and "bewitched" by Shelly, a single mom who's not only smart but attractive. But it's not a match that can realistically be consummated.

Brothers, propelled along by a lucid script and stellar performances from its lead actors, deals frankly and intelligently with the theme that Niddam fleshes out so deftly, the gap between civil and religious law in Israel. It's an important issue and Niddam does justice to it.

***THERAC 25*: *Therac 25* is a play about two young people who meet and embark on a relationship in the cancer ward of Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. Playwright Adam Pettle, above, said writing the script was a survival mechanism to preoccupy himself during his radiation therapy in 1995. The characters Alan and Moira each suffer from a different form of cancer. Companionship and humour helps them struggle against isolation and fear, even while their personal boundaries and Moira's worsening condition strain their bond. Directed by Hume Baugh. At Bread and Circus in Kensington Market, 299 Augusta Ave., Toronto. Feb 12 to 21. www.breadandcircus.ca**

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ISRAEL'S THELMA YELLIN BIG BAND PERFORMING IN TORONTO

Some of Israel's finest young musicians arrive in Toronto this week as the **Thelma Yellin Big Band**. They are being billeted by local families from the Anne & Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy as they tour the city and prepare to perform at four venues. The students from the Yellin School join with Toronto's **Jazz FM91 Youth Big Band** to perform a Big Bands concert in the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Jan. 17, 3 p.m. PWYC, suggested donation $10, at the door only. 416-924-6211.

The Thelma Yellin Big Band also performs at The Rex, Monday. Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m.

* * *

Chagall Painting Acquired: The London Jewish Museum of Art secretly purchased a rare **Marc Chagall** painting at a Paris auction last fall, paying only about $43,000 – a fraction of its estimated $1.6-million value – for the work, the *Times* of London reported.

Chagall painted *Apocalypse in Lilac, Capriccio* in 1945, using a crucifixion to represent the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust. The small gallery purchased the work in secret to prevent larger museums from driving up the price and to avoid any potential difficulties in exporting the work out of the country.

The gouache painting reportedly remained in Chagall's personal collection until his death. His son sold it to a private collector in France in 1985. According to a report in JTA, the gallery planned to put the painting on display last week.

* * *

New Adaptation of *Anne Frank*: Encore Entertainment presents *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a play based on the new Tony Award-winning stage adaptation by **Wendy Kesselman** of **Anne Frank**'s famous wartime diary as she hid from the Nazis in an attic for two years with her family.

The cast is led by **Caitlynne Medrek** as Anne, and also features **Mark Albert**, **Judy Gans**, **Fleur Jacobs**, **Morris Jacobs**, **Christina Elizabeth Hall**, **Michael Rausch**, **Amy Babcock** and **Fabio Saposnik**. The director is **Mario D'Alimonte**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Jan. 28 to Feb. 7. $28.50, $27. 416- 872-1111, www.encoreshows.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Mark Barnes**, publisher of *CODA* magazine, discusses "Jazz Publishing and Recording" as part of the Sundays at Bloor series. Sunday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m. Miles Nadal JCC $9 includes refreshments.

• Lecturer **Shlomo Schwartzberg** presents How Hollywood Looks at Politics, as part of the Media Mondays Hollywood and Society series. Includes amazing film clips. Monday, Jan. 18, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. $12. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

•Artist and visual arts teacher **Judy Singer** has a new website that showcases her new lectures, workshops and paintings. www.judysinger.ca

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Toronto psychologist writes about growing up in the '60s

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

When she was 12 years old, Cathy McClure looked at herself in the mirror and was disappointed with her straight, curveless figure. Her mother told her not to worry, insisting that the early teenage years were an awkward stage and she would soon grow into herself.

Her mother couldn't be more prophetic. In *After the Falls* (Knopf Canada), Toronto psychologist Catherine Gildiner's memoir, we see Cathy grow from a rebellious, angry teenage girl who smoked at nine and drove a car in Grade 7, to a strong-willed young woman who was accepted at Oxford University.

Catherine Gildiner

At the same time, Gildiner describes, in wonderful colour, what it was like to grow up in the turbulent decade of the 1960s.

After the Falls is a sequel to her first memoir, the award-winning *Too Close to the Falls*, which received great acclaim when it was published in 1999. That book ended when Cathy turned 13. This one starts from there, with her family (herself and her parents) moving from Lewiston, N.Y., to Buffalo after her expulsion from school.

There is no reason to have read *Too Close to the Falls* to enjoy the sequel – I haven't yet, though after reading this it's certainly on my reading list – although there are some references to events that happened in the earlier book.

The big question, of course, is: why read the memoirs of someone who's not a celebrity or someone I've never heard of?

After the Falls is quite simply a great read. Gildiner takes you into her teenage life with ease. A practising clinical psychologist, she is a gifted writer. In addition to her earlier memoir, she also penned *Seduction*, a bestselling thriller that dealt with the world of academic intrigue.

After the Falls takes place during the 1960s, a decade that's making a resurgence in popular culture, with the likes of the TV show *Mad Men* and the current movie *A Single Man*.

New to Buffalo, Cathy has a hard time fitting in, as any new kid would, especially at that age. She bought the right clothes, "social camouflage," and tried hard to blend in. Seeing her despondence, her parents decided to host a "coming out" party for her, and it was such a success that she became part of the "in-crowd." Cathy makes her way up the pecking order, so by the time she was in Grade 12, in 1963, she was at the summit.

This despite not making the cheerleading team because of her severe acne.

Playing in the background of Cathy's coming of age are major historical and cultural events, including John F. Kennedy's assassination, the Beatles' *Ed Sullivan Show* appearance, and the beatnik, hippie and the civil rights movements.

Cathy, then a Catholic (Gildiner married a Jewish man after the events of this book and joined a Reconstructionist synagogue in Toronto), was an early champion of civil rights, even as a young teenager. While watching the Eichmann trial on TV in the summer of 1961 , she realized how important it is to follow one's own conscience. The hard part, as she says, is to know when the law was wrong and your conscience right.

She puts this faith to the test when she starts a campaign against black lawn jockeys. It was popular at the time for people to have these small statues of black men in jockey outfits holding lanterns on their front lawns.

Cathy was reviled by this display of racism. At her Jewish friend's house one day, she expressed concern to his mother about the lawn jockey on their front lawn. What if someone had a statue in their front yard of "a man from Auschwitz with a yellow star?" she asks.

She gets the idea of forming the Black Lawn Jockey Civil Rights Movement, and, with her friend Fran, she goes out one night to paint the statues white. This act of conscience would be her first run-in with the law. Later on, in college, she would get a visit from the FBI for an unrelated matter.

Throughout these years, Cathy is horrified by the acts of double standards and veiled hypocrisy she keeps witnessing. At Ohio University, she is disgusted by what she calls "institutionalized racism," when she is refused entry to a sorority because she was seen in the company of blacks and "New York types" (Jews).

She decided then that she wasn't going to try to fit in anymore. She felt isolated from the mainstream, but lucky for her, the hippie movement was in its infancy, and at a Buffalo Springfield concert, she realized that within this culture she could get away with being herself.

"I realized at that moment that I no longer needed social camouflage. I might actually get away with being myself."

There are some nasty incidents in this book (including witnessing the gang rape of a teenage girl in her friend's parents' basement by about eight boys, and her father's slow and losing battle with a brain tumour), all of which shape Cathy's moral outlook.

In the end, the fact that Cathy is not a celebrity is what makes this memoir interesting. She is just a normal teenage girl with image issues, parent issues and friendship issues, who all of us can relate to.

The 1960s setting is a perfect backdrop to Gildiner's memoir. As we move from the conservative early '60s to the more radical late '60s, Cathy, as her mother prophesied, does grow into herself and realizes who she is and what she wants to be.

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Well-rounded portrait of Richler based on fresh material

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

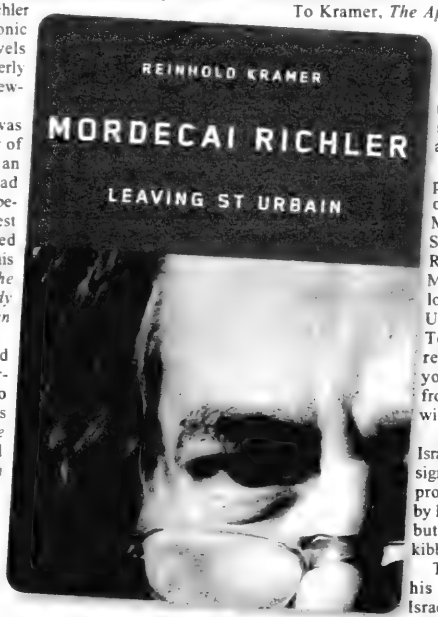
Mordecai Richler was, as his biographer Reinhold Kramer correctly puts it, "one of the greatest writers this country has produced" and "the first 'ethnic' writer to be ready widely in Canada."

Kramer, a Brandon University English professor, makes these reasonable claims in *Mordecai Richler: Leaving St. Urbain*, a well-rounded portrait based on fresh material, including interviews with relatives and friends.

McGill-Queen's University Press plans to reissue it in a paperback edition in April.

The title speaks volumes.

Born into a Montreal Orthodox Jewish family whose values he challenged, Richler was a rebel whose sardonic and richly observed novels sometimes offend the overly sensitive in Montreal's Jewish community.



Richler, whose life was cut short in the summer of 2001, left Montreal as an aspiring writer, his head spinning with dreams of becoming a latter-day Ernest Hemingway. He returned as a published novelist, his resumé bolstered by *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and *Joshua Then and Now*.

Never having painted himself into a corner artistically, Richler also wrote children's books (*Jacob Two-Two and the Hooded Fang*), political works (*Oh Canada! Oh Quebec! Requiem for a Divided Country*), essays (*Hunting Tigers Under Glass*), screenplays, radio and television plays and newspaper and magazine articles.

To say that he had an eclectic range would have been an understatement.

Richler began writing at an early age, but the stinging wit that would be his hallmark did not manifest itself until much later.

He was raised in a dysfunctional household, his mother, Lily, having annulled her marriage to her husband, Moe. Richler, much to his family's annoyance, mined this rich vein of material.

A graduate of Baron Byng High School, he was an indifferent student, not having attained a sufficient grade average to enter McGill University. He got into second-tier Sir George Williams University, but in his second year, he dropped out, having grown bored of being a student.

His horizons stifled by the narrowness of his upbringing, he set sail to Europe at 19 in an attempt to reinvent himself. Kramer, an assiduous researcher, traces Richler's journey from Britain and France to the Balearic island of Ibiza, where he wrote a highly biographical novel, *The Rotten People*, which remains unpublished to this day.

Bubbling with youthful energy and creativity, he submitted stories to *The New Yorker* and *Harper's*, but they were rejected. His prospects cloudy and his money gone, he returned to Montreal, finding a job as a CBC radio news writer on the graveyard shift.

Richler, his sights set higher, finally produced a publishable novel, *The Acrobats*, which, as Kramer observes, was so derivative that all his later themes were set out there.

In Kramer's view, Richler's next novel, *Son of a Smaller Hero*, was an effort "to turn himself into a modern, Gentile writer." Certain that it would be controversial, he and his publisher consulted a lawyer about possible libel suits.

Not surprisingly, the book upset his family and aroused indignation in the Jewish community, some of whose outraged members hurled accusations of anti-Semitism at him.

To Kramer, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* was a great leap forward, enabling Richler to demonstrate that he was "the first major Canadian voice to step outside the British and French traditions."

Some years on, at a première of a film based on this novel, the wife of Montreal liquor tycoon Sam Bronfman approached Richler and said, "Well, Mordecai, you've come a long way from being a St. Urbain Street slum boy." To which he apparently retorted, "Well, Saidye, you've come a long way from being a bootlegger's wife."

In 1962, Richler visited Israel, having secured an assignment from *Maclean's* to profile it. He was humbled by Israel's accomplishments, but none too impressed by kibbutzim.

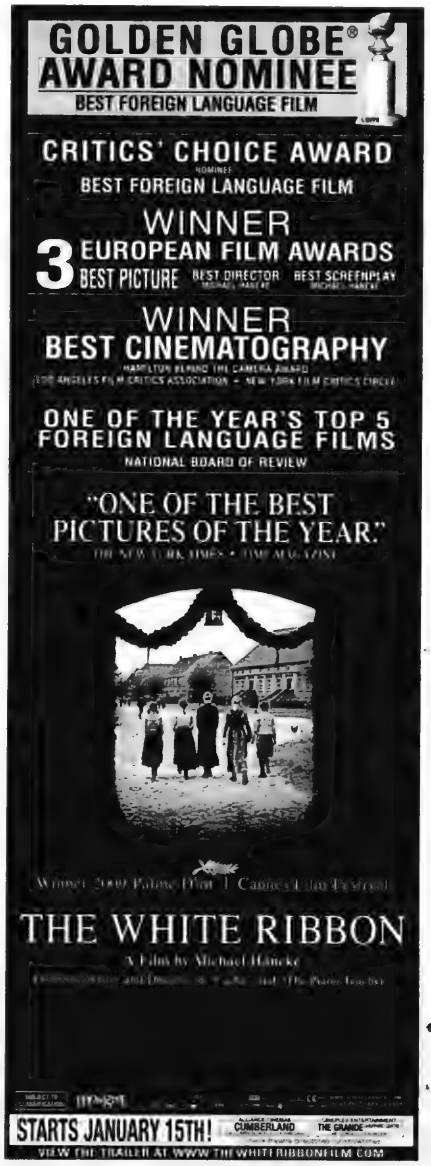
Three decades later, on his second and last trip to Israel, he detected parallels between early Zionists and Palestinian nationalists. His impressions were published in *The New Yorker* and in a book, *This Year in Jerusalem*.

Kramer contends that *Solomon Gursky Was Here*, released in 1989, was his greatest novel, "Dickensian in scope and brilliantly eccentric."

Kramer is not as charitable in his judgment of Richler's harsh assessment of Quebec nationalists. As he puts it, "He was still operating within World War II categories – a *bas les Juifs!* and gang fights on Park Avenue."

During his final years, Kramer notes, Richler mellowed and spoke of revisiting Israel and going to Poland to trace his ancestral roots. He never went, his cancer having returned in 1998. Richler hoped to "beat the rap," but he died as his doctors debated whether surgery would be useful.

He was buried in Montreal's Mount Royal cemetery, which, as every Montrealer knows, overlooks St. Urbain Street. He had come full circle.



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Maccabees captures women's hockey title

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

While the men were hard pressed to even make the playoffs of the Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships, the Israeli Maccabees women's team coasted into the title game, emerging with a 2-1 win over the European Sirens to capture top honours in the women's division.

The Maccabees compiled a 4-1 record overall, racking up wins over teams representing Japan (5-2), Italy (3-2) and China (5-0), as well as the Sirens. The only blemish on their record was a 3-1 loss to the Sirens in a round-robin game in which the Maccabees, with a playoff spot assured, more or less played possum, said Ashley Wronzberg, manager, coach and player with the Maccabees.

The championship game was a tight affair. Following a scoreless first period, the Maccabees registered a shorthanded goal, which was followed by another tally at the tail end of a penalty. Emerging from the sin bin, Teri Goodfellow took a stretch pass at their opponents' blue line and walked in alone on the Sirens goaltender, burying her shot.

The Sirens scored early in the third and much of the rest of the period was played in the Maccabees' end, Wronzberg said. However, the Maccabees played probably their best period of the tournament, checking the Sirens relentlessly and riding the hot hand of 15-year-old goaltender Marissa Kozovski of the Etobicoke Dolphins for the win.

Wronzberg, who plays for the Toronto Sirens of the Golden Blades Women's Hockey League, said most of the Maccabees' lineup consisted of young women "who don't want to quit playing just yet."

The Maccabees had players from a variety of leagues, including a few from the Golden Blades League and one who plays in a men's senior circuit. Most, as it happened, played high school hockey earlier in their careers.

Wronzberg couldn't find enough players to ice a dedicated Israeli team last year, so she joined three other Jewish girls on Team World, which lost in overtime in the semi-finals.

Four years ago, the last time "Israel" iced a team, they finished fifth out of six entrants.

Though they were division winners, the Maccabees could have been even better, Wronzberg said. Three players who expressed interest in the multicultural tournament play college hockey in the NCAA, but were unable to get a release or had to return to their schools.

Still, those who played "had a great time. We had better results than we expected," she said.

The Israeli Maccabees celebrate their gold medal performance. Seen here, top row, from left, Rebecca Haimovitz, Megan Madonik, Sam Agius, Bri Kavanaugh, Kaleigh Davidson, Arlee Stern, Sarah Axler. Bottom row, from left, Teri Goodfellow, Marissa Kozovski, Melissa Wronzberg, Ashley Wronzberg, Amy Shanfield. ***[Jonah Grunfield photo]***

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Stars of David dethroned as champions

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It's hard to repeat as champions. Just ask the Detroit Red Wings and the Israeli Stars of David.

Though both rosters are stocked with star players – the Red Wings with legitimate Hall of Famers, the Davids with, ahem, "Stars" – both had their hopes for a repeat dashed in their recent championship outings.

The Stars of David bowed out without reaching the medal round at the recently concluded Canadian Multicultural Hockey Championships after compiling a mediocre 1-2-1 record. A year earlier, they stunned everyone by winning the title, defeating perennial contenders Polish Hussars 4-3 in the title game.

For the 2009 event, played during the holiday season at Chesswood Arena, the Stars entered with high hopes. But early injuries – top gun Shawn Frank of Dalhousie University went out early in the first game – plus the unavailability of premier players such as Alon Eizenman spelled doom for the Stars, said the team's general manager and co-coach, Alex Voihanski.

Still, the Stars started strong, dispatching the Nubian Kings 8-0 in the opener and leading some to believe the Stars would again be contenders.

However, as champs the Stars "had targets on their backs," with their opponents coming out hard every game, Voihanski said.

Game 2 provided a dose of reality, as the Stars, already without Frank and with captain Stacey Britstone "banged up," lost 5-3 to the Iroquois Silverhawks in a "chippy" affair, said Voihanski.

Game 3 saw the Stars face off against the Macedonian Lions, but despite outplaying them throughout, the Stars came away with a 3-3 tie.

"They had a late goal on a two-man advantage to tie," Voihanski said.

The Stars needed a tie or win in the last game to join seven other playoff teams in the 12-team premier division. Playing their fourth game in two nights, they iced a depleted lineup.

The team had lost defenceman Ryan Goldberg to injury and defenceman Cody Schindermann was ejected early on, leaving the Stars with only two natural defencemen. Forwards were asked to play back and the team couldn't ice three full lines. Not unexpectedly, they ran out of gas and dropped a 5-2 decision to the Hellenic Lightning.

The Lightning lost in the semis to Irish Shamrocks, who went on to defeat the Polish Hussars 5-0 in the title game.

Voihanski said the Stars are a competitive group, but he acknowledged it's tough to put together a winning lineup when many good players have other commitments.

The perennially best teams in the tournament play together year round, while the Stars come together shortly before the first game, get a couple of practices under their belts and then take to the ice in meaningful games.

Voihanski said stellar performances from Aaron Stein, who plays for the University of Western Ontario, and Bryan Weinberg of the Mississauga Chargers were instrumental in keeping the team competitive. Voihanski was joined as coach by Oren Rubin, who managed the defence.

I've got it maid

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

I seem like a nice person. Aside from my husband, my kids and a couple hundred friends who know the truth, I'm quite all right. I volunteer a lot, I like myself (and sometimes even others) and, all in all, I go to bed with a clean conscience.

That's the thing. My conscience is clean, but my house isn't.

It's not that I hate cleaning, it's that I loathe it. Bloody battles with Meir end with me locking myself in the bedroom while he strolls around the rest of the house with a wet rag, mop and some dusters.

In the end, I do leave my safe room, but only to let him air out the blankets, scrub the bath and kiss poor little me.

A month ago, Meir called me into our room for a talk. Usually he shrouds his demure gaze and asks me to stop spending so much money on my unique collection of porcelain witches. But this time, he said stuff like, "Things are going to be different from now on!" (Is it my fault those damned witches are so amiable?)

Then he said sharply, "We're hiring a maid."

I said nothing. He wants to waste his money? Go ahead.

The next morning, Mrs. Maid arrived at my house, awakening me brutally. She was big and strong, and she demanded a big and a strong cappuccino. I went out and got her a nice cup from our neighbourhood café.

I'm not sure she was satisfied, though.

I entered my room and closed the door behind me, in order to commit myself to my regular routine (sprawling on my bed, and observing the ceiling), but after a few hours, I noticed that I was hearing nothing from the outside world, so I got up and found Mrs. Maid browsing the morning papers.

I nudged the bucket and the rag, but it made no impression on her. I also circulated around her a bit, coughing against the broom. Finally, I became afraid that she'd ask me to go out in the cold again and get her another cappuccino, so I ran back to my room and waited.

After five hours, I couldn't take it anymore. I shoved some bills into her big palm and set her free.

I had to leave home, too. It was more dirty and messy then before, so I called up a friend and went to the mall to recuperate with a nice hot latté. I felt so bourgeois, you know, sitting and drinking coffee and bitching about my maid.

When Meir came home, he said nothing. He cleaned up the mess in three short hours, but he didn't complain.

He wanted a maid? He has a maid.

I mean, not exactly. I told her not to come anymore, but I tell Meir that she still does.

With her salary I buy myself stuff and go to the movies.

Meir can't tell the difference (and he even says nothing about my growing collection of witches).

I still go to bed in an unclean house, but these days, my conscience isn't that clean anymore.

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2 tbls butter
5 tbls olive oil, divided
3 garlic cloves, chopped
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2 lg egg whites
1 tsp salt
pinch of black pepper

Heat butter and 1 tblsp oil in heavy skillet over medium heat. Add garlic, stirring, until pale golden. Add bread crumbs, stirring occasionally, about 5 min. Transfer to a bowl, reserving skillet. Cook pasta in pot of boiling salted slightly water until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 c cooking water. Heat remaining 1/4 c oil in large skillet over medium heat; add sage, rosemary, and thyme, stirring, 2 min. Add pasta, 1/2 c reserved water, parsley and toss well. Add more water to moisten if necessary. Serve sprinkled with bread crumbs.

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This year, burn off the fat

FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

This year, I want to inspire you to achieve long-term weight loss. It's not complicated really. Fat loss is about numbers.

I'm sure you've heard this before: if you expend more calories then you take in, you lose weight. That's true, but to achieve one pound of weight loss, you must produce a 3,500 calorie deficit, and you must create that deficit without depriving your body of food. If your body doesn't get the nutrition it needs, it will break down muscle and then bone to feed itself, leaving you with more fat in the end.

To effectively take off fat and keep it off, you need to eat and burn calories every day. That's where exercise comes in.

I found a great website – healthstatus. com/calculate/cbc – that tells you how many calories you burn based on how much you weigh, so I put a list together of some activities, assuming a 155-pound person doing each activity for 60 minutes.

Running at five miles per hour burns 595 calories, but running at eight m/ph burns 948 calories. Walking two m/ph burns 195 calories, while walking at five m/ph burns 362 calories. Yoga and power yoga both burn 362 calories, but hot yoga burns 492 calories. Sitting for an hour burns only 74 calories, while going shopping burns 167 calories. Riding a stationary bike at eight to 10 m/ph burns 492 calories, but if you take it up a notch to a spinning class, you burn 799 calories.

Skiing downhill burns 613 calories an hour, but cross-country skiing burns 799 calories. Play tennis doubles for an hour and you burn 297 calories, but turn it into a one-on-one match and you burn 427 calories.

Light weightlifting burns 241 calories, while heavy weightlifting burns 427 calories an hour.

So get out there and do something this year.

E-mail me at felycesfitness@rogers.com to learn more.

Tikkun olam by a whisker

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

It's 2 a.m., and Roz Gelade might be walking through your backyard.

A little while ago, Roz, the president of Fostering Felines Cat Rescue, rescued a six-year-old brown tabby by the name of Bruno. He was about to go into an adoptive home, but instead he got away. Only days before, he had been shaven in a lion cut, so his fur was very thin.

Roz and some dedicated volunteers put out cat cages, and she recruited other volunteers to look for Bruno, including me. (Recently, I became one of Roz's board members.) It was indeed 2 a.m.

Roz came by to pick me up in her proud yet dishevelled mobile office, with notebooks, cages and food scattered throughout. I smiled as I always do with Roz, because I am so incredibly proud of her for doing what she loves, and for doing it well.

I told her we had to first stop at an all-night convenience store for some hot chocolate. We did. So there we were, in the wee hours of the night, hanging out in front of that store, sipping a hot drink and shmoozing. At 49 years of age, that made me very happy. It's good to hang.

She told me how sad she was that Bruno was out in the cold alone.

You think to yourself, "Cats? That's nuts. Why would anyone give time to saving a cat when they could save or help a person?"

Roz might agree with that, or something close to it. Her love for cats, she told me, enhances her love for people. Animal activists like Roz are refreshing, because many of them are so stridently anti-human. But Roz isn't like that.

Five years ago, she started rescuing cats, fostering them out and then finding them adoptive homes – or "forever homes," as she calls them. Later, she was instrumental in launching the first Canadian spay/neuter clinic. Recently, Roz orchestrated the amalgamation of two cat rescue organizations. She is a pioneer, an innovator, a not-for-profit entrepreneur in an industry dotted with some very extraordinary people.

Like the prophets who loved animals – such as Moses, who went after a lone sheep – Roz is a compassionate and resourceful animal lover. She's the real deal. She should run the Humane Society.

It was cold, and standing around meant fidgeting in somebody's backyard in the middle of the night. The cat wasn't waiting for us in the cages. They were empty. But slowly, meticulously and with soft, loving care, Roz placed a folded blanket under the cages so the metal wouldn't freeze, and therefore the cat wouldn't, either.

We drove up to my condo at 3:30 a.m. and talked for a little while. Roz was still melancholy because Bruno was nowhere to be found. But, she said, "maybe he will be soon and things will be alright."

I told her to read the story of Jacob, who didn't know if Joseph, his son, was dead or alive and, therefore, couldn't mourn or celebrate – a terrible condition for a loved one to be in. She did. It helped. We talked about the importance of developing a philosophy of suffering.

Despite all the fun that people have at her expense – calling her "cat lady" – Roz has never wavered from her dreams, her very humane and compassionate dreams of rescuing, fostering, adopting out and protecting the cat population.

So if you see the bushes in your backyard moving late one night and start to reach for your rifle, look more closely. It might be a very special person acting out her dreams, repairing the world while whispering to a wild cat, "Everything will be OK."

It might be Roz Gelade.

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This Week

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An Israeli search-and-rescue team finds a man trapped in the rubble of a building in Port-au-Prince. They pulled him out and saved his life. [*Israel Sun photo*]

Saving lives amid the ruins

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Jewish federations and other Jewish organizations are mobilizing to help Haitians suffering the devastating effects of last week's 7.0 magnitude earthquake, the strongest one in Haiti in 200 years.

But amid the news of staggering amounts of death, injury and property damage, including damage to both the National Palace and United Nations peacekeeping mission's headquarters, there was unexpected good news at the Toronto offices of Ve'ahavta – the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee, which recently became involved with a Haitian orphanage – the aptly named House of Hope, in Port-au-Prince, 12 kilometres from the epicentre of the earthquake.

"We just got word late this morning that, miraculously, the orphanage is still standing and all the kids are still alive, while villagers have died and are coming to the orphanage for respite," Avrum Rosensweig, Ve'ahavta's president and founder, told *The CJN* last Thursday.

Please see related stories on pages 4, 8, 9 and 31

A Ve'ahavta board member had sent the orphanage a satellite phone with a visiting medical group, Rosensweig said.

"We were all braced to get the worst news, that these 200 children had perished," Rosensweig said. Sadly, he added that the number of orphans needing services in Haiti will increase dramatically. "This tears at all our heartstrings. The Jewish People is very familiar with tragedy."

Ironically, a small group of Ve'ahavta staff members would have arrived in Haiti on the day of the earthquake.

With a per capita income of $3.60 per day, Haiti is the most impoverished country in the Western Hemisphere and thus especially vulnerable to natural disasters, a Ve'ahavta news release stated last week.

As of Monday morning, six days after the Jan. 12 disaster, Ve'ahavta had collected $152,000 for its Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund.

Continued on page 21

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Manitoba and Israel share water ideas – please see page 33

The News in Brief

Canada

Shabbat For Darfur

TORONTO — A cross-Canada Darfur Shabbat will take place on Jan. 22 and 23, in which rabbis and synagogues of all denominations, from Victoria to St. John's, are being urged to dedicate part of their Sabbath service or program to bringing about an end to the genocide in Sudan's Darfur region. Flyers on how to take action will be available in shuls during Darfur Shabbat. Details are available at www.cjc.ca/darfur, Canadian Jewish Congress said.

Churchill Play Staged

WINNIPEG — The controversial 10-minute play *Seven Jewish Children* by British playwright Caryl Churchill will be staged Jan. 24 as part of a festival devoted to her work Jan. 21 to Feb. 8 in Winnipeg. It's one of 17 Churchill plays in the city's ninth annual Master Playwright Festival. Past artists highlighted included Samuel Beckett, David Mamet and Bertolt Brecht. The play, about Israel's Gaza invasion last winter, has been staged in a number of Canadian cities. It has been criticized as anti-Israel and anti-Semitic, with some saying it likens Israelis to Nazis.

World

Gies Found Diary

AMSTERDAM — Miep Gies, the woman who recovered Anne Frank's diary, has died Jan. 11 at age 100 in the Netherlands. Gies was the last surviving member of the small group that hid Frank and her family from the Nazis. After the family's arrest by the Gestapo in 1944, Gies returned to the attic where they hid and found the diary. She always denied her heroism. "I stand at the end of the long, long line of good Dutch people who did what I did and more," she once said. Israeli President Shimon Peres sent the Dutch queen condolences on her death.

Shooter Gets Life

SEATTLE — The man who shot and killed one woman and wounded five others at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle in July 2006 was sentenced to life in jail. At his sentencing Jan. 14, Naveed Haq, 34, apologized "from the depth of my being" and blamed his poorly treated mental illness for his actions. A jury last month found Haq guilty of all eight counts against him. It agreed with the prosecution that he knew what he was doing. A previous jury was deadlocked, precipitating a second trial.

'Zionists' Blamed

TEHRAN — Iran's foreign ministry said "Zionists and American agents" planted a remote-controlled bomb in a motorcycle that killed Iranian nuclear scientist Massoud Ali-Mohammadi, 50, outside his home Jan. 12. But reformist websites hinted the Tehran University professor's endorsement of a rival to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in last year's election rather that his possible work on Iran's nuclear program may have been why he was killed.

Pope Urges Dialogue

ROME — Pope Benedict XVI urged "universal recognition" of both Israel's right to exist and the right of Palestinians to a state. In his traditional New Year's address Jan. 11 to diplomats accredited to the Vatican, the Pope said that on his Mideast trip last May, he "urgently appealed" for dialogue and respect between Israelis and Palestinians.

City Worker Probed Over Anti-Jewish Sites

CALGARY — A city worker in Calgary is being probed for allegedly running at least two anti-Jewish websites.

A "full investigation" of the unnamed 56-year-old foreman with the city's parks and recreation department was launched Jan. 11 after the existence of at least two anti-Jewish blogs, both linked to the man, was revealed to city officials, the *Calgary Herald* reported.

"We just became aware of the issue, so we are doing our investigation to determine an appropriate response," city solicitor Paul Tolley was quoted as saying. "We need to determine a few facts, and then we can respond to this."

The sites in question include a blog and a Facebook page. They contain links to conspiracy theories and writings condemning Jews as racist, power hungry and corrupt.

The *Herald* reported that it does not appear that the man actually writes the material, though anti-Semitic content apparently penned by the same man can be found on many other online comment forums.

In an e-mail to the paper, the man denied running the blog, jewwatchskullnboner.blogspot.com. As of Jan. 13, the blog was inactive.

Officials said the city's code of conduct for staff can include behaviour and actions outside of work hours.

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SYLVIA WAKS ז"ל

We extend our heartfelt condolences to her beloved husband Henry, children Jay and Debbie, Freddie and Linda, sister Sophie Dymant, grandchildren and great-granddaughter.

May her memory serve as an everlasting blessing to those who were fortunate to have known her.

Menahem Ben-Sasson, *President, Hebrew University of Jerusalem*
Nathan Lindenberg, *National President*
Rami Kleinmann, *National Director*

The Canadian Jewish news

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Full-body scans OK to save lives, rabbis say

Rabbi Reuven Bulka

Security devices installed at a number of Canadian airports

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

Full-body scanners are already in some Canadian airports, and more are coming soon. The question for many observant Jews is whether these scanners create a halachic problem (one related to Jewish Law) for Jewish travellers.

That is, will these new security measures breach the laws of modesty observed by traditional Jews, both male and female? This may, in fact, be the case, some Canadian rabbis say.

Full-body scans use technology that provides a three-dimensional image of a person's body underneath the clothing. Transport Canada believes this "virtual strip search" technology will be less objectionable to the majority of Canadians than a physical search.

While those being scanned are not actively revealing themselves, "their dignity is being compromised," says Ottawa's Rabbi Reuven Bulka, a rabbinic emissary for Canadian Jewish Congress and an immediate past Congress co-president.

However, that dignity must always be balanced by what he sees as the government's "right and responsibility to do whatever is necessary in order to protect its citizens.

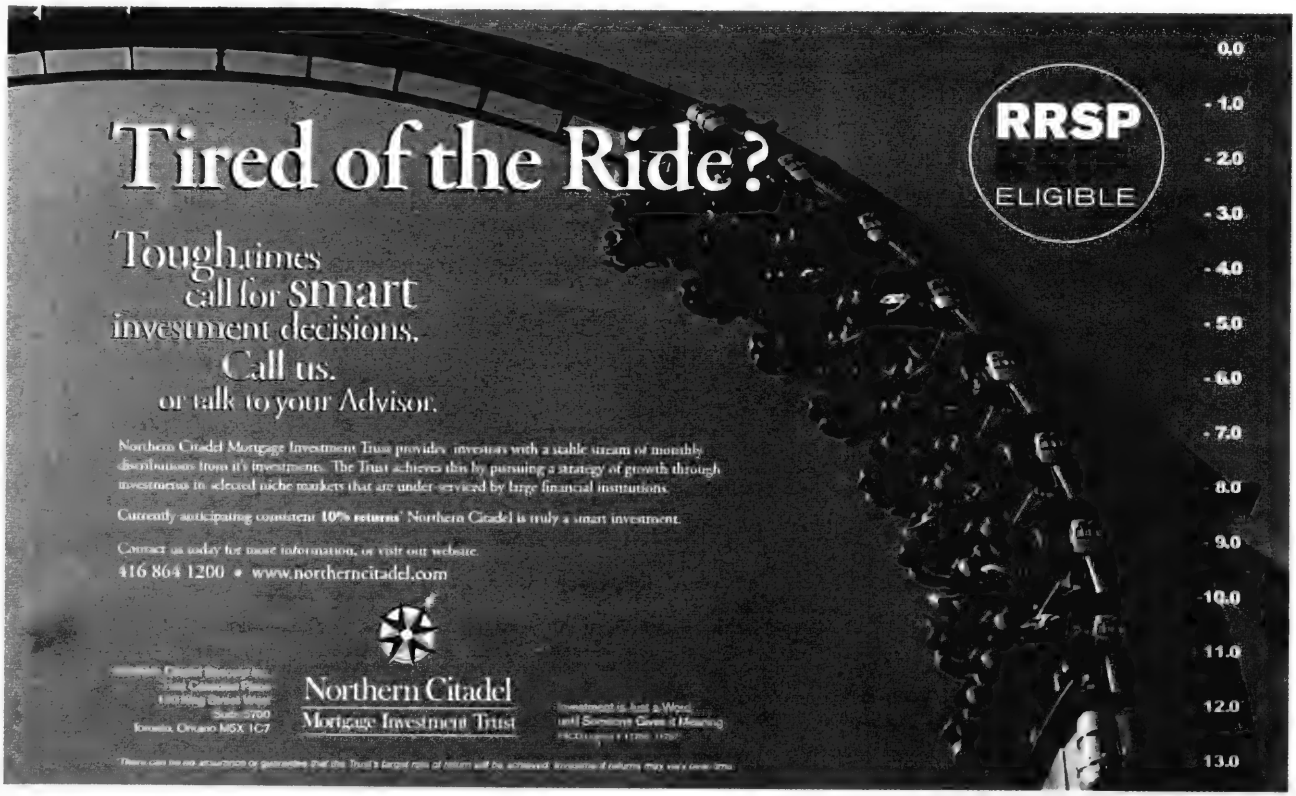
"It would be wrong for us as a matter of principle to stand in the way of what they're doing to protect the country," Rabbi Bulka says.

Several unanswered questions could resolve concerns, he adds. "Who exactly sees it? What exactly does it show?" Without obstructing security, travellers should always have the right to know the answers to those questions, and to "request that their screening be done by someone of the same gender."

"I don't understand what the whole fuss is about," says Rabbi Jay Kelman, founder of Toronto's Torah in Motion and a *CJN* columnist, particularly given the government's reassurances about the type of images that will be available. To save a life, it's permitted to violate almost every Torah prohibition, he says. "Adultery is an exception… [but] this is not adultery."

Rabbi Kelman does question whether full-body scanners are the best means of ensuring travellers' security. "Is this the most effective means of screening terrorists?"

Continued on page 15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A lesson learned

From the editor's desk...

Even among our very first moments some 3,500 years ago around the mountain in Sinai called Chorev, we, the Jewish People, were instructed to help the downtrodden and the suffering.

It was a lesson we learned well. And it was a lesson that has been put into action by every generation in its own time and in its own way, according to the needs of the hour.

In the news pages of this edition of *The CJN*, we have provided a general story reporting primarily on the mobilization into action of many of our Canadian communal organizations after the destruction and chaos in Haiti. The Jewish response, however, has been from communities around the world.

In this column, I wish to provide more information about that response to the catastrophe, specifically by Israel-based organizations.

It should be remembered that Israel has a long history of immediately responding to peoples and countries struck by natural or man-made disasters. In the recent past, Israel has sent rescue teams to:

- Kenya in 2006 to help save lives after the collapse of a 50-storey building.
- China in 2004 after a car bomb demolished the China Hilton.
- Kenya in 2003 following a terror strike at the Mombasa Hotel.
- India in 2001 after a massive earthquake.
- Northwestern Turkey in 1999 following an earthquake.
- Greece in 1999 following an earthquake.

And there were additional instances in Kenya again, and in Argentina, Armenia and Mexico.

* * *

At the cabinet meeting in Israel this past Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the following statement:

"I would like to say a few words about the horrific tragedy that took place in Haiti. What happened there is a large-scale disaster of very great proportions. The lack of protective measures only deepened the tragedy. I think that it is our obligation, as the State of Israel, as the state of the Jewish People, to mobilize immediately – and this we have done…

"This is in the best tradition of the Jewish People; this is the true covenant of the State of Israel and the Jewish People… despite being a small country, we have responded with a big heart. The fact is… that this was an expression of our Jewish heritage and the Jewish ethic of helping one's fellow. I hope that the [IDF] team saves lives and that Haiti succeeds in recovering from this awful tragedy."

* * *

The IDF medical and rescue team set up a field hospital in Port-Au-Prince and is treating patients there – injured children from different disaster-struck areas.

There are also two search and rescue groups who, along with specially trained search dogs, are locating and rescuing survivors trapped in ruined buildings, including many who were injured during the collapse of the UN headquarters. The Israelis are scheduled to stay in Haiti for a minimum of two weeks.

* * *

IsraAID, a non-governmental organization, supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the American Jewish Committee, B'nai Brith International, the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago and other federations in North America, sent a team of medical professionals to Haiti.

The IsraAID group is treating patients and has joined local physicians at the site of the collapsed central hospital where thousands of wounded need help.

According to IsraAID's press release, it set up treatment rooms in four empty rooms at the crumbled hospital, treating patients with intravenous and other medications. In light of the scale of the disaster, the IsraAID press release noted, it is preparing an additional team of volunteers to be sent next week.

* * *

Israel's renowned post-disaster identification unit, ZAKA, arrived in Haiti wearing their distinctive, high-gloss yellow vests.

ZAKA is an acronym in Hebrew for *Zikui Korbanot Ason* (Identification of the Victims of Disaster).

In its press release, the organization stated that "on arrival, the ZAKA delegation was dispatched to the collapsed eight-storey university building where cries could be heard from the trapped students. After 38 hours of work around the clock, working with a Mexican military delegation and other Jewish volunteers from Mexico, the ZAKA volunteers succeeded Saturday [Shabbat] in pulling eight students alive from the rubble."

Search, rescue and saving lives are what we were commanded to do far back in time at Chorev. And we have been doing it ever since.

–MBD

An IsraAID doctor treats an injured girl

SeeJN

SEEKING AND RESCUING

Col. Itzik Kreis, head of the Israel Defence Forces medical rescue team field hospital in Haiti, tends to an injured girl in Port-au-Prince.

[Israel Sun photo]

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Expelled members launch lawsuit against B'nai Brith

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

B'nai Brith Canada (BBC) is being sued by nine former or current members for what they call "oppressive" and "unfairly prejudicial" conduct that led to their expulsions.

The plaintiffs are seeking $990,000 in damages plus reinstatement as members in good standing. They're also asking the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to compel B'nai Brith Canada to produce its bank records, to appoint inspectors "to investigate the affairs of BBC," and to declare much of the organization's new constitution invalid.

B'nai Brith has filed a defence denying the allegations. The claims have yet to be proven in court.

The case arises out of a dispute between several longstanding senior members of the organization – who were expelled – and the organization's leadership over a number of alleged irregularities. The former members contend that B'nai Brith directors have wrested control of the organization from its members, who are organized in lodges, and that B'nai Brith "has used tactics amounting to intimidation" to silence opposition.

Claim alleges BBC tried to 'limit [the] functions and powers of the individual lodges'

The plaintiffs allege that intimidation by B'nai Brith has been implemented through changes to the organization's constitution, "provisions that were never properly enacted by the members in accordance with the bylaws of the BBC, or presented to and approved by the Ministry of Industry (Canada) as statutorily required, in order to suppress any criticism of the management of the BBC or requests for financial accountability."

The plaintiffs further allege that B'nai Brith officers have failed to abide by rules governing disclosure of audited financial statements at the group's 2006 annual general meeting.

B'nai Brith's statement of defence rejected allegations of constitutional misdeeds, saying any changes were conducted in accordance with legal norms and were upheld by a court of B'nai Brith International (BBI), which is empowered to adjudicate internal disagreements.

The plaintiffs were expelled from B'nai Brith after a disciplinary committee hearing in January 2008 for "conduct unbecoming a member." The plaintiffs – who include Lou Ronson, a former B'nai Brith national president and a member since 1939, and former national president Harvey Crestohl – allege the disciplinary committee hearing was fraught with legal and procedural errors "such that the plaintiffs were thereby denied a fair hearing conducted in accordance with the principles of natural justice."

They say they were never informed who laid the complaint against them or what specific conduct merited expulsion. As well, they say they weren't permitted to cross-examine their accusers, they weren't allowed to present submissions on their own behalf, and that the hearing was adjourned with a request for disclosure of documents still pending.

Their statement of claim alleges B'nai Brith has tried to "limit [the] functions and powers of the individual lodges and their members." Further, they allege that B'nai Brith's directors have failed to provide "complete and frank disclosure of the financial affairs as required of the BBC, and enlightenment as to the governance of the BBC.

"The plaintiffs state and the fact is that the directors of the BBC have effectively taken control of the organization from its membership, and in part by way of the taking of such control, failed to provide details of contracts involving themselves and other associated bodies of which they have direction."

B'nai Brith's statement of defence asserts that the group's constitution requires "any concerns, conflicts, controversies or disputes are to be raised and dealt with exclusively within the BBC structure," which includes appeals of disciplinary committee findings.

The defence acknowledges that "many of the plaintiffs were longstanding members of BBC and BBI. However, the plaintiffs' tenure and past accomplishments did not insulate them from subsequently engaging in conduct unbecoming a member of these organizations."

The defence alleges that in late 2005 and early 2006, a number of B'nai Brith members "began circulating defamatory documents which made allegations about the organization and the methods by which it was operating. This group of members eventually began calling themselves the Concerned Members of BBC (CMOBBC)."

The statement of defence goes on to say that the CMOBBC circulated a document at B'nai Brith's annual general meeting in June 2006 that contained "serious and unsubstantiated allegations against BBC and its leadership. The statement was signed by a number of BBC members identifying themselves as members of the CMOBBC."

Continued on page 14

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Haiti's cry is our call

"You have to understand that the situation is true madness, and the more time passes, there are more and more bodies, in numbers that cannot be grasped. It is beyond comprehension," said Mati Goldstein, the head of the six-man delegation from ZAKA, the volunteer organization from Israel that specializes in disaster victim identification.

Goldstein was of course referring to the hellish aftermath of last week's earthquake in Haiti.

As of this writing, it's feared that as many as 200,000 people may have been killed by the quake. The final gruesome number will not be told until the rubble of the destruction is lifted away.

The city of Port-au-Prince has been devastated. More than a quarter of a million people are actually now living on the streets there. Perhaps a third of the country's entire population of some nine million people are believed to be in need of assistance simply to get to the next day.

Corpses are piled in the streets. Corpses protrude from beneath crumbled structures. Corpses are buried in mass graves.

Men, women and children, dazed by the sheer unfathomability and tsunami-like force of what happened, roam the streets, looking and mostly not finding, the people who were once their family.

An IsraAID doctor tends a patient

We have all seen and been moved by the sorrowful images. We have all heard and been pierced by the tearful sobbing of the survivors.

We express our most profound condolences to all the sufferers and survivors of this disaster. We hope they will find in the distant quiet of days yet to come whatever comfort memory may bring to them.

Their cry today, however, is our call.

We – the citizens of the world – must respond to ensure first that the lives of the earthquake survivors are safe and secure. No one can help Haitians retrieve what they have lost. But we can try to help the country put in place ways and means to rebuild what has been destroyed.

We are grateful for and proud of our government's swift and unequivocal response to the suffering in Haiti. And we are especially proud of the immediate, generous, giving response from across the wide diversity of the Jewish world to the unbelievable disaster that has befallen the people of Haiti.

The Jewish community understands the essential nature of our obligation. It is not a matter of charity. It is a matter of justice.

Haiti's cry is our call. Respond.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Two-and-a-half years after Israel invaded Lebanon, Israel's national unity cabinet voted 16-6 to pull out of the war-torn country in a three-stage withdrawal that was slated to be completed by the fall of 1985.

Editorials & Letters

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Access to Israel's holy sites

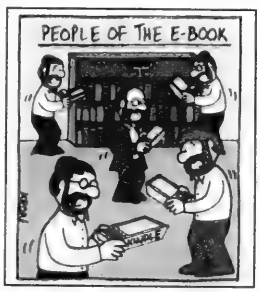
Regarding the recent news item concerning access to the Western Wall, the Canada-Israel Committee reaffirms its view that the pluralistic nature of Israel is an essential value that characterizes the Jewish state ("A Day at the Kotel," Dec. 24). There must be equal access to Israel's holy sites for all whose approach is respectful and anchored in a genuine desire to give expression to the deep spiritual sentiments the Western Wall evokes.

Moshe Ronen, Chair
Canada-Israel Committee

* * *

Funding of services for Israeli Arabs

Brian Rothberg repeats the canard that Israeli Arabs "receive less funding for municipal, educational and health services," but neglects to mention that one of the major reasons for this is that Israeli Arabs pay less in taxes ("Discrimination against Israeli Arabs," Letters, Jan. 14). Writing in the *Jerusalem Post* last year, columnist Seth Frantzman pointed out that only 18 per cent of Israeli Arabs pay municipal taxes, while 53 per cent of Israeli Jews do. This is not, as some claim, because Arabs are unable to pay more. Municipal taxes are based on the size of houses, but statistics in Arab villages are notoriously inaccurate, with the result that many people are taxed less than they should be.



Rothberg then gives proof to the assertion that a lie repeated often enough becomes the truth, when he refers to the West Bank as "land that no international law sanctions as Israel's." In 1991, Eugene Rostow, undersecretary of state in the Johnson administration, demonstrated conclusively, based on a clear reading of international law, that "the Jews have the same right to settle there as they have to settle in Haifa." It is only through repetition of the claim of illegality by Israel's foes that supporters of Israel such as Rothberg have come to believe it is true. While international opinion may claim Israel's "occupation" is illegal, international law does not, unless it is twisted well beyond the framers' original intentions.

Finally, Rothberg complains that checkpoints go "far beyond security needs." Yet recently we saw what happens when supposedly "unnecessary" checkpoints are dismantled, with the tragic murder of a father of seven. While I applaud Rothberg's concern for the "other," I ask him to just occasionally spare a thought for his own, too.

Stephen Tannenbaum
Thornhill, Ont.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

* * *

Rights of Israeli Arabs

I don't worry too much about the rights of Israeli Arabs, because they have more rights than most Muslims living throughout the Islamic world ("Discrimination against Israeli Arabs," Letters, Jan. 14). I don't worry about Jews hating Muslims, because I know that it is not a real problem. But I do worry about the increasingly violent political, intellectual and religious hate against Jews and Israel by Muslims.

I also worry about the people of Israel, who continue to be threatened by terrorism, advanced weapons imported by Hezbollah and Hamas, the growing hatred and desire to punish Israel – materially and militarily – by left wingers in many western countries, and the radicalism that has Muslims killing one another and targeting most everyone else.

Gary Gerofsky
Dundas, Ont.

* * *

Jewish 'Earth Day'

Many contemporary Jews look on Tu b'Shvat (Jan. 29-30 this year) as a Jewish "Earth Day" and use Tu b'Shvat seders as occasions to discuss how Jewish values can be applied to reduce many of today's ecological threats. This is now more important than ever.

While Judaism teaches that "the Earth is the Lord's" (Psalms 24:1), and that we are to be partners with God in preserving the environment, there are daily news reports about water shortages, air and water pollution, rapid species extinction and soil erosion and depletion. Tu b'Shvat is the New Year for Trees, the date on which the fate of trees is decided for the coming year. Hence, it is an ideal time to consider the rapid destruction of tropical rain forests and other valuable habitats. While we are already facing many negative effects of rapid global climate change, recent scientific reports have projected that the earth's average temperature will increase by 2 degrees Fahrenheit to 11 degrees Fahrenheit in a century, and this would have catastrophic impacts on ecosystems and humanity.

While Israel has made remarkable progress in many areas, it faces the worst drought in its history, badly polluted rivers, severe air pollution in its major cities and industrial areas, rapidly declining open space, congested roads, and an inadequate mass transit system. I urge Jews to use Tu b'Shvat and activities related to this increasingly important holiday as occasions to start to make tikkun olam, the repair and healing of the planet, a central focus in Jewish life today.

Richard H. Schwartz
Staten Island, N.Y.

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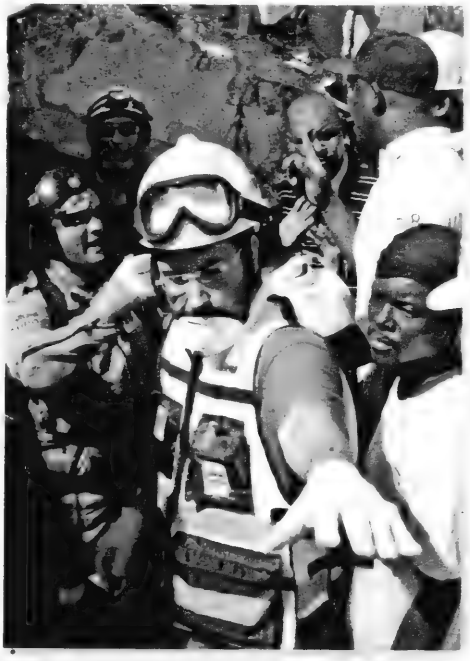
Israelis help the earthquake victims

Clockwise from top left, an Israel Defence Forces (IDF) rescue team pulls a man alive from the rubble of a fallen building; Dr. Jennifer Lee Ashton, an American doctor from the UN medical facility meets with the physician who heads the Israeli field hospital, Col. Itzik Kreis, to discuss possible collaboration between the two relief groups; a volunteer from ZAKA, Israel's post-disaster identification unit, works with Haitians amid the chaos; the IsraAID medical team, which is supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and other organizations, operates in a open-air soccer field in Port-Au-Prince; and members of the IDF search-and-rescue team arrive in Haiti.

[Israel Sun, ZAKA and IsraAID photos]



Opinions

Denying campus anti-Semitism isn't helpful

Parliamentarians from around the world met in London, England, just over a year ago for the inaugural meeting of the Inter-parliamentary Committee for Combating Antisemitism. As a followup to the London conference, and in accordance with the principal resolution that emanated from it, the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (CPCCA) was established.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

Comprising 22 members of Parliament from all parties in the House of Commons, the CPCCA is proceeding to address its key objective, which is to explore, confront, and combat anti-Semitism in Canada today. Although its mandate is broad – with the intent of examining the diverse nature of contemporary anti-Semitism in its many permutations – the coalition has so far chosen to focus more particularly on the evident rise in anti-Semitic activity at Canadian universities.

More than 55 "expert witnesses" have so far testified before coalition members, with further hearings still to come. Reading their transcripts, or listening to their recorded discussions (http: \www.cpcca.ca), is informative, though somewhat predictable.

While many of the scholars and student groups who have already expressed their views recognize the scourge of mounting anti-Semitism on their campuses – manifested primarily by demonization and delegitimization of Israel – and are both willing to label it as such and speak to the chilled academic environment that it has created, there are, of course, those who disagree.

Notably, it's the university administrators who have seemed most inclined to downplay the extent and seriousness of the issue, often couching their remarks in ivory tower jargon or non-committal platitudes. This isn't surprising, since the last thing they'd want to do is sound any alarm bells that might threaten their student enrolment or fundraising capabilities.

What's curious, therefore, is why the CPCCA has renewed its call for more of the institutional leadership to be at a further hearing on Jan. 25. Of the initial invitations that went out to the presidents of 25 of our major universities to attend a session last November, only one made a presentation in person, and just four others sent their representatives. Given their apparent disinterest, coupled with the expectation that their testimony will likely differ little from what has already been conveyed by a sampling of their proxies, it's unclear what benefit there might be in encouraging them to attend en masse.

As reported on the CPCCA website, one expert witness told the inquiry that "Canada is a pioneer of campus anti-Semitism among democratic nations." This charge that should attract the attention of anyone who wishes to make the halls of our academy safer and more hospitable for Jewish students and faculty. Denying that the problem exists is not helpful.

IDF policies in West Bank aren't capricious

Israeli military commanders often find themselves between a rock and a hard place. In the West Bank, they're required to perform a delicate balancing act between their responsibility for Israelis' safety and their international law obligations to ensure, as far as possible, normal civil life for Palestinians. The case of Route 443 is the latest to have come to the public's attention.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

Route 443 is a 26-kilometre highway connecting northern Jerusalem to an interchange on the main Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway. It's now the second-most-popular route for people travelling to the capital from the country's central area and connects the burgeoning town of Modi'in to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The highway was completed during the 1990s. Its eastern 14 kilometres run through the West Bank. Privately owned Palestinian lands were expropriated to enable paving parts of it. Until 2000, this segment was used by Israelis and Palestinians alike. It served Palestinians in adjacent towns and villages and provided them quick access to two regional centres, Ramallah and El Bireh. Palestinian buses and taxis freely travelled the road, as did private, commercial, medical and agricultural vehicles.

That ended after the onset of the second intifadah in October 2000. Israeli vehicles travelling on 443 became targets of Palestinian attacks. Stones and Molotov cocktails were daily occurrences. Gunshots fired from passing vehicles or stationary ambushes became common. People were injured. From December 2000 to August 2002, five Israelis were killed along the route. Commanders reacted by adding patrols and lookout posts. Fences were erected along parts of the road. At one point, tanks were stationed on the hillsides surrounding it. These measures didn't suffice, and eventually Palestinian vehicular travel on the highway was limited and later prohibited.

From 2004 to 2007, I served as the Israel Defence Forces' legal adviser in the West Bank. During this period, we received complaints regarding travel restrictions on 443, claiming that banning Palestinian traffic on the road contravened both international and Israeli domestic law; that the IDF wasn't properly balancing its obligations under the rules of belligerent occupation, and that 443 had effectively become an internal Israeli road. Some organizations equated Israel's policy to apartheid.

In July 2007, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel (ACRI), representing Palestinian villages affected by the travel restrictions, petitioned the Supreme Court. Besides the assertions detailed above, ACRI claimed IDF policy on 443 was disproportionate, because means less harmful to Palestinians could be adopted to ensure Israelis' safety on the road.

The state replied, explaining the travel restrictions' military necessity and describing a series of alternative roads paved for Palestinians within the framework of the security barrier project, roads aimed at connecting Palestinian towns and villages adversely affected by 443 travel restrictions and the barrier. These roads shorten travel time from outlying villages to central towns, but don't provide access as quickly as 443. It added that the IDF was implementing a plan to allow some Palestinian vehicles to travel on the road.

In December, the Supreme Court published its judgment in the case, finding for the petitioners. The majority ruled that the IDF wasn't authorized to turn 443 into an "internal Israeli" road, reiterating a position that roads paved on expropriated Palestinian lands could benefit both Palestinians and Israelis, but not only the "occupying power," particularly when such policy would last a long time.

The full panel declared the travel restrictions' military advantage disproportionate to the harm they inflicted upon Palestinians and that alternatives hadn't been properly considered. In summation, the majority gave the IDF five months to implement a plan that would safely renew Palestinian travel on 443.

In the obiter of her concurring opinion, Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch addressed assertions that the IDF's policy on 443 was tantamount to apartheid. She warned against referring to security measures adopted to protect people travelling on roads as segregation based on improper racial or ethnic grounds, adding that the comparison between preventing Palestinian traffic along 443 and the crime of apartheid was so extreme that it shouldn't have been raised at all.

IDF commanders must weigh similar matters daily. They don't always get it right. But rest assured that they don't act capriciously, and that even sensitive military matters are subject to judicial review.

Kairos, CIDA and the NGO wars

The Tory government's decision to end taxpayer funding for political advocacy under the banner of "humanitarian aid" by church-backed groups such as Kairos and Alternatives has sparked a knock-down, drag-out fight that echoes as far as Israel.

Despite claims by officials and supporters, the evidence clearly shows that both groups have joined the anti-Israel demonization campaign – including boycotts, divestment and sanctions – as part of a broader strategy that aims to end Jewish sovereignty. Whatever good Kairos may do elsewhere, its participation in the immoral war against Israel is unacceptable.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

In Israel, a similar debate is underway after revelations that millions of dollars from European governments are being channelled to support groups that promote allegations of Israeli "human rights violations" and "war crimes." These groups routinely strip away the context of terrorism, and not only the legitimacy but the necessity of Israel's responses to protect its citizens.

As a result of these revelations, legislation is being prepared in Israel to require transparency in NGO funding provided by foreign governments. Such funding violates accepted diplomatic practice, particularly between democracies, and the tight secrecy of these European decisions accentuates the breach of civil behaviour. In newspapers, on talk shows and in polls, Israelis are expressing strong criticism about the unchecked ability of externally funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to set biased agendas and promote false and poisonous perceptions of Israel.

This criticism is new. For many years, NGOs claiming to promote moral virtues and good deeds have been protected by a "halo effect." Virtually no one, including journalists, checked for bias or questioned their credibility. Based on little more than their noble words, influential Israel-based groups such as B'tselem and global superpowers such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Amnesty International and Oxfam, each with multi-million dollar budgets, were largely exempt from scrutiny.

But the halo is finally fading. A more savvy public recognizes that these groups are spearheading the demonization of Israel under the façade of human rights. A series of NGO scandals, particularly at HRW, is tarnishing their image further. In May, HRW held a fundraising dinner in Saudi Arabia – where the rights of women, minorities and others are violated every day – and touted its role in demonizing Israel.

A few months later, HRW's "senior military analyst" was exposed as a Nazi memorabilia fetishist who wrote that an SS jacket is "so cool." This is the same "expert" sent by HRW's pro-Arab Middle East division to write reports alleging Israeli "war crimes." In response to this scandal, HRW founder Robert Bernstein took the unprecedented step of criticizing his own organization in an op-ed published in the *New York Times*.

While investigations of NGOs' political agendas are long overdue, the partisan nature of the Canadian debate on the role of NGOs and their funders is troubling. For the Tories, the changes in the CIDA budget, and particularly the decision to end taxpayer support for Kairos and Alternatives, were tied to targeting Liberal party support among Jews. Absurd attacks were launched against Liberal MP and former justice minister Irwin Cotler, charging that his world-renowned leadership in fighting anti-Semitism was somehow insufficient.

On the Liberal side, some MPs and sympathetic pundits reflexively defended CIDA funding for Kairos, blindly accepting false claims of impartiality made by the group. Kairos officials denied clear evidence of wrongdoing and immorality, and revised its website in a belated and ineffective attempt to distance themselves from some of the damning details.

Similarly, in Israel, ideological defenders of politicized NGOs and campaigns of demonization, including the New Israel Fund, sought to discredit and block public debate by charging critics with "McCarthyism" and attempts to "stifle free speech." After enjoying the privileged position of critics, they didn't know how to respond when criticized.

In both Israel and Canada, the NGO wars are far from over. But as the debates continue, it's clear that a small group of NGO officials, empowered by a few wealthy donors, will no longer avoid accountability when they twist moral principles beyond recognition.

The Kirshner File

Obama's overtures to Iran have been rebuffed

A year ago in January, shortly before his inauguration as the first African-American president of the United States, Barack Obama broke with his predecessor, George W. Bush, and announced he would pursue a policy of "engagement" with Iran so as to improve bilateral relations and halt Iran's budding nuclear program. As he put it, "We are going to have to take a new approach. My belief is that engagement is the place to start."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

During the next few months, Obama fleshed out his position, saying he was "committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us" and "direct dialogue."

In a further signal to Iran, Obama, in a speech in Turkey, declared that the United States "is not and will never be at war with Islam."

But even as Obama went out on a limb to strike a positive tone, Iran rebuffed Obama, stating it will not suspend uranium enrichment, the nub of the problem.

As if to rub it in, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad asserted that Iran would not cooperate unless there are "profound changes" in U.S. foreign policy: an end to support for Israel, a withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, and an apology from Washington for meddling in Iranian affairs in the past.

In light of Iran's provocative response to Obama's overtures, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has expressed doubt whether Iran is really interested in turning a new page. "We're under no illusions," she commented recently. "Our eyes are wide open on Iran."

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

Israel's defence minister, Ehud Barak, has been even blunter, observing that the chances of thwarting Iran's nuclear ambitions through negotiations are "very low."

Despite Iran's truculence, and the news that it has built a secret enrichment plant in Qum, the United States and the other permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council – Russia, China, France and Britain – engaged Iran in talks in Geneva last October. In what appeared to be a significant shift, Iranian negotiators consented to ship three-quarters of Iran's known stockpile of nuclear fuel to Russia and France for conversion into a form that could only be used for peaceful means in the production of electricity and medical isotopes.

The draft agreement, which seemed like a breakthrough, served two interlocking purposes – delaying Iran's ability to produce a nuclear weapon for about a year and thus buying time for a broader and more comprehensive solution to the impasse, and pushing back Israel's veiled threat to bomb Iranian nuclear sites.

Washington gave Iran an informal deadline of Dec. 31, 2009, to negotiate seriously and co-operate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency, with Obama saying he was "not interested in talking for the sake of talking" and Clinton urging Iran to take "constructive actions."

To no one's surprise, Iran's divided leadership has not ratified the deal reached in Switzerland.

It is therefore a dead letter.

Within weeks of the Geneva talks, Iran let it be known that it had no legs to stand on.

On a trip to Istanbul to bolster relations with Turkey, Ahmadinejad said that Iran would not stop its nuclear program while its arch rival, Israel, was in possession of an atomic arsenal.

In another unmistakable sign that Iran had reneged, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said that Tehran would not transport its low-enriched uranium out of the country, but would consider "a simultaneous swap" in which it would give up some of its stockpile after receiving more highly enriched fuel.

Mottaki's suggestion was, at best, disingenuous, since the whole point of the Geneva exercise was to bring Iran's stockpile below the level required to manufacture nuclear weapons.

Iran continues to insist that its nuclear program is not military-oriented. But the United States, like Israel, is skeptical.

Indeed, the Obama administration no longer believes that Iran ever ceased work on its nuclear program in 2003, as a controversial U.S. intelligence report released in 2007 strongly suggested. For the record, intelligence agencies in Germany, France, Britain and Israel rejected this rosy appraisal from the start.

Iran's lack of good faith has also been noted by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Barack Obama

Last November, after it was already clear that Iran had no intention of co-operating meaningfully with the United Nations, the outgoing director general of the nuclear watchdog organization, Mohamed El Baradei, acknowledged that Tehran had stonewalled inspectors regarding nuclear weapons design programs, and that his efforts to ascertain the truth had effectively reached "a dead-end."

El Baradei's admission, which was definitely not in keeping with his previous sanguine assessments of Iran's intentions, have raised concerns that Iran may have already built secret nuclear facilities, and is now working on testing a neutron initiator, a key final component of a nuclear device.

Of late, senior Iranian officials have given credence to the growing view that Iran is absolutely determined to go through with its enrichment program.

Ali Larijani, the speaker of Iran's parliament and a prodigy of Iran's spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned that Iran's co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency could "seriously decrease" in the near future, and that Iran may pull out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which governs the world's use of nuclear power. (Israel is not a signatory to that treaty.)

Ramping up the rhetoric, Ahmadinejad fired off three inflammatory statements, saying that Iran is not obligated to inform the UN about its plans to build nuclear sites, threatening to produce higher-enriched uranium, and dismissing the Obama administration's deadline to accept the UN-drafted deal crafted in Geneva.

Mohamed El Baradei

In an additional demonstration of defiance, Iran tested the solid-fuel Sejil-2 missile – which can reach Israel – and staged war games.

Both well publicized exercises were presumably designed to discourage Israel and the United States from launching attacks on its nuclear infrastructure.

On Jan. 2, the Iranian foreign minister took Iran's defiance to a more menacing level, warning that the UN had one month to respond to his counter-proposal.

On Dec. 25, he suggested that Turkey or Iran could be the venue for exchanging nuclear material. The UN, spearheaded by the United States, has ignored this self-serving offer, which would gut the Geneva agreement.

Facing familiar Iranian recalcitrance, the United States is calling for a fourth set of economic sanctions to be imposed on Iran. "We have already begun discussions with our partners and with like-minded nations about pressure and sanctions," said Clinton, speaking shortly after the U.S. House of Representatives voted to slap sanctions on Iran.

According to Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon, Iran will be hit with fresh UN sanctions in February.

Since previous UN sanctions have not had an effect on Iran, Israel has called for "crippling sanctions" that might actually work.

But it is questionable whether the UN will go that far. Neither Russia nor China are keen about sanctions, publicly regarding them as counter-productive and privately fearing that they will jeopardize their thriving commercial relationship with Iran.

Moscow's mindset is such that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has been quoted as claiming he has no evidence that Iran is trying to build a nuclear weapon.

What sanctions Russia and China have supported were always watered down, leaving Iran free to pursue its nuclear objectives.

The debate over sanctions may be academic. On Jan. 10, Ahmadinejad said that sanctions will not deter Iran from pursuing a nuclear program.

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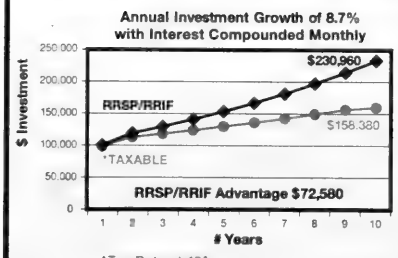

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Iranian exile predicts end of current regime

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Iran's Islamic leadership will fall by the end of this year if the country continues to be rocked by further political turmoil, claims an exiled Iranian academic currently visiting Israel for the first time.

Mahmood Karimi-Hakak

Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, a 60-year-old Muslim who holds dual Iranian and American citizenship and last visited Iran in 2007, arrived in Israel as a Fulbright scholar last month at the invitation of Tel Aviv University.

He plans to remain in Israel for the next five months, teaching theatre and social studies at Tel Aviv University and working with Israelis and Palestinians on stage productions.

Two weeks ago, Karimi-Hakak – a professor of creative arts at Siena College in Albany, N.Y. – delivered a lecture at Haifa University in which he is reported to have said, "If the situation [in Iran] remains as it is today, by the end of 2010, the regime in Iran will be replaced."

Iran, governed by hard-line Islamists since the downfall of the pro-western Pahlavi monarchy in 1979, has been convulsed by street violence since last June's disputed general election.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was first elected in 2005, claimed victory, but his opponents in the Green Movement cried foul, saying the election was rigged.

"He stole the election," declared Karimi-Hakak in a telephone interview from Israel.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, sided with Ahmadenijad, who has repeatedly called for Israel's destruction, denied the Holocaust and fended off western demands to halt its militarized nuclear program.

Certain that the election was a blatant exercise in fraud, Iranian protesters took to the streets in nationwide demonstrations, calling for fresh elections and reforms. The protests have been met by a harsh response from the government.

Karimi-Hakak describes the Iranian regime as dictatorial and theocratic and believes that non-violent demonstrators acting on behalf of the opposition Green Movement – which seeks evolutionary rather than revolutionary changes – can bring it to its knees before year's end.

"This regime has to go," he said.

By his estimate, demonstrators are capable of dislodging the powers-that-be in Iran – namely Khamenei and Ahmadinejad, as well as the Revolutionary Guards that support them.

"The Iranian regime has already cracked from within," he claimed. "A great part of the army, Revolutionary Guards and the clergy have already shown signs of support for the Green Movement."

But he warned that western intervention in Iran, in the form of an Israeli or U.S. strike on its underground nuclear facilities, would be counter-productive and strengthen the forces of repression.

As he put it at Haifa University, "An Israeli attack would only unite the Iranian people and enable the government to blame a 'foreign enemy' for Iran's mismanagement problems, so I implore you not to intervene."

Karimi-Hakak cited a precedent to buttress his belief that external threats prompt Iranians to rally around their government. In 1980, Iraq invaded Iran, touching off a protracted war that caused hundreds of thousands of casualties and united Iranians.

"Ahmadinejad wants a war so that he can consolidate his hold on power and destroy the opposition," he said. "I am convinced that the heads of the government in Iran pray every day for an Israeli attack that would reunite the people against an external enemy."

In his judgment, a new Iranian government would realign Iran's foreign policy. "It would have friendly relations with all countries in the Middle East, including Israel, and all the great powers."

It would also cancel Iran's military-oriented nuclear program which, he said, isn't needed. But Iran, he added, has a right to peaceful nuclear energy.

Karimi-Hakak claims that the majority of Iranians aren't anti-Israel and would welcome a resumption of Iran's diplomatic relations with the Jewish state. Iran severed ties with Israel in 1979, shortly after Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the Shah, was forced into exile.

Nor do most Iranians buy into Ahmadinejad's claim that the Holocaust is a hoax. "They categorically do not believe that," he said.

No supporter of the Shah, Karimi-Hakak supported the Islamic revolution on the grounds that it would usher in a period of a democracy.

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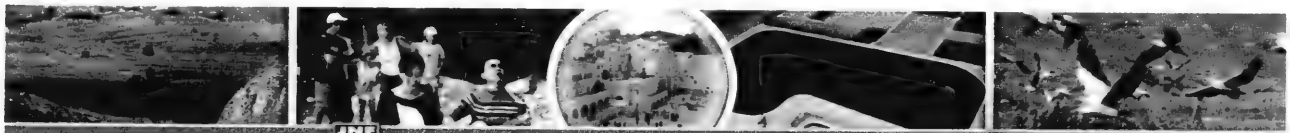

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CJC, United Church ties remain strained

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The relationship between Canadian Jewish Congress and the United Church of Canada remains strained even after a church spokesperson further distanced the Protestant body from a Jewish anti-Zionist organization and said it would meet with Congress to discuss their differences.

Bernie Farber

Last week, United Church spokesman Bruce Gregersen said a letter to Congress would be sent this week responding to Congress' request for a meeting.

He acknowledged that providing a $900 grant to Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) was a mistake and that the church regretted doing it. "IJV is not an organization that we [the national church] choose to partner with for any future activity," he said.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber did not appear satisfied with that response. He said, "it shouldn't take two months to say let's get together," referring to Congress' letter outlining its concerns and requesting a meeting. In addition, a statement distancing the United Church from IJV "was never made by the [church's] moderator. It should have been done before.

Congress concerned over grant to Independent Jewish Voices

"They need to put forward a policy by the national body. If they do that, it would be a huge step forward."

Last summer, as the United Church met at its national conference, reports revealed it had provided IJV with a startup grant. IJV is harshly critical of Israel, and one of its latest postings on its website, an article from Israel by Nurit Peled Elhanan "is similar to the racist garbage we had to put up with in the 1980s and '90s by [Holocaust denier] Ernst Zundel, that Israel is evil, malevolent and conspiratorial," Farber said.

The United Church, he said, continued to link to IJV's website even after pronouncing its regret about funding it. In addition, the United Church co-sponsored with IJV a speaking engagement by an anti-Zionist lecturer.

Farber said "despite our being faith partners with [the United Church] and others for 30 years, there is I suppose an expectation we have that we will not make common cause with groups that disparage our partner groups, that are hostile to the mainstream of each other's communities and gives them neither comfort nor support.

"Despite that, the [United Church] continues to have a relationship that is antithetical to the Jewish community... No one should be under the illusion that the relationship with IJV is without serious consequences."

Farber said that in early November, Congress president Mark Freiman sent a letter to the moderator of the United Church asking for a meeting. "We've received no substantial response.

"We wanted to talk as friends and partners do and to this day we have been ignored."

Asked about the United Church publicizing IJV views, Gregersen said the national church doesn't have the power to instruct regional bodies and committees to stop Internet links to IJV.

As for the national church, Gregersen said its position is that "the IJV is not an organization that we choose to partner with for any further activity."

He said the United Church had previously responded by e-mail to Congress. "We sent Bernie Farber a message that [church general secretary] Nora Saunders was out of the country and we'll respond when she returns," Farber said he never received that message.

Gregersen said the United Church had granted Congress a privileged position at last summer's national conference, giving it the right to address the assembly as honoured visitors.

"From our perspective, the relationship with Congress is still a valued relationship. We know it has been strained for various reasons... We'd be prepared to talk about it."

For its part, the United Church has its own concerns including Congress' reaction to the labeling of Kairos, an ecumenical church group, as anti-Semitic.

Gregersen suggested the United Church and Congress should "find something to do that is positive and gives us common ground and is a shared activity." He suggested joint projects promoting "ecological justice."

But Farber said that the two groups would not be "getting together until the issue is resolved."

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[illegible]

B'nai Brith Canada defends policies

Continued from page 6

B'nai Brith states that members of CMOBBC complained to a BBI court about alleged irregularities that led to adoption of a new constitution, but the court ruled that the amended constitution was duly passed and was valid. Furthermore, the defence notes, the court required all parties to the appeal to remain silent about the case.

The statement of defence alleges that the CMOBBC nevertheless subsequently circulated e-mails containing allegations of wrongdoing about B'nai Brith, and despite a "cease and desist notice," the CMOBBC continued to circulate material about the organization and its leadership.

In November 2007, B'nai Brith's executive committee filed a complaint to the group's internal disciplinary committee against 21 BBC members who were alleged to be involved with the CMOBBC, and charged that their behaviour "was contrary to the BBC Code of Behaviour and the best interests of the BBC so as to merit expulsion for conduct unbecoming a member of BBC."

The defence asserts that the hearing was conducted fairly and that Joe Bogoroch, the chair of the executive committee, "was available to answer any question which the appellants wished to pose. At no time during the hearing or subsequently did the alleged CMOBBC members or [their lawyer] direct questions to Mr. Bogoroch or ask to cross-examine him."

The defence also claims that the members facing expulsion declined to call witnesses when prompted, were permitted to make statements but deferred to their lawyer, and were allowed to provide the evidence they chose.

Lawyer Rochelle Cantor, who represents the expelled members, said the next step in the case will likely be examination for discovery, in which B'nai Brith representatives are questioned and their replies become part of the court record.

CREATIVE ART: Students at United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tikvah campus – from left, Emma Finkelstein, Alyssa Finkelstein, Mathew Chertkow, Carly Swirsky, Max Marshall, Ben Rakoff, and Julia Swirsky – show off the illustrations they created for the USDS Parent Association Acorn Cards initiative. Children from nursery to Grade 8 create the artwork, and their parents can buy note cards with their illustrations on the cover.

Toronto writer wins book award

JTA

Toronto author Joseph Kertes has won the 59th annual National Jewish Book Award for fiction for his novel *Gratitude*.

Kertes' Holocaust-themed novel, which was first published in Canada in 2008, is one of 18 books in various categories recognized by the awards overseen by the Jewish Book Council in New York City.

The book is set in German-occupied Hungary during the final months of World War II. Kertes, a native of Hungary, escaped with his family to Canada after the 1956 revolution.

Other National Jewish Book Award winners include Hasia Diner, author of *We Remember with Reverence and Love: American Jews and the Myth of Silence after the Holocaust, 1945-1962* (New York University Press), the American Jewish Studies' Celebrate 350 Award; Melvin Urofsky, the Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award for *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life* (Pantheon Books), and Daniel Gordis, for *Saving Israel: How the Jewish People Can Win a War That May Never End* (John Wiley & Sons), the Contemporary Jewish Life and Practice Award.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, chief rabbi of England, won the Dorot Foundation Award in memory of Joy Ungerleider Mayerson in Modern Jewish Thought & Experience for his *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible, Genesis: The Beginnings* (Koren Publishers). The winners will be honored March 9 in New York City.

'Security and health [override] all other considerations'

Continued from page 3

Rabbi Bulka agrees that full-body scans may not be the most effective security measure. "There are people in Israel who have said... what you need is a full body check – you have to be able to have access to every single part of the body, including those we would consider off limits. So what do you do then?"

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler

In that case, he says, the government has a responsibility to ensure that "a woman has the right to request that she be searched by another woman, and the same thing for a man."

Rabbi Chaim Strauchler of Toronto's Shaarei Shomayim Congregation says that "the paradigm of forbidden or permitted is probably the wrong paradigm. Technology is innocuous; it's how it's utilized that's the issue." He cites the examples of computers or cars: "The automobile isn't prohibited, [but] used improperly it can be a tool for death.

"There's an entire section of Talmud devoted to laws of privacy [the first chapter of tractate Bava Batra]," Rabbi Strauchler says. "Our tradition requires societies to build fences to prevent people from looking in on one another.

"Likewise, security is the greatest value when it comes to halachic decision-making: security and health [override] all other considerations save three."

So the only question for Rabbi Strauchler is the specific technology – "how it's employed to assure the best possible security, but at the same time doesn't compromise a person's privacy."

That might involve "finding ways to set up [security] people in locations where they would not see the person that's being scanned," not saving the files and images from the scans. "The system as a whole needs to be created in a way that prevents abuse.

"Halachah always has something to say," Rabbi Strauchler says, but he also believes the controversy of full-body scans should highlight an important personal issue, given the modern proliferation of information on the Internet and in other media – not all of it appropriate. "Each of us needs to think about what should we see, what should we not see, and decide the ways in which we expose ourselves or we don't."

Academic doubts broad economic sanctions against Iran will work

Continued from page 12

"The first constitution after 1979 was extremely democratic. But in the past 20 years, Iran has shifted away from democracy," said Karimi-Hakak, an advocate of representative government.

He immigrated to the United States in 1976 to continue his studies in theatre. Returning in 1992, he lived in Iran until 1999. He left yet again after coming under investigation for a Shakespeare play he had produced without official approval.

He doubts whether broad economic sanctions will work against Iran, saying that previous United Nations sanctions have bolstered Iran's leadership while hurting ordinary Iranians. He calls for sanctions that will limit the international mobility of Iran's leaders and freeze their overseas bank accounts.

After a month in Israel, he has reached the conclusion that it's a very complex, democratic country whose Arab minority isn't necessarily treated equally.

"The people I have met in Israel are wonderful and very friendly," he observed. "They desire peace and tranquility." But he's not convinced that the present Israeli government is in touch with their feelings and acts on their desires.

He admits he was hesitant to visit Israel. "I thought about it for a year, but I went because one should face the 'enemy' and carry on a dialogue with such people."

In fact, Karimi-Hakak doesn't regard Israel or Israelis as enemies.

"I don't think anyone is our enemy. It is governments that perpetuate animosity between countries. This animosity is not shared by Israelis and Iranians, who have lived in brotherhood."

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Jewish Life

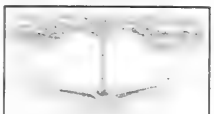
Catching up quickly

By RABBI AVROHOM JACKS

A scientist and a philosopher were being chased by a hungry lion.

The scientist made some quick calculations and concluded that "it's no good trying to outrun the beast, because it will catch up to us."

The philosopher kept running a little ahead of the scientist and replied, "I'm not trying to outrun the lion. I'm merely trying to outrun you!"


Rabbinic Reflections

Judaism offers a hopeful message to anyone who has failed. The Torah teaches that we don't have to obsess about a negative past. We can indeed outrun a harmful past. We can make up ground lost to bad judgment and actually use a destructive experience to end up ahead.

This is accomplished through the transformational power of tshuvah (repentance). Tshuvah not only rectifies the past, it converts a negative sin into a positive mitzvah.

In this week's Torah portion, God tells Moses and Aaron how to calculate the Jewish calendar. The Jewish calendar is lunar-based, which means that unlike the secular calendar, which is based on the movement of the sun, its months are based on the waxing and waning of the moon.

A lunar month is about 29 days long and a solar month is approximately 30 days long. This means that over the span of a secular year, the Jewish calendar loses about 11 days against the secular calendar. Roughly every two or three years, we include a Jewish leap year in our calendar.

During a leap year, an extra month is added to the year. This not only catches up the days that are lost, it actually overcompensates so that the Jewish calendar ends up a few days ahead of the solar year.

The leap year then serves as a reminder that everyone has an opportunity from time to time to make up for what he or she has failed to accomplish in the past. Furthermore, just as the leap year not only makes up for the deficiency and also provides an advance on the future, a Jew must also intensify his efforts in the service of his creator and store up additional merits in the process.

A story is told of how the famous Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Barditchev once grabbed a very strong, errant Jew by his lapels. This Jew was a muscular chap – not the type of person that you would want to start up with.

The rabbi was an elderly, physically feeble person. Nevertheless, he was able to shake the larger, stronger man. While the frail rabbi shook the strapping man, he told him that he was jealous of the notorious sinner.

"Why would you be jealous of me, rebbe?" the man asked. "I am just an sinful Jew. You are a spiritual giant."

The rabbi explained that if the man would repent, not only would his past be undone, he would also transform his sins into merits. This would give the man so many merits that he would have more than the rabbi had accumulated over his lifetime.

When we reflect on the difference between the Jewish and secular years, and how the leap year not only catches us up but allows us to overtake the solar year, we should realize the powerful message for our own lives. It's never too late to not only salvage our past, but even to transform it into something completely different.

This gift of tshuvah is one of Judaism's most precious gift to mankind.

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks is the spiritual leader of Congregation Zichron Kedoshim in Montreal.

Warfare must be abolished

As we stand on the threshold of the new year, the quest for universal peace seems as unrealizable as ever. North Korea's nuclear program and Iran's refusal to stop enriching uranium – potentially to manufacture nuclear weapons – highlights the fact that the world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era. Most alarmingly, the likelihood that fanatical terrorists will get their hands on nuclear weaponry is increasing.

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

When Robert Hutchins supervised the development of the atomic bomb at the University of Chicago 67 years ago, he called it "the good news of damnation," contending that it would frighten people into banding together to avoid world suicide and achieve world peace.

Now, years later, we can see he was as wrong as Alfred Nobel, a half-century earlier, who predicted that his invention of dynamite would make war so horrible that men would voluntarily give it up.

Nuclear warfare has made effective defence impossible; only retaliation remains as a threat. And even that is dubious: enemy submarines can lob nuclear bombs upon our coastal cities and submerge them into the sea. Who could identify the enemy in such a covert and undeclared war? One that could be over, for all practical purposes, in 20 minutes.

Our most perilous cultural lag is equating modern warfare with wars of the past, when today it is not only quantitatively but also qualitatively a different paradigm. We are confronting an entirely unique situation in the history of mankind, and either warfare must be abolished or we will be.

Young Canadian men and women are dying in faraway places. They face terrorists who are determined, resolute and implacable, heroes to themselves willing to die to vindicate their cause. They can be killed, but there is no way to extinguish their grievances or hostility.

In his recent book *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle*, Chris Hedges, a bitter critic of his country's foreign policy, warns his fellow Americans about the costs of warfare. "We embrace the dangerous delusion that we are on a providential mission to save the rest of the world from itself, to impose our virtues – which we see as superior to all other virtues – on others, and that we have a right to do this by force. The wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan are doomed to futility. We cannot afford them. The rash of home foreclosures, the mounting job losses, the collapse of banks and the financial services industry, the poverty ripping apart the working classes, our crumbling infrastructure, and the killing of Afghan and Iraqi civilians by our iron fragmentation bombs converge. The costly forms of death we dispense on one side of the globe are hollowing us out from the inside at home."

Others, of course, disagree and are certain that the terrorist threat must be eliminated if the world is to ever enjoy security.

War is waged for many different reasons. At best, it should be engaged in with regret, an admission that nothing else will do, that we have failed in reason and reconciliation. To proclaim a war as "holy" is the ultimate depth of blasphemy. Ultimately, all war is unholy desecrating what it proclaims to defend.

The late diplomat and politician David Ormsby-Gore lamented: "It would indeed be a tragedy if the history of the human race proved to be nothing more than the story of an ape playing with a box of matches on a petrol heap."

Jewish Life

Intermarriage poses educational challenges

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

As Mark Steyn put it quite simply in his book *America Alone*, "experts talk about root causes. But demography is the most basic root of all." Prognostications about the future of any country, race or civilization must begin and end with the hard numbers. Is a given culture creating enough babies to reproduce their ranks? To cite one of Steyn's examples, "by 2050, 60 per cent of Italians will have no brothers, no sisters, no cousins, no aunts, no uncles. The big Italian family, with papa pouring the vino and mama spooning out the pasta down an endless table of grandparents and nieces and nephews, will be gone, no more, dead as the dinosaurs."

I had the pleasure recently of attending a series of lectures by the world's leading Jewish demographer, Sergio Della Pergola, the Argov chair of Israel-Diaspora Relations at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Among the barrage of statistics that Della Pergola mounted in his various PowerPoint presentations, two facts stood out for me. They were not at all unexpected, but they felt different when put forward in the context of statistics as opposed to anecdotal speculation.

One was the now-universal reality of interfaith marriage throughout the Jewish world. According to the latest figures, intermarriage rates are rising in every country, without exception. In the former Soviet Union, the rate is approaching 75 per cent, making Jewish intermarriage a decided anomaly. In the United States, figures are near 55 per cent, in England, close to 40 per cent, and so on.

Whether one views this with alarm or indifference is perhaps linked to how much one privileges individual choice as opposed to the overall health of the Jewish body politic. But it cannot bode well in the long run, no matter how many times I'm bombarded with the argument that it's the non-Jewish partner who is interested in Judaism. It's tiresome to hear a self-interested romantic choice (which at least is honest) rationalized after the fact as being somehow "healthy" for the Jewish community.

The second argument that Della Pergola made is that denominational affiliations are becoming increasingly feeble as ways of measuring the complexity of people's actual religious identity. In one particularly telling survey, Israelis who self-identified as *chiloni* (ostensibly secular) asserted the next minute that of course they kept kosher, looking puzzled as to why this might pose a contradiction. The variety of nuanced ways in which Jews now manifest their religious observance and understandings of Torah places interesting demands on the next wave in Jewish education, challenging educators and synagogue-goers to reach beyond the sterile cliches of denominational markers toward a truer and more holistic grasp of the student in front of them or the congregant behind them.

At the age of 13, when virtually all Jewish males become initiated into Jewish adulthood, the future prime minister of Britain, Benjamin Disraeli, was baptized as a Christian. Never quite losing his Jewish identity yet obviously carrying it with profound ambivalence, Disraeli is reported to have said that "history is made by those who show up." One might add that this is as true of Judaism as it is of politics.

The greening of Tu b'Shvat

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

If ever there was a Jewish holiday that was way ahead of its time, it must be Tu b'Shvat. Journalist Aaron Howard writes: "Never mentioned in Tanach, Tu b'Shvat [the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shvat corresponding to Jan. 30 this year] was once simply the yearly date for reckoning the age of trees. In modern times, the holiday has become a Jewish Arbor Day marked by the planting of trees and a Jewish environmental holiday marked by wrestling with issues such as global warming and sustainable living." **[bit.ly/shevat01]**

Here's how you can learn more about Tu b'Shvat and its relevance to the world around us.

• Study what Jewish tradition has to say about the environment. Prof. Richard Schwartz quotes several rulings from the Talmud that deal with what he calls the "sacred environment," including this midrash, which he suggests has become all too relevant: "In the hour when the Holy one… created the first person, He showed him the trees in the Garden of Eden and said to him: 'See My works, how fine they are; now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world, for if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you.'" **[bit.ly/ shevat02]** Patterned along a traditional page of Talmud, the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism has created the Tu b'Shvat Living Talmud with both classic and contemporary quotes. **[bit.ly/shevat04]**

• Join a Jewish environmental organization. COEJL, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, has assembled an impressive list of two dozen Jewish organizations that are active with environmental issues. They include the EcoKosher Network, which promotes "awareness that the foods we eat have an impact on our health and the health of our communities and environment" and Torah Trek, whose "programs explore the connection between inner and outer geography, between the journey into the wilderness and the heartpath of the soul." **[bit.ly/shevat13]**

• Enjoy a Tu b'Shvat seder. Unlike that other holiday with the famous seder, Tu b'Shvat has its own lesser-known seder. In the 16th century, the kabbalists of Tzfat compiled a Tu b'Shvat seder that involves enjoying the fruits of the tree, particularly those native to the Land of Israel, and discussing philosophical and kabbalistic concepts associated with the day. The seder is a great way to appreciate the bounty that we so often take for granted, and to develop a good and generous eye for the world around us. **[bit.ly/shevat05]**

I came across plenty of tips for hosting seders with an environmental twist such as one from hazon.org **[bit.ly/shevat06]** And it's heartening to see Jewish environmentalists are not too earnest to indulge in a pun, as Barbara Lerman-Golomb does with her article titled "Tu b'Shwatt: Serving up energy action at the seder." **[bit.ly/shevat07]**

Rabbi Yossi Ives poses an interesting question: "We may… ask why Judaism, which comes with first-class environmental credentials, appears in many instances to be lagging behind in ecological consciousness." He says that in the minds of many people, environmentalism has been hijacked by "eco-fascists" and that animal welfare has been "discredited in the eyes of many Jews for its hostility to shchitah… But these objections, while correct in my view, don't delegitimize the fundamental morality of environmental responsibility and compassion towards animals respectively." Some solutions: "Rabbis can raise the issue in sermons, communal organization could adopt environmentally friendly policies, Jewish charities can invest ethically and individual Jews can buy with a social and ecological conscience." **[bit.ly/shevat08]**

For Tova Birnbaum, Tu b'Shvat evokes memories of simpler times. "When I was growing up, Tu b'Shvat was a day I looked forward to, if for no other reason than that it meant snack bags of exotic fruits like carob and figs… As I got older, those school-issued bags of fruit disappeared, taking my observance of Tu b'Shvat with them… It's a strange irony that a day that celebrates nature and the lovely world God created should be so prominent in childhood and so overlooked in our older years… So I think it's time for the adults to take back Tu b'Shvat." **[bit.ly/shevat11]**

Tova is in good company.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Conversion centralization promotes unity, not disunity

By RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS

There is great irony regarding last week's *CJN* editorial ("The nightmare risk of schism," Jan. 14) in light of the Perspectives piece by Rabbi Marc D. Angel in the same issue on the opposite page ("Return conversion to local rabbis")

The editorial calls for Jewish unity, but Rabbi Angel calls for disunity.

But the editorial's call for unity has been responded to already in the development in North America of the regional beit din system of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA). The oft-repeated canard that this system was created as a reaction to the demands of the haredi Chief Rabbinate in Israel is simply wrong.

I was a member of the committee that developed this centralized system. It was a response to the anarchy that existed in North American conversions. North American rabbis were frustrated by the wide range of conversion standards among Orthodox rabbis. And, just as the editorial called for unity, the rabbinic organization also responded with a call for unity. It developed a transparent, organized, professional system for conversions. The protocols are outlined on the RCA's website at rabbis.org.

The Beth Din of America, which supervises this system, is in contact with the Israeli Chief Rabbinate's office and has had and continues to develop open dialogue with that office concerning conversion. The chief rabbi meets regularly with RCA representatives to maintain this dialogue. Situations may occasionally come up with the Israeli rabbinate, but with this open communication, these issues can be dealt with.

What Rabbi Angel objects to is that the standards of this beit din system are too stringent and that they preclude rabbinic autonomy. He has a right to that opinion.

But whenever there is centralization, there will be limits. The Food and Drug Administration in the United States only approves certain drugs. Some doctors may want to use drugs that were rejected. If we prefer autonomy, we would let them prescribe them. If we prefer the benefits of a central authority, we would not. The RCA chose – after much deliberation at the committee level, after soliciting input from the membership and from our modern Orthodox rabbinic leadership, and after approval of its executive – to implement a centralized system. We feel it is a vote for unity.

Rabbi Angel wants rabbis to have the autonomy to do conversions in which candidates aren't required to keep Shabbat and all the mitzvot. But there is a severe price to pay for that autonomy. For just as he calls for autonomy of rabbis to do conversions according to their own standards, he must also affirm other rabbis' autonomy to reject those conversions if they feel they don't meet halachic criteria. So the autonomy to do lenient conversions will be met with the autonomy to reject them. I don't think this is good for the Jews.

I don't deny there are issues that must be dealt with in the area of conversion, and that these issues have arisen as a result of a changing Jewish world. The North American Orthodox world has had enormous success with the quality of its education system and in the numbers of deeply committed Orthodox Jews. As well, the haredi community, both in Israel and North America, has also enjoyed tremendous success in its commitment to education and a haredi way of life. The number of people in the haredi community is growing rapidly.

The haredi approach is different than the modern Orthodox one. How to manage that and how to manage the toxic mix of power and religion in Israel is thorny. However, our tolerance of religious views should not be reserved only for those on the left. It needs to be exercised with respect for those on the right as well.

Guest Voice

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks

Tolerance of haredi positions seems to have disappeared, and all civil discourse seems to have disappeared with it. The language and views that are tolerated in venomous attacks on haredi positions would never be tolerated toward any other Jewish group. This pains me greatly.

So I think the *CJN* editorial's call for unity has already been heard and responded to. And I think Rabbi Angel's position is a radical call for disunity.

But having said all that, as much as I feel that unity is a wonderful thing to pursue, there are far bigger challenges to the future of the Jewish People, as our members are disappearing through apathy and abysmal Jewish illiteracy.

How about a call from the heart about that?

Rabbi Reuven Tradburks is the former spiritual leader of Kehilat Shaarei Torah in Toronto. He lives in Jerusalem.

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It is with great sorrow that the Federation of Hebrew Teachers marks the Shloshim of our beloved mentor, colleague and president.

FREDA STEINBERG, ע"ה

She will always be remembered for her passion and ceaseless work to assist her fellow educators. Our sorrow knows no bounds. May her family be comforted among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

Writing contest launched

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

B'nai Brith Canada's Don Mills Lodge is sponsoring a writing contest for Jewish high school students in the GTA who have completed at least 40 hours of community service.

The lodge will award $250 each to four students "whose essays best exemplify the authors' personal involvement, commitment, and inspiration" in performing required community service hours.

Lodge president Ava Brodsky told *The CJN* that part of the motivation in organizing the contest was to encourage students to express in writing what their experiences were, and to continue to volunteer even when they're no longer obligated to do so.

Essays will be judged by 10 lodge members who are former teachers or have been involved in writing, Brodsky said.

The 52-year-old lodge, a co-ed group with 120 members, has been involved in many community service efforts as part of the larger service organization.

Among them, members are actively seeking both food and monetary donations to the Kosher Food Bank at Pride of Israel Synagogue, which serves 120 families a week. They also speak to other groups about the need for a kosher food bank.

As well, they have donated money to Lilah's Fund, which supports research on neuroblastoma, a cancer of the nervous system which is one of the most common cancers in young children.

The lodge's newest project, the writing contest, was made possible through its bingo fundraisers.

Student essays should be between 350 and 500 words, and must show insight into the community service process and its impact on the student.

Entries must include the student's name, address, phone number and age, as well as his or her school's name, address and phone number.

The lodge will accept essays from Feb. 1 to Apr. 30 at donmillslodge@yahoo.ca.

Complete information about the contest can be found by going to donmillslodge.com, and downloading the PDF file of the January 2010 *Planet* lodge newsletter.

Blind artisan makes pianos sing

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Ari Isaac sees his blindness as an afterthought.

It hasn't stopped him from water-skiing, it hasn't stopped him from tuning pianos and it hasn't stopped him from becoming the only Canadian artisan to handcraft piano hammers and bass strings.

"When you ask... about special difficulties... I have to laugh, because I don't look at [my blindness] like that," he said in his Toronto home. "I don't think about it."

Isaac always had poor sight due to glaucoma, but at 18 years old, around the time he moved to Canada, Isaac lost his sight completely.

"When I first became blind, of course it's difficult... If you're going to overcome it, it takes awhile. I decided I'm not going to let it stand in my way," he said. "The world stops if you let it. I don't let it."

At work, Isaac relies on his sense of touch and his hearing.

"In my head, I view the world from a visual side. When I look at you, I can't see you, but I know how tall you are from the way you walk. I can tell if a person is slim or fat, skinny or short."

Isaac feels his way through his home-based workshop, weaving around wooden desks, metal machines and dozens of bass strings. Eventually, he stops at a small desk in the back, where he keeps a roll of sheep wool, the best kind of material to use when covering piano hammers.

"It's springy... I looked for something that had spring in it," he said, adding that the more flexible a piano hammer is, the richer the sound it will produce.

"Most hammers cannot flex, I've always made hammers that can. It changes... the intensity of playing."

Any music drifting through Isaac's house will probably come from his CD player. Isaac, who was born into a musical family, stopped playing piano in his youth. But he never stopped enjoying it.

"I grew up immersed in classical music. By the time I started tuning, I had a really good idea what musical tone is about," he said.

In his late teens, his family encouraged him to apprentice in piano technology, which includes piano tuning and rebuilding.

This was where he learned the anatomy of a piano.

"At the time, in Israel, when we needed parts, we couldn't get them abroad," he said. This meant that the parts were made virtually by hand.

After moving to Canada and continuing this work, Isaac noticed that most piano parts, like hammers, were imported internationally from factories, rather than handcrafted by skilled artisans.

"Eventually, I started rebuilding pianos. You put new strings on pianos, put new hammers in. I noticed [that] the hammers that I was buying, I couldn't get them to do what I wanted, no matter what I did," he said. "I decided I wanted to make my own bass strings and hammers. Those are the two parts that really make a difference."

When a piano's hammer hits the string, it stops the string from vibrating, thereby "killing" part of the note, Isaac said. This creates a tinny sound. By using flexible materials to make the hammers, he can create longer, richer notes.

As one of only a handful of artisans who makes bass strings and piano hammers in North America, Isaac has worked for many famous musicians, including concert pianist Sally Christia and jazz pianist Delbert Bump, as well as on comedian Robin Williams' piano.

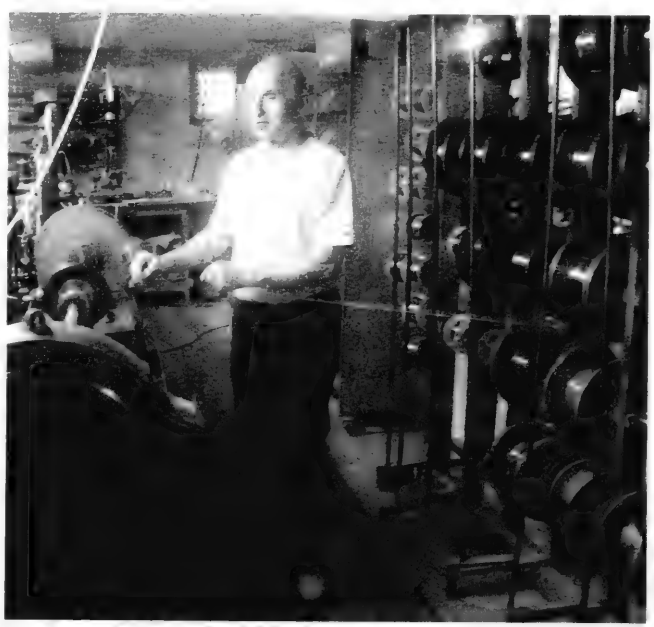
But for Isaac, his job isn't about celebrities.

"I wanted to contribute something to the world of music," he said.

When asked what special difficulties a blind piano technologist may face, Isaac pauses for a second, thinking. Finally, he has an answer.

"Not being able to fly a plane," he said.

For more information about Isaac, visit www.isaacpiano.com.



Ari Isaac, who has been blind since he was 18, makes piano hammers and bass strings by hand. ***(Rita Poliakov photo)***

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Things you didn't hear about Galloway's Gaza stunt

Even a few years ago, radical British MP George Galloway's PR stunt earlier this month to pressure Cairo into allowing his pro-Palestinian "aid" convoy into Gaza at the Rafah crossing would likely have received substantial media coverage.

Now, however, world attention is focused on the aftermath of the Christmas Day airplane bomb attempt, including Al Qaeda's and Yemen's roles – basically, there's been a re-focus on Islamist terrorism. Consequently, the media gave scant notice to Galloway, other than to report that he ran afoul of Egyptian authorities and was sent packing back to Britain.

Still, this episode revealed much about Egypt and Gaza – and in particular, about Hamas.

First the background: the group Galloway headed, called "Viva Palestina," consisted of about 500 activists, mostly British and American. They had gathered in Egypt for a week in late December to protest the "siege" of Gaza, prior to their intended trip there to mark the anniversary of the Gaza war.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

However, during the night of Jan. 5, in the northern Sinai town of El Arish, they clashed with Egyptian security forces over the route the convoy was to take, leaving many injured on both sides. (In a separate incident at Rafah, an Egyptian soldier was killed and more than a dozen others were injured, and four Palestinians were wounded, in a gun battle during a Hamas-organized protest against an anti-smuggling wall that Cairo is building on the border.)

AFP reported ("Egypt bars Gaza-bound aid convoys," Jan. 9) that in response to the El Arish clash, Egyptian foreign minister Ahmed Abul Gheit declared that Galloway had committed "criminal" acts on Egyptian soil. Gheit told *Al Ahram*: "Egypt will no longer allow convoys, regardless of their origin or who is organizing them, from crossing its territory." Galloway was expelled from the country.

AFP added that "Egypt accused Galloway, who once called at a London rally for the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, of trying to embarrass the country, which has refused to permanently open its Rafah border crossing with Gaza."

What went unreported was the broader significance of Galloway's Egyptian escapade.

Two developments stand out: first, Egypt's angry response to Galloway's, and Hamas', challenge to open the Rafah crossing to his convoy (Egypt wanted the trucks to go through Israel's southern crossing) underscores the degree to which Cairo wants to keep the onus on Israel as the party responsible for humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in Gaza – a point made explicit by the Egyptian foreign ministry's labelling of Israel as the "occupying force."

Keeping the Rafah crossing mostly sealed not only keeps the international focus on Israel, it also hinders ties between Hamas and the banned Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, a movement from which Hamas arose and which threatens Mubarak's regime.

Second, as Amira Hass explained ("Pro-Gaza activists under siege – imposed by Egypt and Hamas," *Ha'aretz*, Jan. 8), Hamas so tightly controlled the small number of activists who did manage to enter Gaza that they apparently were left bewildered and frustrated.

For instance, claiming "security reasons," Hamas prevented the activists from lodging in the homes of ordinary Gazans (as some NGO's had arranged), forcing them to stay in a hotel – owned by Hamas – where they were bottled up. But Hamas officials went further. They even prevented the activists who were participating in a "Break the Siege" march from speaking with Gazans.

The march itself was a controlled PR exercise for Hamas, as Hass describes: "The march turned into nothing more than a ritual… Especially photogenic were four Americans from the anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox Jewish group Neturei Karta… There were no Palestinian women among the marchers – a slap to the many feminist organizers and participants, both women and men.

"After the march, the guests voiced protests to some of the official Palestinian organizers. 'We came to demonstrate against the siege, and we found that we ourselves were under siege,' they said.

"In meetings [that managed to be arranged] without the security men, several activists got the impression that non-Hamas residents live in fear and are afraid to speak or identify themselves by name. 'Now I understand that the call for 'Freedom for Gaza' has another meaning,' one young man told me."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Coast to Coast

Jewish community responds to crisis in Haiti

Continued from page 1

The organization is working on sending "basic supplies like water, diapers, baby bottles and pharmaceuticals" to the orphanage, which Rosensweig said is being used as a respite centre. As well, the organization plans to help to repair whatever damage the building has suffered.

As of Monday morning, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto had raised $268,500 from more than 1,600 donors, while in western Canada, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund had raised more than $17,000 as of last Friday, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver raised more than $16,000 in the first 24 hours of launching its Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund.

"The Jewish community is deeply saddened and concerned about the tragedy in Haiti, and we are committed to continuing the long tradition of Jewish humanitarianism during times of crisis," said Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver board chair Michael Fugman in a news release.

Over and above the amount in UJA Federation's fund in Toronto, four other federations have directed a total of $40,000 to Toronto's federation to help the Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid (IsraAID), which has sent a 15-person search-and-rescue team from Israel to Haiti. The team is working at the site of the collapsed central hospital in Port-au-Prince, where thousands of wounded have gathered, according to a federation news release dated Sunday.

UJA Federation is sending 100 per cent of the funds it raises to IsraAID, the release stated.

The federation is IsraAID's largest organizational supporter, said federation spokesperson Howard English.

"The scope of this disaster is really beyond description," he added. "The Jewish community recognizes what a calamity this is."

In Montreal, Federation CJA has been asking members of the Jewish community to join the global effort to assist the Haitian people.

The organization expected donations to top $80,000 by the end of last Friday, and money was still coming in. "We are extremely moved by the response from the Jewish community. It's just outstanding," said Federation CJA communications director Howard Krosnick.

He also noted that employees of the shoe retailer, Aldo Group, are designating the money raised by their internal campaign to the CJA relief fund, and the corporation has promised to match dollar-for-dollar their contributions.

"There is a deep historical connection between Haitians and Jews, which includes Haiti having rendered assistance to the Jewish People during the Holocaust, and Haiti has been a long-standing friend of Israel," the federation said in an e-mailed message.

"This desperately poor country – the poorest in the Western Hemisphere – cries out for help at this critical time. We cannot but feel deep compassion for their plight, and we would be failing in our duty to come to the assistance of the vulnerable if we do not stand in solidarity with Haiti today."

The federation is working with local and international partners, including the Montreal Haitian community, to funnel help in the most effective way.

As well, a jam session was held at Montreal's student-run Ghetto Shul on Saturday night to raise funds for Haiti.

The Jewish General Hospital (JGH) in Montreal is also assisting in Haiti relief. Its foundation collected several hundred boxes of medical supplies, including medications, that were shipped on Saturday. The foundation is also raising funds among staff, volunteers and lay leaders at the hospital. External donors are being sought to match these contributions.

The hospital said it is also prepared to send interested doctors and nurses to Haiti, if the Canadian and Quebec aid agencies request this type of support.

"This tragedy has hit us close to home," said JGH executive director Dr. Hartley Stern. "Many of our staff and patients are from Haiti and have family and friends who are living there now. We are grieving with them and will show our support in any way we can."

A news release from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office, dated last Thursday, said that Netanyahu had ordered Israel's defence ministry, foreign ministry and public security minister officials to quickly consider how to render humanitarian assistance to Haiti following the earthquake, and that an advance IDF Home Front Command, IDF Medical Corps and Foreign Ministry delegation had left for the island. The group included engineering, medical, logistics and rescue experts.

Relatives of Sharona Elsaieh, daughter of the late peace activist Abie Nathan, said last week that she was missing. They heard from her last Friday, alive and in good condition, according to a JTA report. She had been living in Jamaica for several years.

Two other Israelis, a woman and her nine-year-old son, were also reported missing. Several other Israelis also live in Haiti.

Rabbi Shimon Pelman – a Chabad rabbi based in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic – was on his way to Haiti last Thursday, two days after the quake, when reached on his cellphone by *The CJN*. He also serves the tiny Jewish community of Haiti, which numbers perhaps eight families in Port-au-Prince, the capital, about 16 kilometres from the earthquake's epicentre. He said he had not heard of any Canadian Jews being in Haiti at the time of the earthquake.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic each occupy part of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. Normally, it is about a three-hour drive from Santo Domingo to Port-au-Prince, the rabbi said.

Travelling with two Dominican diplomats, and taking kosher food for Israeli relief personnel in Haiti to have for Shabbat, the rabbi was expecting members of the Dominican Jewish community to follow with more supplies. The Dominican has a Jewish population of about 350.

On an individual basis, Julian Brass, a 26-year-old Toronto-based entrepreneur, is organizing a fundraiser to help Haiti relief efforts.

The founder of NotableTV.com, a new-media company launched last March, Brass decided last week, when he saw the scope of the earthquake's destruction on television news, to "shut down normal operations" at his company for three to four days to create a "massive" fundraiser that would galvanize young professionals, as well as raise money and collect goods to send to Haiti. Details were not yet finalized when *The CJN* went to press Monday.

Following the earthquake, Canadian Jewish Congress' national president Mark Freiman and CEO Bernie Farber wrote to the Haitian chargé d'affaires in Ottawa to express deep sorrow and extend condolences on the extent of damage and loss of life.

The funds established by Jewish federations are "in keeping with the traditional Jewish concept of 'tikkun olam,' " Freiman and Farber wrote.

Other Jewish organizations, including B'nai Brith Canada and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center, expressed their sympathy and support to the Haitian community.

To donate through Jewish federations, see below, or contact your local federation,

In Toronto, go to www.jewishtoronto.org or call 416-631-5705.

In Vancouver, donations can be made online at www.jewishvancouver.com/haiti.

In Winnipeg, go to www.jewishwinnipeg.org or call 204-477-7428.

In Montreal, go to www.federationcja.org/haiti or call 514-345-2600.

Those wishing to donate to the Jewish General Hospital's relief fund can visit the JGH Foundation in Room A-107 or phone 514-340-8222, ext. 8251.

* * *

To donate to Ve'ahavta's Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, go to www.veahavta.org

To donate to B'nai Brith Canada's Haiti fund, call 1-800-274-3210.

For information about NotableTV's fundraiser for young professionals, go to www.notabletv.com, or to its Facebook page, called Toronto, Help Haiti.

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism has an online fund for American donors. To receive a Canadian tax receipt, Canadians must send their donation (by cheque only) to Rhonda Schild at United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Canadian Region, 1000 Finch Ave. W., Suite 508, Toronto, Ont., M3J 2V5, Attn: Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund, or call 416-667-1717 or 800-417-1332.

Further information about the Chabad Haiti Relief effort is available at chabadominican.com.

For further news developments, go to www.cjnews.com

With files from Janice Arnold and JTA

ANTISEMITISM ON CAMPUS

Salim Mansur, Professor of Political Science at University of Western Ontario, Toronto Sun columnist, and author of the new book, "Islam's Predicament", will talk about the need to confront bigotry and extremism, and explore the issue of racism on campus.

Marina Nemat, author of the best-selling novel, "Prisoner of Tehran…A Memoir", speaks of her personal experience with religious fanaticism -imprisonment and torture at the age of sixteen, for protesting the Islamic revolution.

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On Campus

Canadian professor gets Ottoman Bank award

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

After five years of research, reading hundreds of documents and writing 440 pages, Joseph B. Glass last month became the first Canadian to receive an award from the Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre last month.

Glass, along with co-author Ruth Kark, received about $10,000 (US) this past December for their book *Sephardi Entrepreneurs in Jerusalem: The Valero Family 1800-1945*, which explored the development of banking in Ottoman Palestine by telling the story of the Valero family, who, in 1848, developed the first private bank in what is now Israel.

The competition, which recognizes academic research on Turkish banking and economic history, was run by the Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, the European Association for Banking and Financial History and the History Foundation of Turkey. The award ceremony was held in Turkey.

For Glass, who teaches Canadian studies and geography and tourism at Centennial College in Toronto, and Kark, a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, the award came as a surprise, mainly because of the timing of their submission.

"If we take the timing of how Turkey and Israel relations deteriorated a little bit [in 2008, when the entry was submitted], we thought, 'Well, maybe just because the book talks about Israel, they'll overlook it,'" Glass said. "I hope [the award] is an expression of their academic freedom."

Joseph B. Glass *[Rita Poliakov photo]*

The book itself, which took Glass and Kark about five years to write, looks at the history of Sephardi Jews in Jerusalem, a side of Israel's history that many researchers ignore, Glass said.

"There are things that, in history, they sort of get lost," he said, adding that this is often the case for the Sephardi families he's studied and written about.

"This whole group of Sephardi families were a fascinating study that had been overlooked. Usually, when it comes to history... whoever writes it, write what they want," he said.

According to Glass, the research was hindered by Israel's Labor government several decades ago, which "followed certain ideological directions when it came to Sephardi Jews."

Kark, who met Glass when he was her PhD student at Hebrew University, agrees that more research needs to be done on the subject.

"It's a topic that is neglected, especially by Jewish researchers and scholars. It is important, it has an international [importance]," she said.

When entering the competition, the authors hoped the fact that their research was unusual would be recognized.

"There was the hope that they'd pick up on the uniqueness of telling the story of a bank," Glass said. "[The judges said] they found the intermingling of social and financial history to be fascinating."

Glass and Kark originally started work on the book after being approached by the Valero family. They were given access to bank statements, personal diaries and letters that had never been published. The authors found out that the Valero family dealt with the finances of visiting royalty and that they had their own synagogue, which still exists in Jerusalem.

This book is one of several projects that she and Glass have worked on together, Kark said, adding that 20 years ago, Glass was her teaching assistant at Hebrew University.

"He learned a lot about the local things [in Israel], the local history. He was a wonderful student," she said.

"Joseph also had a wonderful character, which probably comes from Canada. He's very considerate and a very nice person, apart from being a talented scholar."

Glass, who is currently working on a new book about Canada and the Holy Land, will use his part of the award money for his research, while Kark is considering adding it to a fund she keeps for her master's and PhD students who need financial support.

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NEW PLAYERS IN MEDICINE

Alternatives to seeing a doctor

with Dr. Brian Goldman

Dr. Brian Goldman is a veteran ER physician and one of Canada's most trusted medical broadcasters. He's known across Canada as CBC Radio One's "House Doctor" and is the host of CBC Radio One's 'White Coat, Black Art', an award-winning show that takes listeners past the hospital's sliding doors and reveals the true culture of modern medicine.

4.1 million Canadians and 1 million Ontarians can't find a family doctor

Come find out about new players on the health care scene – from nurse practitioners to physician assistants who are starting to make a difference.

Why should health care change?

Dr. Goldman presents a fascinating talk about restructuring health care to get the right medical people seeing the right kinds of patients and creating a win-win situation for all.

$5.00 Admission

Sun. Jan. 24, 2010 at 2:00 pm

Lodzer Centre Congregation
12 Heaton Street, Toronto
(Bathurst to Cocksfield
north of Sheppard, 1st street north
off Cocksfield is Heaton)
www.lodzercentre.com

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

To send in digital photos, please visit

www.cjnews.com

and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Happy 70th wedding anniversary, Fay & Jack Glazier. Much love from your family.

Happy sixth birthday to Emma-Belle Freid. Lots of love from Mommy & Daddy, grandparents, aunts & uncles & cousins.

Kaisel Kates celebrated his 90th birthday on Dec. 3, 2009.

Happy 60th anniversary to Ricki & Gil Gallen on Feb. 2. Love, your children and grandchildren.

Gary & Lynda Freedman recently celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary with family in the Dominican Republic.

Four generations! Standing from left: Michelle Gamliel (Israel), daughter of Shelley Rothman-Benhaim. Seated, Mollie Rothman, great-grandmother, holding baby Bracha-Esther Gamliel, three months.

Happy eighth birthday, Tarah Ainsley! Love from your baby sister Caleigh.

Happy third birthday, Caleigh Ariel! Love from your big sister Tarah.

JNF
Say it with Trees
"In Loving Memory"
JEWISH NATIONAL FUND
416-638-7200

What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @
for the :-) generation

What's New deadlines: Due to an early deadline, submissions for the Feb. 4 issue must be in on Jan. 22. Deadline for the Feb. 11 issue is Feb. 1 take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Saturday, Jan. 23

BLACK AND WHITE GALA

Beit Rayim Synagogue and school is holding a Black and White Gala, Pride of Israel Synagogue. Food, open bar, martini bar, cognac/liqueur tasting, dancing, silent auction. Appearance by **Adrian Marchuk**, performing as **Frankie Vali** in *Jersey Boys*. **Marilyn Somers**, 416-402-9044, msomers@beitrayim.org.

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (Central) meets at Toronto Heschel School, Sheppard and Faywood. Shiur at 9 a.m. Services at 9:30 a.m. Kiddush following. torontopartnershipminyan.com.

Sunday, Jan. 24

JEWISH HEALING SERVICE

Jewish Healing Program presents a free healing service, 3-4 p.m. Beth Tikvah Synagogue. Facilitated by **Rabbi Jarod Grover** and **Yehudit Shier Weisberg**. Sponsored by JF&CS, 416-638-7800, ext. 287.

LODZER CENTRE

Dr. Brian Goldman, CBC Radio One's House Doctor, presents "New Players on Medicine: Alternatives to seeing a doctor." Lodzer Centre Congregation, 12 Heaton St., 2 p.m., $5. Light refreshments. Introductory mah-jong evening, Monday, Jan. 25. **Sarah**, 416-636-6665. Wednesday nights, parshah of the week study, 7:30 p.m. Free. Details at www.lodzercentre.com.

ADULT EDUCATION

Shaar Shalom adult education committee presents guest speaker **Anna Porter**, author of *Kasztner's Train*. 7:30.

YIDDISH SING-ALONG

Friends of Yiddish presents *Lomir Ale Zingen* (Let Us All Sing), a Yiddish sing-along, led by **Mitch Smolkin**, with piano accompaniment by **Nina Shapilsky**, 2 p.m., Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Members free, $7 guests.

Monday, Jan. 25

MAH-JONG

Introductory mah-jong, Lodzer Centre, $5. Includes professional instruction and a copy of the 2009 mah-jong card. Call **Sarah**, 416-636-6665, to ensure a seat. www.lodzercentre.com.

BRAIN CHANGES

Dr. Cheryl Grady, scientist at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute, will talk about her study about why older adults find it difficult to concentrate in busy environments and filter out irrelevant information. 1:30-3 p.m., Wortsman Hall, Baycrest Hospital. To register, 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, or lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

Tuesday, Jan. 26

MOVIE SERIES

Tuesdays with Larry movie series, *The Band's Visit*, Hebrew with English subtitles, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 2 p.m., $5 at the door.

PATHWAYS TO WELL-BEING

Beth Emeth sisterhood and continuing education present **Rosalie Moscoe**, registered holistic nutritionist, "From Frazzled to Fantastic, Pathways to Well-Being, 7:30 p.m. At the door, $12 members, $14 guests, 416-633-3838.

Wednesday, Jan. 27

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

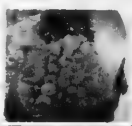
Ellen Scheinberg, director, Ontario Jewish Archives, and **Michael Rajzman**, assistant curator, Ontario Jewish Archives, will speak on "Unravelling the Mysteries Involved in the Use and Identification of Historic Photographs," 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. $5 for non-members.

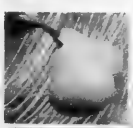
Continued on page 25

HAZELTON PLACE
RETIREMENT RESIDENCE
PLEASE JOIN OUR ART WORKSHOP
TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY
January 26 & 27th 9:30a.m. - 12:00p.m.

Please join us for a complimentary workshop over 2 days to create your own artwork. Instructed by Professor Borvoets; selected pieces will have limited prints produced. Art supplies and instruction will be free. At a later date, prints will be offered for sale to support a "Granny Project" in Africa. Hazelton Place invites you to join our inspiring artists to help create the artwork for this worthy cause.

Please RSVP as limited spaces are available.
Complimentary Refreshments served.





Hendrikus Borvoets, artist and art professor at Western University, CEO Art for Aids International.

Hazelton Place Retirement Residence: Monthly rates starting at only $3095 including 3 meals a day, recreational programs, housekeeping and 24 hour emergency nursing response.

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Be Updated: On Michael Korman's latest views of the current business cycle.

When: February 3, 2010 Time: 7pm until 8:15pm

Where: Richmond Hill Country Club
8905 Bathurst Street
(Highway 7 and Bathurst) RSVP: 416-493-8786

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Continued from page 24

Other News

KOHN SUMMER INTERN

Applications are being accepted for the 10-week summer program for college and university undergraduates and graduates who would like to work in the Jewish community, sponsored by JVS Toronto in partnership with Hillel of Greater Toronto. For more information, call 416-787-1151 ext. 259.

TEMPLE HAR ZION

Temple Har Zion's Shabbat evening services Jan. 29, 8 p.m., are followed by guest Rabbi Ilyse Glickman speaking on "Men are from Mars, Women Are From Haifa: an Exploration of Gender Roles in Israeli Society."

Join the temple for Extreme Shabbat, an all-day celebration of Shabbat Shirah and Tu b'Shvat devoted to the environment. Activities for all ages, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Everyone welcome. 905-889-2252 for information.

JF&C GROUP SERIES

Effective Parenting: a 4-session group to show parents of children 2-11 years how to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. Starts Wednesday, Jan. 27, 7-9 p.m. 4600 Bathurst St.

New parenting workshop: Survivor – the Teen Years is a 2-hour workshop to teach skills to parent your adolescent without losing your sanity. Led by **Ted Borovoy**. Thursday, Jan. 28, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

Workshop on When You're About to Separate: what to tell the kids, for parents about to separate or in the early stages of separation. Thursday, Jan. 28, Lipa Green Building, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Registration required.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or visit www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides hand-knitted hats and mittens to schoolchildren. Call 416-630-9313.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents a Shabbat Shirah of Music and Fun: Friday, Jan. 29, Carlebach Kabalat Shabbat; Shabbat davening Jan. 30 with elaborate melodies; Motza'ei Shabbat kumzitz featuring Shema Kolenu, at 8 p.m. Wine and cheese. No charge, **Carol Handelman**, 416-789-3213, ext. 204.

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 3, "Faith" series $30 members, $40 non-members; single class, $8 members, $10 non-members. 416-633-3838.

CHORALAIRS

New members sought for Choralairs, a non-audition choir. Reading music not essential. Rehearsals Tuesdays, 7:15-9:45 p.m., Earl Bales Community Centre, Room 2. Call **Sally**, 416-636-8247 or **Brian**, 416-631-0029.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. "Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity" begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are reliable, friendly, and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors. **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

IRAN

Kahillat Shaarei Torah, presents a two-part series on Iran, "The Threat to Security: Global and Local Perspectives" with **Doron Horowitz**, director of community security, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. Part I, "The Global Threat," Jan. 21; Part II, "The Local Impact," Feb. 4. Refreshments 7:30, presentation, 8 p.m., 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for winter/spring courses at the Prosserman JCC, including: Breathing Life into Torah with Hitbonenut Meditation; Rebbe Nachman of Braslav's Wisdom,Thursdays, Jan. 28-Feb. 18, 9:30 a.m. with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. King David: Traitorous Serial Killer or National Religious Hero? on Wednesdays, Feb. 17-March 17 at 8 p.m. with **Prof. James Diamond** of the University of Waterloo, and the Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn, Thursdays, April 15- May 6 at 9:30 a.m. with **Prof. Paul Franks**. Courses at Shaarei Shomayim: Trei Asar: The 12 Prophets with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., "Amos," Jan. 12-March 16; "Yoel," Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., from April 13-June 8. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca.

SEPHARDI CHALLENGES

New Israel Fund of Canada and Adath Israel Congregation present Israeli legal activist **Prof. Yifat Bitton**: "The Challenges Facing the Sephardic Community in Israel," Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation, 416-781-4322.

SURVIVAL SEMINAR

Jews for Judaism survival seminar with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, six-week series begins Jan. 26, 8 p.m., Beth Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave., no charge, 416-789-0020.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Feb. 5, **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Creative writing classes with **Sylvia Warsh**, Fridays until March 26. Memoir, stories, poetry, $66 members, $122 non-members. Call **Ruth Cohen**.

Financial Forum, planning your future, 11 a.m-3 p.m., Jan. 27, free. Wellness lecture, Jan. 28, "Nutrition Labels and Food Marketing," 1:30-2:30 p.m., free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Prosserman Jewish Community Centre, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Inquire about new programs at the Culinary Arts Studio, including Gluten Free Treats, Jan. 25, 9:30-11:30 a.m., and Ode to Julia Child series, Chou Paste, Feb. 1, 9:30-11:30a. m., ext. 235.

The Prosserman JCC's winter program guide is available. Drop by or call 416-638-1881, ext. 0.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Toronto Jewish Film Society season launch, *The Believer with Strangers*, introduced by *Eye Weekly*'s film critic, Adam Nayman, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. $15 general admission, $10 ages 18-29, 7:30 p.m. only.

Media Mondays, "The Art of Television," Jan. 25, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Drop-in, $12.

Jewish Life at the J, Hebrew classes Jan. 21-March 4. Hebrew conversation through Israeli love songs, Thursdays, Jan. 21-March 4.

Kolel at the J, Doing Jewish, Jan. 27-March 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Kick-start your Jewish knowledge or relearn what you have forgotten. The basics of Jewish life, holidays, life cycle, basic Jewish philosophy and the Jewish home. Ext. 4106 or www.kolel.org.

"History of Jewish American Swing, 1938-1950." Part of series, A Brief History of Jewish Popular Music with Jordan Klapman. Lecture with piano and sing-along, $2, ext. 155.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

BETH TIKVAH WINS AWARDS: Beth Tikvah Synagogue received two Solomon Schechter awards from the United Synagogue of Conservative (USCJ) Judaism at its recent biennial convention in New Jersey. The award certificates were accepted by Maurice Kulik, president of Beth Tikvah, right, and Robert Feldgaier, the shul's past president and a vice-president of Canadian region of USCJ.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 27

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Rose Greenspoon	Dec 25/09	6 Manor Haven Rd
Nick Ehrenfeld	Dec 26/09	65 Skymark Dr
Joseph Falk	Dec 25/09	503-22 Shallmar Blvd
Ilse Brook	Dec 28/09	645 Castlefield Ave
Sid Prut	Dec 26/09	343 Clark Av W
Rabbi Richard Sobel	Dec 26/09	New York, USA
Lev Riazanski	Dec 27/09	43 Whalen Court
Selma Leibovitz	Dec 26/09	239 Rose Green Dr
Gertrude Moses	Dec 24/09	66 Shallmar Bl
Sid Epstein	Dec 28/09	4300 Bathurst St
Balcia Kniznik	Dec 29/09	100 Antibes Drive
Sid Starkman	Dec 29/09	55 Skymark Drive
Frances Cepler	Dec 29/09	3 Geddes Court
Minnie Kazdan	Dec 29/09	14 Clayhill Cres
Joseph Levy	Dec 29/09	3560 Bathurst St
Katy Burger	Dec 31/09	3000 Bathurst St
Sylvia Rosenbaum (Smith)	Dec 31/09	209 Armour Blvd.
Ilse Brook	Dec 28/09	645 Castlefield Ave
Murray Gruson	Dec 29/09	44 Charles St W
Murray Morgenthau	Jan 1/10	307 Hillhurst Blvd.
Daniel Leavy	Jan 1/10	10 Pining Road
Bert Farago	Jan 3/10	83 Larkfield Dr
Elvira Dobrina	Jan 4/10	5430 Yonge St
Jean Siegel	Jan 5/10	85 Skymark Dr
Carole Jacobson	Jan 5/10	3089 Bathurst St
Esther Birnbaum	Jan 5/10	7300 Yonge St
Allen Eisen	Jan 4/10	23 Timberlane Dr
Louis Swartz	Jan 6/10	265 Ridley Blvd
Charlie Atkin	Jan 6/10	1201 Steeles Ave W
Stanley Wagman	Jan 6/10	278 Bloor St E
Marion Laszlo	Jan 7/10	9 Junewood Cres
Leon Klorfine	Jan 7/10	195 Wynford Dr
Joseph Fromstein	Jan 7/10	5444 Yonge St
Mel Lerman	Jan 7/10	149 Alexis Blvd
Ernest Weiss	Jan 7/10	2 Tokay Crt
Harold Weinstein	Jan 8/10	85 The Board Walk
Shirley Fruitman	Jan 8/10	65 Skymark Dr

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Anker, Gordon Samuel	Dec. 18/09	260 Heath St. W
Kofman, Jakov	Dec. 18/09	Private
Riskeviz, Meir	Dec. 19/09	78 Foxfield Cres
Zimmerman, Magda Miriam	Dec. 19/09	22 Midvale Rd
Srebrnik, Esther	Dec. 19/09	80 Antibes Dr
Eidelman, Arkadi	Dec. 21/09	309 Mascot Place
Solovitch, Albert	Dec. 21/09	Private
Borsa Braun, Julianna	Dec. 23/09	749 Briar Hill Ave
Freedman, Sandra	Dec. 23/09	Private
Voskoboinik, Valentina	Dec. 23/09	33 Drewry Ave
Greenwald, Doreen	Dec. 20/09	230 Searle Ave
Lager, Susan Sadie	Dec. 27/09	Private
Marcovici, Rachel	Dec. 27/09	33 Wilmington Av
Teitelbaum, Baruch	Dec. 27/09	6040 Bathurst St
Groszberger, Morris (Mor)	Dec. 28/09	5 Marwill St
Moshkovich, Elka	Dec. 29/09	550 Cummer Ave
Lifshitz, Valery	Dec. 30/09	7440 Bathurst St
Fisch, Juliana	Dec. 30/09	120 Torresdale Av
Samuels, Abraham (Albert)	Dec. 30/09	
Nesry, Michael	Dec. 31/09	
Kewel, Aron	Dec. 31/09	Private
Bogard, Anne	Dec. 31/09	20 Shallmar Blvd
Ber, Samuel	Jan. 1/10	1131 Steeles Ave.
Chikvashvili, Sara	Jan. 1/10	275 Weldrick Rd
Sacks, Beckie	Jan. 1/10	133 Torresdale Av
Schein, Sam (Szymon)	Jan. 1/10	541 Finch Ave. W
Pomerantz, Gertrude	Jan. 1/10	3560 Bathurst St
Weiner, Marvin	Jan. 1/10	33 Weldrick Rd. E
Becker, Edith	Jan. 2/10	41 Joshua Crt
Erlich, Joseph	Jan. 4/10	24 Felicia Crt
Kirsh, Lilli Margo	Jan. 3/10	205 Wynford Dr

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HEBREW BASIC DIGITAL

Dena Sugarbroad	Dec 13/09	205 Cummer Ave
Angel Adelstein	Dec 14/09	3 Wychwood Park
Molly Feldman	Dec 15/09	4001 Bayview Ave
Joseph Mayer	Dec 20/09	45 Driftwood Ave
Sylvia Grant	Jan 4/10	429 Walmer Rd
Marion David	Jan 6/10	718 Sheppard Ave

In Loving Memory

ZOE ALEXANDRA NEUMANN SPRINGER ז"ל

January 10, 1985 to January 22, 2005

"FOREVER YOUNG"

It is with profound sadness that we mark the 5th anniversary of the loss of our beautiful and courageous Zoe. There are no words that can fully convey the depths of our longing for her.

Zoe's permanent absence in our lives remains unreal, even today, 5 years later. Zoe remains our shining star, forever etched in our hearts and imprinted on our souls. Zoe is deeply missed by her parents Judy and Steve, her sister Lindsay, Ari Simms, Grandma Rhoda, Aunts Robin and Andrea, Uncle Allan, John, cousins Marielle, Shauna, and Joanna, Great Aunt and Uncle Rifka and Shloime, and all the rest of our special extended family and friends.

FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS
NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

Zoe, we love and miss you more than words....
Mom & Dad, Lindsay & Ari

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שאר הנושאים

גידי קורן וחברים

"היה או לא היה" - אירוע השנה שלנו

זו השנה השניה שפרופ' בקיבנבו "תיאטרון המפגש", תיאטרון ההבימה הישראלית בטורונטו. מערדדים מהצלחה הכבירה של "עיר הנפש" בשנה שעברה, נמצאים אנשי תיאטרון המפגש בחזרות אחרונות לקראת "היה או לא היה" על פי המחזה המצליח של עדנה מזי"א, על סיפור אהבתם המפורסם של השחקנית חנה רובינא והמשורר אלכסנדר פן. ההצגה מתרחשת בתל אביב הקטנה של שנות השלושים, ומיטיבים בה, בנוסף לרובינא ופן, גם ביאליק, שלונסקי ושאר סלבריטיס של תל אביב הקטנה. וזהי הצגה מהנה ונוגעת ללב, שתרגש את כל מי שיצא מישראל, אבל ישראל לא יצאה ממנו.

במאית ההפקה הטורונטאית היא יעל פינגולד, שהקימה את התיאטרון ובימה את "עיר הנפש" בשנה שעברה. מפיקת ההצגה היא תמי ברמן, מזרזת הרים מקצועית. בגלל ההיסטריה לכרטיסים בשנה שעברה, תוקיימה שתי הצגות ביום ראשון , 7 בפבריאר, 1:00 בצהריים וב-7:30 בערב

היכן? סיטי סליהאוס, 1000 ניו ויסטמינסטר
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אוצו רוצו.

נשק קטלני 2 -יהנרס סרוצקו

בכתבתי הקודמת, תארתי מה נפל בגורלו של אילי יליד שוויץ, אשר הצליח להתחלת לתיק המצלמות שהיה תלוי על כתפי והורחם על ידי קצין במחלן אמריקאי אמיץ. אם חשבתי אז שהקצין הגזים, גיליתי שזה עדיין לא קצה הקרחון ושחד האמריקאים מפעילת טרור לא היה מכריש אפילו את ורדי אלן לפני בדיקת דם.

כמה שבועות אחרי שנפרדתי מאילהי היקר, נסתי לנאשוויל המוזיקאלית, בדרך חזרה לטורונטו, גילה אירש בימחון אמיץ, באותו תיק מצלמית חסר מיל, סרט הדבוה שנקרא באנגלית לא צחה.GNIKSAM-EPAT. הבמחוניסט לא האמין למראה עיניו וכמובן החרים את הסיים המסוכן. מיותר לציין שבעזרת סרט הדבקה כזה אפילו שמשון הגיבור לא מסוגל לחטוף תרנגול לכפרות. לכן שאלתי את אירש הבמחון, כיצד רבע גליל של טיים, עלול לסכן מטוס בגודל חצי אוניה. להפתעתי, האיש ענה בלי להתבלבל, שבעזרת סרט ההדבקה אפשר לקשור ידים, לתלות, לחנוק, לאטום פה ועוד פעולות שמסכנות טיסה. בקיצור, אם הפרלמנט השוויצי היה יודע מה מסוגל טיים תמים לבצע, היה מעניק פרס נובל למציאה הטיים המאושר. (אחרי הכל, גם יאסר ערפת זכה בפרס הנכסף).

אחרי שנעלתי את נעלי הטבס שעברו בהצלחה דרך גלאי מתכות, גיליתי להפתעתי שהשוירוכים הצילחו להעריס על מכשיר הרנטגן ולעבור את הבדיקה הקפדנית. הרי בעזרת שרוכים אפשר לקשור טיס למושב, לכפית בן-עריבה, ואפילו לתלות איש במחין נושא אקדח. לכן אל תתפלאו אם במיסה הבאה תאלצו להפרד משרוכים, ענבות, צעיפים ועוד פריטי לבוש אשר יכולים לשמש כלי נשק קטלניים. ועדיין לא הזכרתי תולצות עם שרוולים, מכנסים ארוכים, הגרות עם אזמים ואבזרים אחרים שלכאורה נראים תמימים, אך בידי אשפי טרור מאומנים, יכולים להביא אסון על הטיסים. לכן בטיסה הבאה, כדי להיות בטוחים, כדאי לעלות לטיפון המטוס בתחתונים, גופיות וכמובן יחפים.

סרטים שכדאי מאוד

ענת האסקר מתקרבת והאולמנים מנסים לשחרר את לחיציהם הגדולים.

Up in the Air הוא סרטו המצליח מאוד של ג'ורג' קלוני, שמשחק את דמותו של נוסע מתמיד שמבלה כשלוש מאות יום בשנה על מטוסים ותפקידו הוא לפטר אנשים ממשרותיהם, במקום שמנהליהם המפחדים יעשו את העבודה הלא נעימה. חייו מתנהלים בנעם של רוחק מבוקש, עד שהוא פוגש את מי שהוא מקווה שתהיה אשת חייו, ואז מתחילות ההפתעות. סרט חכם וציני על החיים במטוסים המהיר של המילניום החדש. שמהנה במיוחד קורן.

Broken Embraces הוא סרטו החדש של האשוך הספרדי אלמאדובאר והכוכבת הגדולה שלו פנלופה קרוז. זהו סיפורו של במאי סרטים עזוב, שאיבד את ראייתו בתאונת דרכים, משמחתו וחיי האהובה שלו. על פי דרכו של אלמאדובאר- יש כאן עלילה ועלילת משנה, אהבות גדולות וראשות, נשים מדהימות וסצינות מטריפות חושים. זה קולנוע כמו שלעמי קולנוע צריך להיות. תשע במולם קורן.

Coast to Coast

Federal finance minister talks to Jewish high schoolers

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — High school students at Winnipeg's Gray Academy of Jewish Education were clearly eager to ask questions of Finance Minister Jim Flaherty when he spoke to them Jan. 11 at the Asper Jewish Community Campus' Berney Theatre.

In his opening remarks Flaherty said that last year was "a very rocky time," for the global economy.

But, he said, "I think we'll see improvement in 2010, and 2011 will be even better," and Canadians "can have some comfort" that an economic recovery is underway in this country.

Flaherty was in Winnipeg last week as part of pre-budget consultations. Gray Academy was the only school he visited on his trip.

He told students that the overall challenge globally is that the U.S. dollar is under a "lot of pressure due to the large U.S. deficit." He added that Ottawa is running a deficit in these difficult financial times in order to encourage employment.

Jim Flaherty
[Rhonda Spivak photo]

He also told the teens about the upcoming conference of G7 finance ministers that Canada is hosting in Iqaluit, Nunavut, on Feb. 5 and 6.

His opening address was relatively short, as he said he wanted time to answer the students' questions, noting that it's important for him to listen to the needs of business-people, university students and young people.

The students weren't shy in querying the finance minister.

One of the first questions asked was whether Prime Minister Stephen Harper's decision "to prorogue parliament would affect the economy."

Flaherty said that it wouldn't, and that what matters is "consumer confidence," among other factors.

As well, he said, "because we won't sit, I'll be able to do more pre-budget consultation" and travel around the country listening to others' ideas.

"A lot of good ideas come from listening," he said.

Another student asked Flaherty about how the Canadian economy would be affected by the high Canadian dollar and weak U.S. dollar.

Flaherty responded that in "the short term, it's very difficult for exporters," but over the longer term, businesses can adjust. He said what concerns businesses is currency volatility. He noted that the higher Canadian dollar is a good thing for "those who want to buy more modern machinery" in order to upgrade their businesses.

When asked by a student how U.S. President Barack Obama's "Buy America" plan will affect Canada, Flaherty responded that "for elected people, it's easy to succumb to protectionist sentiment because it's popular."

After noting that Obama is under a lot of pressure, Flaherty said, "We have a NAFTA agreement with the U.S. and Mexico, and we expect compliance."

He added that protectionism is very "short-sighted" for economic well-being.

Flaherty, who noted that he has "three 18-year-old sons," spoke to the students about the need to plan for the future so that the economy will be in good shape when they graduate from university.

When asked by a student about his views on Iran, Flaherty said that the "prime minister has been very clear that we view the buildup of tools of aggression against Israel as unacceptable."

Following his address, Flaherty was given a tour of the Asper Jewish Community Campus by Bob Freedman, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, and federation president Ben Cohen.

Klimt painting restored to survivor

JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A Montreal man stands to come into millions of dollars from the sale of a restituted painting his family lost during the Holocaust, according to a British newspaper.

The *Financial Times* reported Jan. 8 that Georges Jorisch, 81, and the current owner of *Church in Cassone* by Gustav Klimt have reached a legal agreement to divide the proceeds after the masterpiece is auctioned at Sotheby's in London early next month.

Sotheby's estimates the painting will be sold for between 12 million and 18 million pounds, or about $19.9 to $29.9 million.

"I am sorry, but I cannot say anything at the moment," Los Angeles lawyer Randol Schoenberg, who has represented Jorisch, responded by e-mail to a request from *The CJN* for more information.

Jorisch, a retired camera store owner who has been living in Montreal since the 1950s, was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Vienna. The painting's current owner wasn't identified by the auction house.

Church in Cassone was part of the collection of Jorisch's great-uncle, Viktor Zuckerkandl, a steel magnate, and his wife Paula. When they died childless, their home and its contents were passed to Viktor's sister, Amalie, and her daughter, Mathilde, Jorisch's mother.

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Coast to Coast

Canada slashes funds to UNRWA

Money redirected to bolstering PA justice system

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Canada has reduced its direct support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) – which runs Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank Gaza, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon – and "redirected those funds to specific projects in the Palestinian Authority that will ensure accountability and foster democracy in the PA," Treasury Board President Vic Toews said last week.

In an interview, Toews, MP for the riding of Provencher in southeastern Manitoba, said that on Jan. 9, he met with Palestinian Minister of Planning and Administrative Development Ali Al-Jarbari in Ramallah, where funding to UNRWA was discussed.

Until now, Canada – which chairs the Refugee Working Group that was established in the wake of the Madrid Middle East summit in 1991 – has provided UNRWA with 11 per cent of its budget, which amounts to $10 million annually toward UNRWA's work in the refugee camps.

Toews said that in the past, funds Canada earmarked for UNRWA "went into a general operating fund" of the Palestinian treasury, and although Al-Jarbari asked that this situation continue, sending funds this way made it "difficult" for Canada to monitor how the funds were being used. Toews said Al-Jarbari asked that funds be given "directly" to the Palestinian treasury, but Toews refused.

Asked whether Ottawa had concerns that UNRWA funds were being administered by Hamas operatives, Toews responded that "Canada has made a $300-million commitment over five years to the Palestinian Authority, but we want to put that money only into programs that are consistent with Canadian values. We are going to focus our funds on institution-building in the PA, such as building a proper functioning justice system. We need to ensure that [the PA has] less wide discretion and the funds are being directed to specific projects."

He added, "I told [Al-Jarbari] that our paramount concern is the security of Israel."

Toews, a former director of the constitutional law branch at Manitoba's department of justice, said, "We are going to allocate money to training Palestinian prosecutors, and towards the office of the attorney general and the public prosecution office. If we train people properly, we will have the emergence of proper institutions necessary for a state."

Toews said that it's "obviously more difficult to monitor the use of money sent into general funds than specific projects." He noted that "overall Canada is not reducing the amount of money given to the PA, but it is now being re-directed in accordance with Canadian values."

Toews added: "Canada has pledged $20 million towards training prosecutors, judges, and police and building up the Palestinian judicial sector by building courthouses in Ramallah, Hebron and Tulkarm. But more important than building the courthouses is training the people… A fair and effective system of criminal justice with an efficient and independent prosecutions office and attorney general's office is integral to the process, and to securing long-term peace and stability in the Middle East. "

Toews also noted that this initiative to promote reform in the Palestinian justice system was being funded through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). He said that money sent to the PA through CIDA would be allocated to ensure accountability.

Toews indicated that he spoke with the Palestinians on behalf of Canada's minister of international development, Beverley Oda, who oversees CIDA.

Vic Toews
[Rhonda Spivak photo]

Canada's support of justice sector reforms in the PA is named "*Sharaka*," an Arabic word connoting trust and partnership. The initiative includes not only training people, but providing equipment, infrastructure and information technology systems.

Regarding the PA's police force, which is being trained in Jordan by Lt.-Gen. Keith Dayton of the United States, Toews said "Canada has the largest contingency under Gen. Dayton. We have 18 officers, and the United States only has 10."

After noting that he had spoken to an RCMP officer from Halifax and others, Toews said, "A full third of Palestinian Authority police have no training whatsoever."

Toews, who also visited Jordan during his trip, said that he met with the Jordanian prime minister, finance minister and planning minister, as well as the head of its atomic energy commission, "because Jordan is looking to produce nuclear energy for desalination."

He added: "They [the Jordanians] don't have water or energy that other Arab states have. We had very good discussions. Our Canadian technology, CANDU reactors, are not conducive to the development of weapons-grade uranium. I met with an expert… at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem who assured me that this was the case. I wanted to verify it myself."

Toews was in Israel on behalf of the government to participate in the second annual Manitoba-Israel Water Symposium hosted by the Jewish National Fund.

While in the West Bank, Toews also met with PA Justice Minister Ali Khashan and Attorney General Ahmed Al Mughani.

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Landmark Winnipeg communal hall sold

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — For Jewish Winnipeggers of a certain generation, the former Hebrew Sick Benefit Hall on Selkirk Avenue in North Winnipeg brings back memories of happy times.

The Hebrew Sick Benefit Hall *[Myron Love photo]*

For several decades, the hall – next door to Gunn's Bakery, one of Winnipeg's two kosher bakeries – was a centre for the Jewish community. It hosted synagogue services on yom tovim, as well as weddings, Yiddish plays and a variety of social events. However, in October, Congregation Etz Chayim – which inherited the building as a result of the merger of the Beth Israel, Bnay Abraham and Rosh Pina Synagogues in 2001 – sold the storied hall to a church group.

Jonathan Buchwald, Etz Chayim's executive director, noted that over the last couple of years, revenue from bingo at the hall had fallen steeply, and it had also become increasingly difficult to find volunteers to run the bingo.

"It didn't make sense to carry the building any longer," Buchwald says. "We decided last summer to sell and found a buyer.

"It is the end of an era."

The Hebrew Sick Benefit Association (HSBA) was founded in the early 1900s and became the largest of several mutual aid societies for Jewish immigrants to Winnipeg at a time before governments provided social services.

According to Allan Levine in his new book, *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*, the HSBA in 1907 purchased the former St. Gyles Presbyterian Church on Selkirk Avenue and transformed it into the Queen's Theatre, a venue for Yiddish theatre that attracted the stars of North American Yiddish theatre.

Laurie Mainster grew up on Selkirk Avenue near the Queen's. He recalls having a walk-on part when he was four years old. "My parents used to host some of the visiting actors," he said. "A lot of local talent also blossomed at the theatre."

With the onset of the Depression and the growth of an English-speaking generation of Jewish Winnipeggers, the theatre fell on hard times. After a fire in the mid-1930s, the HSBA rebuilt the hall and modernized it as a Jewish community centre.

Max Hochman recalled that the hall hosted a lot of Jewish weddings on Sundays (and non-Jewish weddings on Saturday evenings). Hochman's father-in-law, Abraham Raber, operated the hall's concession counter in 1950 until his death in 1976.

"He sold soups, corned beef sandwiches, chocolates and drinks," Hochman said. "There was always a lot of activity. It kept him busy. Sarah [Hochman's late wife] and I helped out wherever we could. We ran the coat check. Young professional groups held their meetings at the hall. Cards were also a big deal."

Jack Raber, Max Hochman's brother-in-law, recalls that stags were also popular for grooms. "There would be gambling, with some of the money raked off for the groom," he said.

Mainster remembered High Holiday services that were led for a number of years by Cantor Jack Silverberg. "The HSBA Hall was the place to go," he said.

The hall began to be used for bingo in the 1960s and, after the HSBA merged with the Ateres Israel (Mizericher) shul to form the Beth Israel in Garden City, money raised from bingo was used to help fund the Beth Israel's operating expenses.

"It was only in the mid-'80s, when the Gambling Commission began monitoring gaming controls, that the bingo really began to make money," said Sid Kasner, a longtime Beth Israel member who served as the first president of Congregation Etz Chayim.

QJC addresses museum's role

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The story of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were persecuted and forced to leave Arab countries should be included in the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, now under construction in Winnipeg, say Quebec Jewish Congress (QJC) and representatives of those Jewish communities now living in Montreal.

During two days of public and private hearings held by the museum in Montreal last week, Lisette Shashoua and Gladys Daoud, natives of Iraq, provided harrowing testimony of their own families' dispossession and flight from oppression and even physical danger in the 1960s and '70s. Since June, a museum advisory committee has been holding consultations in every province and territory on what Canadians think the museum's content should be. They are scheduled to conclude in Moncton, N.B., on Feb. 4.

Projected to open in 2012, the museum was a dream of the late Izzy Asper, founder of the Canwest Global media conglomerate, and has been carried on by his daughter, Gail Asper, since his death in 2003. Three levels of government are contributing to the $265-million cost, and the rest is being raised in the private sector. The museum has been a federal Crown corporation since 2008.

For full story, please go to cjnews.com

Securing legal counsel in key parenting disputes

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 28 years

Question: My ex-wife keeps saying that my nine-year-old daughter doesn't want to see me, even though we have a scheduled parenting plan. I haven't seen her in months. My wife keeps ignoring my emails.

I don't owe her any money. I would like to go to court to enforce our agreement. However, I'm not sure I want to hire a lawyer. I have a job, but lawyers are expensive. Legal Aid won't help me because I work. I have some assets and a modest income. What do I do?

Answer: Borrow the money, if necessary, but get an experienced family law lawyer. People have no hesitation to finance a car. Right now, the Ontario courts are grossly overburdened by litigants attempting to represent themselves. Judges often complain that they continually have to explain the law and procedure rather than administer justice. "Duty counsel" court appointed lawyers in each Ontario Family Court have very limited responsibilities and only give initial advice to such self-represented parents and Court appearances. They are not permitted to represent a parent.

Usually, parents who represent themselves have little idea how the law works, what their rights are and how best to avoid the procedural mistakes that can cost them serious money in court awards, nor do they know the best strategies to follow.

Most importantly, going to court may be the worst option of all. Good counsel can often avoid a courtroom confrontation altogether. They have all sorts of tools at their disposal that may avoid confrontation: mediation, arbitration, custody/access assessments, conciliation, four-way meeting of collaborative law. And when things go wrong — and cases *do* go wrong — that hardly damns the success of good counsel in most situations where the money is invested wisely.

Sadly, some children no longer see their absentee parents because the "other" dad or mom would not deploy the necessary resources to hire competent legal counsel. Years later, it is often impossible to seek access when the child is older.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Filmmaker explores spirituality in India

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Ben Feferman did not find his spirituality at a synagogue or a Shabbat dinner. He found it in India.

Feferman, who started the film production company Fef Films, spent six months in India with a cameraman and a mission – to explore the link between Judaism and eastern spirituality.

"I grew up not religious at all. Actually, I was really against Judaism," he said.

This changed when he was about 21 years old, around the same time that he started reading about eastern spirituality and Buddhism.

"I decided if I'm going to start exploring other paths, I'd like to explore Judaism," he said. "I started to go to Israel and to really make the effort to learn where I come from first. From there, I wanted to explore the world."

As Feferman started researching the idea of Jewish Buddhists, a statistic from the *Los Angeles Times* caught his attention.

"[It] said one-third of all Buddhist converts were Jewish. When I read that statistic, it really blew me away," he said. "It really made me think… 'What is it about Jewish people that points them in the direction of the East?' That's when I decided I was going to take an indefinite break to go to India."

Feferman also decided to turn his journey into his first documentary, which he called *The Wandering Jew*.

During his trip, the filmmaker visited meditation centres, monasteries and ashrams, which are places of religious retreat.

"It took some time to get adjusted and get oriented with the whole Indian scene," he said, adding that he was often exposed to poverty in India. "It really grounded me in terms of the way I lived, the way I spend my money."

Feferman started spending about $10 a day, ate simple meals and, every once in awhile, would sleep on front porches.

Feferman arrived in Mumbai two weeks after the city was attacked by several gunmen, who claimed about 101 victims.

"A lot of people told me it's not safe to go," he said. But Feferman refused to postpone his trip.

"This event really brought the community together," he said.

As time went on, Feferman found a way of identifying the Jews in a monastery.

"I would stand at the back of the class. When everyone would bow down to the guru, it was always the Jews who wouldn't bow down. I started to notice this trend," he said. "It didn't matter how religious they were, they just couldn't fully bow down. I'd go up to them after, I'd say, 'I know you're Jewish.' They'd be so shocked."

This was how Feferman began collecting Jewish stories. It was also how he learned that Jewish Buddhists are tied to their religious roots.

"I think it's something in the Jewish soul, there's some sort of mechanism that just wouldn't [bow]. The idea of idol worship is so deeply engraved," he said.

Feferman found that many of the Jews he was meeting were backpackers, tourists or businessmen.

Ben Feferman, 26, turned his spiritual journey in India into a documentary.

"It was a real mix, but they seemed to get along very well," he said.

His documentary, which he has submitted to the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, centres on the stories of seven "wandering Jews." One of the most memorable Jews is a psychiatrist from Baltimore who changed his name to Siddhartha. (Siddhartha Gautama is the Buddha's name.)

Currently in his late 60s or early 70s, Siddhartha was the only person who truly worked to distance himself from Judaism, Feferman said.

"Siddhartha was really someone who stripped himself of his past and wanted to start anew," he said. "He changed his name, stopped contact with his family and really went on a spiritual quest."

While Feferman was intrigued by Siddhartha's story, he doesn't necessarily agree with his point of view.

"I believe that in order to be in touch with your spiritual self, you first have to walk the path that you were born to," he said.

For Feferman, this path also involves the struggle of intertwining other religions with Judaism.

"It's sort of been really ingrained that anything outside of Judaism is wrong. You're a traitor, a heretic. Everyone's taught that," he said.

"I felt like I was teetering this line… I want to be able to explore spirituality outside of Judaism, but at the same time I'm very happy where I am Jewishly."

While Feferman spent six months filming, he spent about four months editing his footage.

"One of the main problems is that everything's in my head… It was my own personal journey. I didn't have a conclusion, I sort of had to be very artistically open-minded," he said. "It was an incredible experience because I got to relive the trip in the editing room."

Throughout the process, Feferman was determined not to preach.

"I'm not saying it's right to go to India, I'm not saying it's wrong. I'm just saying I felt the urge to do it. These are our stories, you make your own decisions," he said.

To watch a trailer of the movie, visit www.thewanderingjew.ca.

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Israel's field hospital in Haiti focuses on saving lives

By NATASHA MOZGOVAYA
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

PORT-AU-PRINCE — The Israeli field hospital in the earthquake-stricken Haitian capital is a microcosm of the streets of the city, fluctuating between despair and hope amid the looting, violence and stories of miracles.

Each account takes on great importance against the background of the earthquake that devastated the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

In the children's ward, located in a tent, is a baby under a year old. Someone left him here after he was pulled out of the rubble Sunday morning. He has open sores on his leg and does not make a sound except for a slight chirping when the doctor checks his leg. The doctors say he's in shock.

"His condition is stable, and pretty good, considering what he's been through," says Dr. Assaf Amit, who heads the children's emergency department. "He'll get antibiotics and surgery on the leg. It's a rare case of survival. Apparently, he was in an air pocket. When he came here, his condition was life-threatening."

His parents aren't here – they may be dead – but the Israeli nurses caress him and give him a warm bottle of milk.

"Apparently it's genetic, the ability to survive: he was lying in the rubble without food for five days," says Gali Wiest, the delegation's head nurse.

A baby around 18 months old lies on a bed in intensive care. She was admitted with an open sore and a massive infection throughout her body. The respirator shakes her every time it forces air into her. She has already been resuscitated a few times, and the team is not optimistic.

"We were shocked by the sights, and the nurses here have to cope with providing nursing care – it's a Third World country," Wiest says. "I have four children myself, and I was an emergency room nurse, but the sights here are very difficult and you need a lot of mental fortitude. We've already taken in 87 children, most in moderate to serious condition. There have been a few operations and amputations, and they keep coming."

But no one stays for long. The hospital has a two-week mandate, which is nothing compared to the time it takes to recover from complex injuries.

"We're all thinking about the fact that we discharge them into the street, in effect, because they have no home," Dr. Avi Yitzhak says. "But you have to make the right decision: either you take in 40 people and treat them for two weeks, or you try to save as many as possible to at least stop the primary injury."

Yitzhak immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia in 1991 and says he feels a special connection to the patients here. He says he knows the problems of practising medicine in the developing world.

Jeanne-Michelle cuddles her newborn whom she named Israel. Israeli medical workers look on. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

"There's no organized network of clinics here, there's nowhere to discharge them to, and we have to treat as many people as possible, as long as it's still possible to save them," he says.

"When I went out on rescue yesterday, I saw what was happening in the streets – the bodies, the people who didn't know what to do. It's obvious that the work is very intensive, and I assume that we could burn out at a certain stage. But for now, we're full of energy and we're thrilled by our ability to help."

Willsmith Joseph, 9, had surgery Saturday to amputate his toes, which had developed gangrene. Sunday morning, he was in a deep sleep in the children's ward. His older brother knelt beside him. They will have to leave before noon. The nurse gives him two packets of antibiotics and some acetaminophen and tries to explain in English when to take them.

"Where are you going?" I ask the older boy.

"We have no place to go. To the tent encampment," he says. "Our house was ruined." Willsmith's face contorts in pain as he walks with his new crutches.

"Had we not amputated his toes, the gangrene would have spread and he would have died within days," Yitzhak explains. "Yes, it hurts, and there's an infection, but he'll live. It's a drop in the ocean, and it's frustrating, but we have to do the maximum to help as many people as possible."

Most of the wounds are infected and neglected – some people were pulled out of the rubble after being trapped for a few days, others simply couldn't get to a hospital or were turned away.

Max Darlene Azur, 29, came to the Israeli hospital with open wounds on both sides of her leg. For four days, she shouted and writhed in pain in the town square. The bodies of two of her cousins were still inside her home.

"I was in my room, and the wall simply collapsed onto my leg. But now I feel much better," she says.

The hospital also had its first birth Sunday. Jeanne-Michelle was brought in with labour pains and delivered a beautiful boy, her fourth child. Jeanne-Michelle sits indifferent most of the time, but when she says her newborn's name – Israel – a broad smile spreads across her face. "I feel fine," she says. She will be discharged within a few hours, to make room for other deliveries.

"It's very symbolic," Dr. Dar Shir says. "In a place where, even without the disaster, infant mortality is among the highest in the world and most women don't give birth in hospitals, the best experts in Israel delivered her baby. It's very moving and balances out a little the things that are happening here, and reminds us that a woman who is ready to give birth will do so even when there's an earthquake. It's what keeps the human race going. Of course it's a problem to discharge them under these conditions, but at least she delivered safely and both mother and baby are in excellent condition."

The field hospital's commander, Col. Itzik Kreis, a physician, says: "Throughout the night we continued to deal with saving lives; we received a number of patients in very poor shape who needed surgery and intensive care.

"For now, the other medical teams don't have the ability to provide more than first aid. We are focusing on saving lives," Kreis says. "Most of the injuries are a result of the earthquake, but in a few days, the situation can change, and regular patients will start to come in as well."

Israel and Germany hold historic joint cabinet session

By ASSAF UNI
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BERLIN — German Chancellor Angela Merkel received Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday as an historic joint meeting of the two countries' cabinets got underway in Berlin.

The meeing was the second ever to take place, and the first on German soil. Approximately 10 ministers from each government took part in the talks.

"The joint government consultations are a very special event. Germany only conducts such meetings with a very few partners," German government spokesperson Christoph Steegmans said ahead of the Merkel-Netanyahu meeting.

Prior to the noontime meeting, Netanyahu held talks with Merkel and took a tour of a memorial located near the Brandenburg Gate in honour of European Jewry murdered during the Holocaust. The prime minister was also expected to visit the Jewish Museum in Berlin and to meet with the speaker of the Bundestag during his visit.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the joint cabinet meeting on Monday in Berlin. ***[Flash 90 photo]***

The two sides were expected to discuss security issues – including the potential for further sanctions on Iran – as well as development projects and environmental topics, the spokesperson said.

High on the agenda at the meeting will also be Israeli plans to buy a German-built Dolphin class submarine, as well as two missile boats, at a total cost of around one billion euros. Germany has become the main supplier of equipment to the Israeli navy, which already operates three German Dolphins.

Foreign analysts say the submarine is capable of launching ballistic missiles carrying nuclear warheads.

Two of the crafts are now under construction in Germany and are expected to be sold to Israel in the coming years. Over the past months the two allies have also held talks over the sale to Israel of a sixth Dolphin, as well as two 'stealth' missile boats.

Germany and Israel established diplomatic ties in 1965, 20 years after the end of the Holocaust, in which six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis.

The first German-Israeli cabinet meeting was held in Jerusalem in March 2008, when Merkel travelled to Israel and addressed the Knesset.

Israel Briefs

Deputy FM apologizes

Israel's deputy foreign minister officially apologized to Turkey over a public reprimand of its ambassador. Daniel Ayalon apologized for calling in Ahmet Oguz Celikkol and embarrassing him in front of TV cameras after the Turkish prime minister's recent verbal attack on Israel and a new anti-Israel Turkish TV drama. "Although we have our differences of opinion on several issues, they should be discussed and solved only through open, reciprocal and respectful diplomatic channels between our two governments," read Ayalon's letter, which was given to the Turkish ambassador to send to Ankara. The ambassador was made to sit on a lower chair than Ayalon and the table between them only displayed an Israeli flag. Ayalon did not shake Celikkol's hand. Turkish President Abdullah Gul told Al Jazeera he had threatened to recall his ambassador if Israel did not issue a formal apology.

Jordan wants scrolls

The Jordanian government has asked the United Nations to help it take the Dead Sea Scrolls from Israel. Jordan last week filed a complaint with UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, claiming that Israel stole the 900 ancient religious text fragments from an eastern Jerusalem museum during the Six-Day War in 1967. Canada rejected a request by Jordan earlier this month to confiscate the documents under international law. The scrolls recently completed a successful exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. A Jordanian antiquities official said in a statement that Jordan has documents to prove it owns the scrolls.

Jordanian suspect arrested

An Amman taxi driver was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the last week bombing of an Israeli diplomatic convoy in Jordan, *Al-Arabiya* reported. No one was injured in the attack, in which two remote-controlled bombs were detonated close to the Allenby Bridge crossing just as a convoy of Israeli diplomats visiting Jordan passed. Four diplomats and two security guards were heading to Israel for the weekend from Amman, according to reports. After the bombing, Jordan's foreign minister reportedly called Israel's ambassador to Jordan, who was not in the convoy, to assure him that all efforts were being made to arrest those responsible for the attack.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

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Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.

Submissions can not be returned.

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If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selctions based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

Minaret ban opposed by 43 per cent of Israelis

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

A plurality of Israelis would oppose legislation to ban the construction of minarets on mosques in Israel, according to a survey conducted by an American organization dedicated to promoting racial harmony and strengthening inter-group relations.

Rabbi Marc Schneier

The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding (FFEU), based in New York City, found that 43 per cent of Israelis rejected a ban, while 28 per cent backed one. Twenty nine per cent of respondents were undecided.

The telephone survey was carried out recently by Keevoon Research, and 500 Jewish Israelis were interviewed.

The survey was commissioned on the heels of a referendum in Switzerland in which 57.5 per cent of voters supported a proposal to ban the building of new minarets in the country.

At present, there are four minarets in Switzerland, serving a community of 400,000 Muslims.

The proposal, opposed by the Swiss government, was put forward by the right-wing Swiss People's party (SVP), the largest party in parliament. The SVP claims that minarets are a sign of Islamization and Islamic power.

Last November's referendum took place at a time when European nations are engaged in a debate on how best to integrate Muslim citizens and address such issues as Islamic head scarves.

By some estimates, Europe is home to 10 to 15 million Muslims.

Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of FFEU, was gratified by the results of the survey.

"When it comes to freedom of religion, Israelis are apparently much more tolerant than their Swiss counterparts," he said in an interview last week. "Israelis understand that all religious symbols deserve our respect and tolerance."

The survey also found that the strongest resistance to banning minarets came from Israelis in the national religious camp, who politically are the most right-wing in Israel.

Seventy two per cent of such Israelis expressed opposition to the ban, compared to 42 per cent of secular Israelis and 36 per cent of "traditional" Israelis.

"The poll shows a definite correlation between religious observance and tolerance toward Islam," said Rabbi Schneier, a past president of the North American Board of Rabbis and chair of the American section of the World Jewish Congress.

He added: "Israelis seem to put politics aside, and opposition to banning minarets actually increases as we move further to the right on the political spectrum. The fact that less than one-third of Israelis support banning minarets indicates that from the Israeli point of view, there is room for respectful coexistence between Jews and Israeli Arabs when it is based on religion and not politics."

Fire strikes Crete synagogue for second time

JTA

ATHENS — The only synagogue on the Greek island of Crete caught fire for the second time in 10 days in what is believed to be an arson attack.

An early Saturday morning fire at the Etz Hayyim synagogue in the city of Hania destroyed the roof of the building as well as scores of books.

Two fire engines and five firefighters arrived on the scene and took two hours to get the fire under control.

The fire brigade is investigating the cause of the fire and hasn't ruled out arson.

The synagogue was already seriously damaged in a Jan. 5 arson attack, which destroyed some 30 antique Turkish carpets and the synagogue's extensive library. The arsonists reportedly climbed over the shul's iron gate and made an improvised firebomb using stuffing from a couch in the synagogue's mikveh to ignite a canister filled with flammable liquid.

Until 1999, Etz Hayyim was a desecrated house of prayer that remained the sole Jewish monument on the island of Crete after the destruction of its Jewish community in 1944 by the Nazis. From 1996 until its re-dedication in 1999, the structure had been painstakingly restored.

The Jews of Crete are first mentioned in the Second Maccabees. The city came into administrative prominence during Hellenistic times and attracted artisans and technicians from Alexandria. It's likely the members of this early Jewish community were originally from Egypt.

Damage in the second attack is estimated at $43,000 (US), since the wooden roof was completely destroyed.

Synagogue director Nikos Stavroulakis said that four computers as well as 300 CDs and cassette tapes of Jewish music were also destroyed.

(Please see related story on page 41.)

Manitoba-Israel Water Symposium starts with a splash

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — This week, some 20 water scientists, half of them from Israel and half from Manitoba, are touring Israel's key water sites as part of the second Manitoba-Israel Water Symposium, hosted by the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael – The Jewish National Fund (KKL-JNF).

Over the course of their six-day trip, the group of Manitoban and Israeli researchers and policy-makers are scheduled to visit the Mekorot National Pumping Station, the water recycling and allocation site at Kibbutz Dafna, the Hula Valley, Lake Kinneret, and the rehabilitation project at the Alexander River.

The aim of the tour is to deepen Manitoba delegation members' understanding of the issues facing Israel and the innovations that have emerged to combat these challenges, as well as to boost international co-operation between the province and the state on mutual water issues.

"We have been focusing mostly on the water issues that are common to both Israel and Manitoba, in order to promote mutually beneficial research projects," said Prof. Avi Gafni, the symposium's co-ordinator from the KKL-JNF. "We hope to strengthen the tie between Manitoba and us, so that both of us – in Canada and in Israel – will benefit from our research findings."

According to Gafni, despite vast differences in climate and scale, the province and state face many of the same water issues, including problems involving the reconstruction and maintenance of watersheds and wetlands. Both could benefit from research on water-resource treatment, conservation and management and water quality. They could also benefit from research on wetland/watershed-related issues such as the impact of overpumping, water level, fishing on freshwater sources, and factors affecting water source's resilience capacity.

"Whether you have a lot of water or a limited amount, you still have to steward it and protect it," said Manitoban Minister of Water Stewardship Christine Melnick, who initiated the first Water Experts Symposium in Manitoba in August 2008. That event was attended by Israel's minister of agriculture and rural development, Shalom Simhon, and Efi Stenzler, the world president of Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael (KKL-JNF).

Having coped with decades of water shortage, Israel has engineered unparalleled solutions for dealing with water issues. "Why reinvent the wheel when there is this world expert with such tremendous experience?" Melnick said.

"For many of the [Manitoban] scientists participating this year, this trip is their first to Israel. They are astounded at how Israelis have made the desert bloom in so many ways. One of the scientists told me that coming here has been like being projected into the future. The country is so incredibly innovative when it comes to water."

Dwight Williamson, one of the participating scientists from Manitoba, couldn't agree more. "I have already learned so many things, and as the week goes on and we begin to exchange specific information from one researcher to another, I am learning more and more," he said. "The ways that water is managed in the central and northern parts of Israel is inspiring and generating many ideas that we will be able to take back with us to Manitoba."

The scientists will also conduct brainstorming sessions on areas of potential co-operation. Melnick mentions one: research into algal blooms, from which both Lake Manitoba and Lake Kinneret suffer.

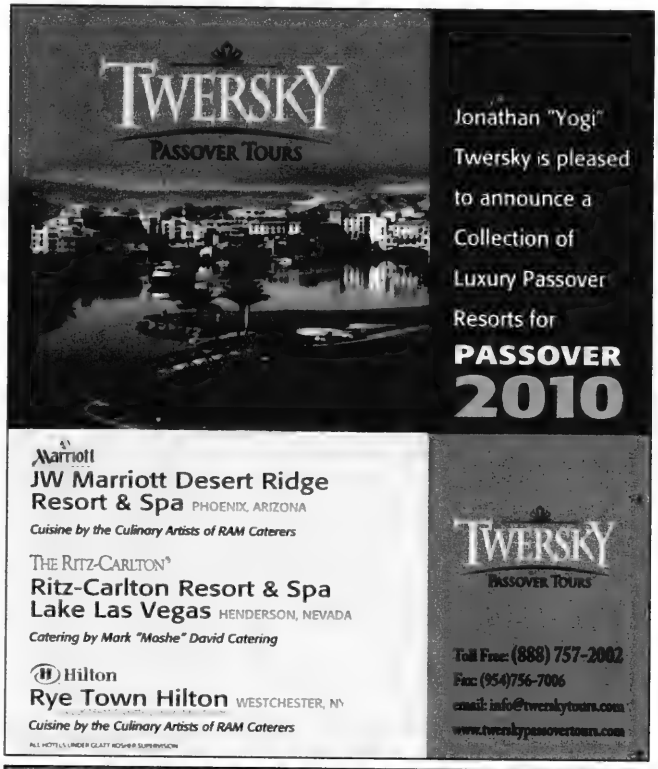
Israel dried up the Hula Valley wetland in the 1950s to create more agricultural land and thereby caused severe damage to Lake Kinneret. Lake Winnipeg and Manitoba's Netley/Libau wetlands are also in need of major rehabilitation.

At the end of the meeting of minds, scientists will propose different research project ideas, and as was the case for the first symposium, the winner will receive a $100,000 (Cdn) grant.

Last symposium's winning project, a joint initiative between scientists from the Galilee Technology Center in Israel (MIGAL), the International Institute for Sustainable Development in Manitoba, and a scientist in Mexico, is called the Agricultural Wetland/Watershed Research Network. It's an online international database of research on wetlands and watersheds.

It's uncertain at this point what sort of collaborations will take place in the future. Melnick doesn't rule out the possibility of co-operative efforts between independent organizations.

"There are all sorts of incredible discussions happening," she said. "There is a great openness here [in Israel] among scientists, to collaboration and knowledge sharing. I am sure this will be a long, deep and lasting relationship."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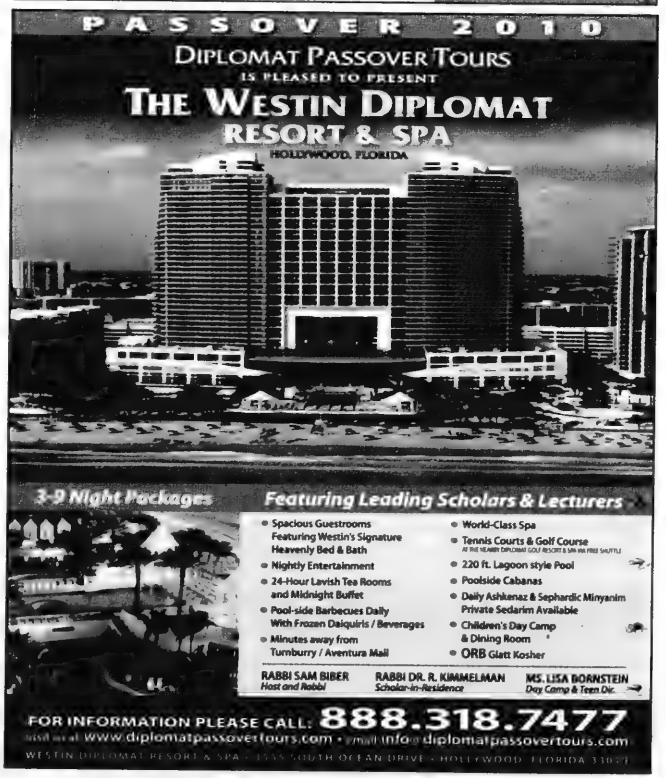
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Arts & Travel

The White Ribbon *is a stark parable about the roots of fascism in Germany*

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Michael Haneke's stark, subtle film, *The White Ribbon*, is a cautionary tale about the dangers of stifling conformity, absolutism and regimentation.

Since it is set in a German village, on the eve of World War I, it may be seen as a troubling parable on the roots of fascism in Germany.

Shot in black and white, this challenging German-language film with English subtitles turns on a series of strange and mysterious incidents that threaten to upend the peace and stability of a bland, obscure village.

A doctor riding a horse collides with a nearly invisible wire, injuring his arm. The son of a local baron is beaten. A barn goes up in flames. A woman is killed in a sawmill accident. A pet bird is found dead, its body pierced by the blade of a scissor. A cabbage field is ravaged. Children vanish, only to turn up.

Haneke uses these random and apparently unrelated incidents to explore themes such as hatred, malice, cruelty and collective barbarity, the very qualities the Nazis nurtured and exploited in their drive for power.

The White Ribbon, which opened in Toronto last week and won the Golden Globe award for best foreign film, is narrated by the village school teacher as he reflects on the events that rattled its residents.

That he has been chosen to tell the story is hardly a coincidence. He's a composed fellow who has no axe to grind and therefore can be trusted to tell the truth.

And in this somnolent village, the truth is a bitter thing.

The doctor (Rainer Bock), a thoroughly unpleasant person, is a widower who verbally abuses his housekeeper and may be guilty of physically abusing his daughter.

The strait-laced pastor (Burghart Klaussner), so rigid and unbending, subjects his children to a severe form of discipline, forcing each to wear a white ribbon – a symbol of innocence and purity – until they conform to his unyielding moral standards.

The remote and unsympathetic baron (Ulrich Tukur), an omniponent figure who presides over harvest feasts with a sense of noblesse oblige, finds his world in a shambles after his wife (Ursina Lardi) announces she has fallen in love with an Italian banker and intends to leave him.

Virtually the only characters who elicit our empathy and sympathy are the teacher (Christian Friedel) and the nanny (Leonie Benesch), both of whom are ripe for romance and love.

Christian Friedel and Leonie Benesch

Compared to the doctor, pastor or baron, they seem well-adjusted and reasonably "normal."

In a scene that appears to distil the traditional rituals of courtship in rural, early 20th-century Germany, the teacher visits the nanny's family to announce his marital intentions. Before he can even utter a word, her cut-and-dried father cuts him off unceremoniously and spells out the terms of engagement.

It's the only faintly amusing moment in the film, since Haneke has his sights set on more pivotal matters. For him, the issue of importance is the tyranny and violence that contributed to the rise of totalitarianism in Germany. This theme asserts itself subliminally but powerfully in *The White Ribbon*.

Lies My Father Told Me *released on DVD*

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Jan Kadar's *Lies My Father Told Me*, a sentimental period piece set in Montreal in the 1920s, holds up rather well after 35 years. Restored by Ergo Media and due to be released in Canada as a DVD on Jan. 26, it's a portrait of a struggling working-class Jewish family.

Based on a story by Montreal writer Ted Allan, it's heart-warming yet hard. Allan appears in the film as a cocksure Marxist who's out to save the world from capitalism, but he is a marginal character, a foil to Zeyda, a rumpled, bearded Fiddler-on-the-Roof figure played by Yossi Yadin, the Israeli actor.

A traditional east European Jew who ekes out a living selling second-hand goods from his horse-drawn cart, Zeyda is loved by his six-year-old grandson, David (Jeff Lynas) but scorned by his ambitious son-in-law, Harry Herman (Len Birman).

Harry's patient wife, Annie (Marilyn Lightstone), finds herself caught in the middle, since they all live together in a dingy flat in what Harry derisively describes as "a stinking neighbourhood."

Much of *Lies My Father Told Me* unfolds in and around their courtyard dwelling during the depths of winter, while the rest is filmed in the bright sunshine of spring and summer.

Cinematographers Paul Van der Linden and Arpad Makay portray Montreal as an insular city filled with faceless tenements and imposing high stone walls, leaving the impression that it might have been plucked from a shtetl in Poland.

The opening scene sets the tone. Zeyda, steering his old white horse through snow-bound wintry streets and lanes, shouts in a sing-song voice, "Rags, clothes and bottles."

Hawking castoffs, Zeyda gets by, but he's far better off than Harry, an aspiring entrepreneur who's convinced that his patent for creaseless trousers will be his ticket to prosperity.

"It will cause a revolution in the men's clothing industry," he claims. "This could put us all on easy street."

All he needs is a $500 loan from his father-in-law, but Zeyda is rightfully skeptical. If you'll excuse the pun, Harry has yet to iron out the imperfections in his invention. In the meantime, Harry has to put bread on the table, so he gambles on horse races.

Though he depends on Zeyda's largesse to some degree, Harry has a low opinion of him, regarding him as a religious fanatic. Nor is he happy that Zeyda boards his aging, smelly nag in a stable adjacent to their home.

As Zeyda and Harry feud, David, who often accompanies Zeyda on his rounds, sides with his grandfather. In fact, he likens Harry's derogatory assessment of Zeyda to "terrible lies."

But as he learns more about his surroundings and life itself, David discovers still more "lies." These jolting discoveries, two of which concern sex and nipples, are part and parcel of growing up. Kadar handles these situations with good taste and humour.

The film, propelled by Allan's strong screenplay and fine performances from the lead actors, abounds with eccentric characters, among whom are Baumgarten the ranting Marxist, Edna (Carole Lazare), the local prostitute, and Mrs. Tannenbaum (Barbara Chilcott), a shrill woman who complains about Zeyda's steed and whose husband seems fond of adulterous encounters.

Three decades after it was filmed on location in Montreal, *Lies My Father Told Me* remains a quintessential Canadian film about a boy's evolving view of the world, the vagaries of human nature and the Jewish immigrant experience in Canada.

Flying Bulgars dive into darkness with new CD

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

After more than 20 years as a musician, David Buchbinder has turned into a storyteller.

And soon, he'll be taking his stories to the stage.

On Jan 31, Buchbinder and his band, the Flying Bulgars, will turn their newest CD, *Tumbling Into Light*, into a multimedia concert, complete with images, film and dance.

While Buchbinder has participated in multimedia shows, he decided to take this one to a higher level, he said.

"I wanted to… bring in other disciplines in order to give the audience a much more expanded experience in music," he said. "Once we made this record, I really began to feel so strongly about it… that I got inspired to want to not just do concerts or CD releases."

The CD itself, which was released in November of last year, took Buchbinder and the band's vocalist, Dave Wall, about three years to write. Unlike the Flying Bulgars' other albums, *Tumbling Into Light* is mostly in English rather than Yiddish and has fewer instrumental songs.

"[We] wanted to move into an area that was completely original music while maintaining a deep connection with Jewish sound," Buchbinder said, adding that he decided to move away from writing in Yiddish.

"We wanted to open up the stylistic range of what we were doing… we wanted almost all the songs to be in English. Yiddish is a language understood by very few," he said.

Buchbinder decided to keep some instrumental songs on the CD.

"I think it's kind of important. Pure instrumental music is abstract, and I love that," he said. "It creates a space that's more fluid and that's not telling you as much what the story is, and so you paint your own pictures to it."

While Buchbinder is used to writing instrumentals, adding lyrics proved to be a challenge.

David Buchbinder, on trumpet, with the Flying Bulgars.

"I wrote a certain amount of songs as a teen with lyrics, then I didn't," he said. "My goal was to write some of these songs… It's so hard to write lyrics that don't suck. It's so easy to be too on the nose or to be completely obscure… you have to get to that sweet spot."

Buchbinder is proudest of *Into Light*, which he wrote by himself. The last song on the CD, it's an exploration of finding light through dark or seemingly hopeless situations.

The first song on the album, *Angel*, explores the story of Jacob and the angel who wrestles with him and later blesses him with the name Israel.

"Our question is, was it a blessing? Perhaps there are ways in which we need to reinvent ourselves. For us, that's a Jewish theme," he said. "So we go into some of the darkness, it has to do with the walls that are rooted between people."

The song *Into Light*, as well as the whole album, touches on the idea of having to delve into darkness, or difficult situations.

"It's not all bad. In the deeper places, the harder places, you learn a lot," he said. "Each time you come out of it, you know more."

While writing, Buchbinder drew from personal experiences, including his father's death.

"I've had harder times and easy, celebratory times… The tougher times where it's hard to have hope and it's hard to see… you have to recognize it as a cycle. When you go into the darkness, you will come out into the light again."

Before Buchbinder and Wall started working on lyrics, they decided to write letters to themselves from the future.

"It's almost like a sweet little cheat. Let's find out what [the album's] about before we know," he said.

For Buchbinder, the CD made him realize that life isn't a circle, but a spiral, he said.

"If you're just going from light into darkness, that's kind of a drag. But if it's not a circle but a spiral, [then] each time you come around, you're in a new place."

The Flying Bulgars' multimedia show will debut on Jan. 31 at Toronto's Young Centre for the Performing Arts. For tickets, call 416-866-8666.

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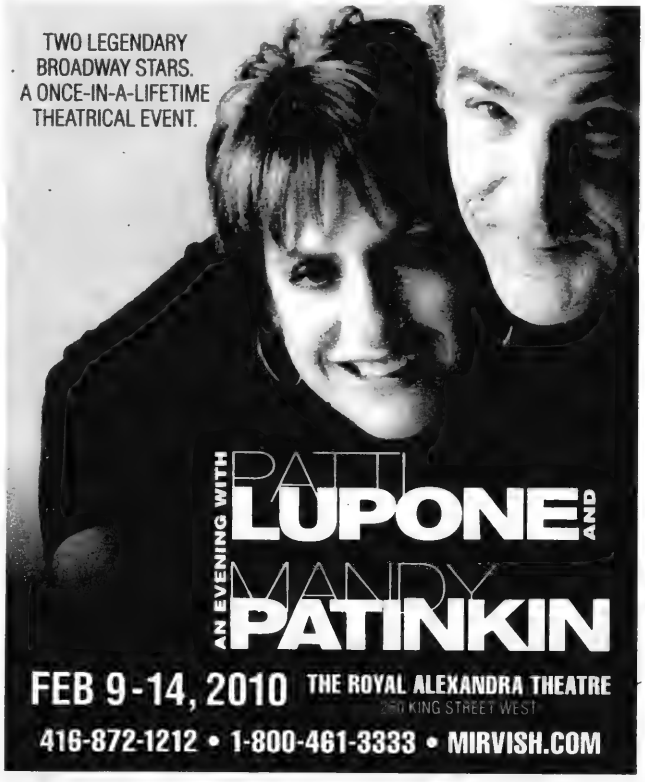
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

PULSATING GROOVES OF JAFFA ROAD AND ECCODEK COMING TO LULA LOUNGE

Jaffa Road is a Toronto-based group that combines original and ancient poetry sung in Hebrew, Spanish and English with pulsating "dub" grooves, belly-dance rhythms and ambient electronic textures to create a "unique sonic landscape." The band is joined by members of **Eccodek** to deliver a global fusion sound with strong Jewish, Arabic and Indian influences. Presented by Koffler Centre for the Arts. Jaffa Road and Eccodek perform at Lula Lounge, Wednesday, Jan. 27, 8 p.m. $12 (advance), $15. www.ticketweb.ca

• • •

Chai Tea & A Movie: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival presents *Hey Hey It's Esther Blueburger*, an Australian film from 2008. Thirteen-year-old Esther, alienated from the girls at her posh private school, breaks free at her bat mitzvah and finds a new hip friend with an even cooler mother.

This is "a fun, cheeky comedy about a girl's desperate struggle to fit in." Jan. 31 Silver City Richmond Hill, 8725 Yonge St. at Hwy. 7. Tea 4 p.m., film 5 p.m. $15. 416-967-1528, www.tjff.com

The TJFF is also screening *Anvil*, the story of a Canadian heavy metal band, headlined by **Steve (Lips) Kudlow** and **Robb Reiner**, that had a meteoric rise and fall and has climbed back from obscurity. "Despite its obvious resemblances to *This Is Spinal Tap*, this funny and well-made documentary has an emotional core that will have everyone – not just metal fans – cheering these two Jewish boys from Canada."

Cineplex Odeon Varsity and Varsity VIP Cinemas, Manulife Centre, 55 Bloor St. W. Monday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m. A "smoked-meat shmooze" with **Virginia Schenk** and **Jane Reiner** is followed by a VIP screening at 7:30 p.m. $18. 416-324-9121, cinephile@tjff.ca

• • •

***The Believer*, with *Strangers*:** The Toronto Jewish Film Society launches its new season with *The Believer*, **Henry Bean**'s provocative tale, based on a true story, about a Nazi skinhead named **Danny Balint (Ryan Gosling)**, whose virulent anti-Semitism disguises the fact that he was born a Jew. His final confrontation with the demons tormenting him makes for "a stunning piece of work."

Also being screened is *Strangers*, about a Jew and Muslim who encounter each other on the Paris subway, with unexpected results. The films are introduced by critic **Adam Nayman**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Sunday Jan. 24. Two screenings, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15.

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***Light in The Piazza*: Mitchell Marcus**, artistic producer of the Acting Up Stage Company, is readying for the opening of *The Light in The Piazza*, a Tony Award-winning musical set in 1950s Italy about an unusual romance that seems to have overtones of **Henry James**. The lovers are a young, handsome Italian and a 26-year-old mentally challenged American woman whose mother struggles to accept "a love that transcends language, culture and circumstance." The piece traverses a fine line between musical theatre and opera, even as it tells a story that unfolds in both English and Italian

The Light in The Piazza runs Jan. 30 to Feb. 21 at the Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, 26 Berkeley St. $30 to $45; students $22. 416-368-3110, www.lightinthepiazza.ca

• • •

Names in the News: The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research has received a gift of about $4.5 million (US) from the estate of **Michael (Mickey) Ross**, an award-winning television writer who was the son of Jewish immigrant parents. The National Yiddish Book Center and the Los Angeles Jewish Foundation have also received gifts from the estate.

Ross, born **Isidore Rovinsky** in 1919 in New York City, was an Emmy Award-winning writer and part of the team that created the television shows *All in the Family* (along with **Norman Lear**), *The Jeffersons*, and *Three's Company* during the 1970s and '80s. His earlier credits include *The Martha Raye Show* and *The Gary Moore Show*. Ross said of himself: "I was born of immigrant parents. I loved their attitude, their ways, their morals. I don't want to see that lost."

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Arts in Brief

• Ethnomusicologist **Judith Cohen** is giving two presentations at the First Narayever Congregation, 187 Brunswick Ave. "Demystifying Ladino Song" is on Wednesday, Jan. 20, 7:30 p.m. "Music in the Lives of the Crypto-Jews (Marranos) of Portugal" is on Sunday, Feb. 7, 7 p.m. $5 each or PWYC.

Steve (Lips) Kudlow on guitar and Robb Reiner on drums in *Anvil*.

• Friends of Yiddish presents *Lomir Ale Zingen* (*Let Us All Sing*), another of its popular Yiddish sing-alongs, led by singer **Mitch Smolkin** with **Nina Shapilsky** on piano. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Sunday, Jan. 24, 2 p.m. $7; members free.

• Sinfonia Toronto's Masterpiece Series continues with a concert featuring Toronto piano virtuoso **Yuval Fichman** in **Chopin's** *Piano Concerto No.2 in F minor*. Jan. 22 at 8 p.m. Glen Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Tickets $12 to $40. Visit www. sinfoniatoronto.com

• Lecturer **Mark Clamen** continues his discussion of the art of television at the next Media Monday with the topic, "When Did That Become Funny?: The New Forms of TV Comedy." Includes amazing TV clips. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, Jan. 25, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. $12. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• Miles Nadal JCC Active Seniors presents "History of Jewish American Swing 1938-1950," with **Jordan Klapman**, part of his series on Jewish popular music. Lecture with live piano and sing-along, refreshments. $2. Thursday, Jan. 28, 1:30 p.m.

•Sundays on Bloor presents "I'll Never Smile Again: The Musical Legacy of Ruth Lowe Sandler," with Tommy Sandler. $9 includes light refreshments. Sunday, Jan. 31, 2 p.m.www.mnjcc.org

• Film maven **Shlomo Schwartzberg** presents "Hollywood Looks at Race," the first in a series on Hollywood and Society. Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W. at Bathurst. $6; members $3. Tuesday, Feb. 2, 10 to 11:30 a.m.. Other lectures on religion, war and crime follow on a weekly basis.

• More than 330,000 people saw the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition during its six-month stay in Toronto, the Royal Ontario Museum reports. It was the best-attended exhibition at the ROM since "Egyptian Art in the Age of the Pyramids" was mounted there nine years ago.

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Snorkellers overwhelmed by underwater sculpture park

By JOSEPH SERGE
Travel editor

ST. GEORGE'S, Grenada — There are many beautiful places worth visiting on this tiny Caribbean island's 300 square kilometers, and all are within a short ride of your hotel.

After you've experienced the colourful capital city of St.George's, with its historic fort and fragrant spice market, there are a few half-day trips I strongly recommend.

A snorkel trip to the underwater sculpture park is a must.

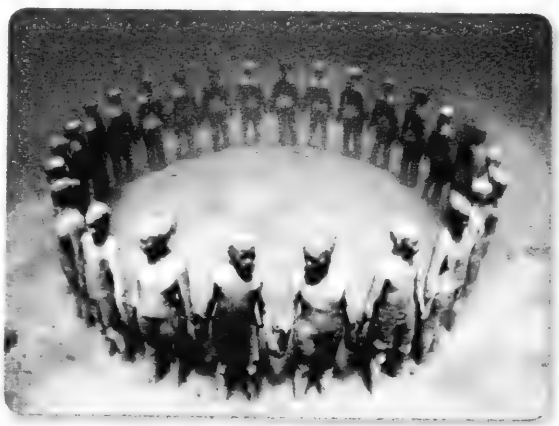
I wasn't sure what to expect when I went on this snorkelling trip with Dive Grenada. [www.divegrenada.com] The underwater sculptures are located just off Molinere Bay on Grand Anse Beach, where most hotels are located. I took a boat ride with maybe 10 other people for about 10 minutes or so, then we stopped and donned our flippers and masks and jumped in.

At first the sheer beauty of what I was witnessing overwhelmed me. The water was so clear, so crisp and so calm. Schools of colourful fish were all around me, so close I could touch some. I was so absorbed in this, I found myself falling behind my group of snorkellers.

As I caught up to them, I was amazed at what I saw. It was surreal to see, and words cannot accurately convey the scene.

Below me was *Vicissitudes*, a bizarre concrete and steel sculpture of a group of life-size children standing in a circle, holding hands and staring outward. The water was shallow and clear enough for me to get a good view of it from the surface, but if I wanted to get close up, I was only one deep breath away.

Farther along I saw other statues: *La Diablesse* was a goddess standing serenely



Vicissitudes. [Grenada Board of Tourism photo]

watching over the display. Farther along was *The Lost Correspondent*, a clerk typing at a desk. The detail is so amazing, you can even read the newspapers on it.

The most surreal display was *Grace Reef*, which showed a group of women lying prone, as if dead, on the ocean floor.

British artist Jason de Caires Taylor installed this sculpture park, the first of its kind, in 2006. The goal was to create an artificial reef to form a sanctuary for the abundant marine life in the waters. It took around six months to put together. It's truly an amazing sight. If your children are good swimmers, they will also get a kick out of the sculpture park. Visit www.underwatersculpture.com and look at the film in the gallery section.

The Seven Sisters Falls
[Joseph Serge photo]

There are some tiny jellyfish in the area that irritated me with mosquito-bite-like stings, but otherwise they were pretty harmless.

If you are feeling energetic, or adventurous, another trip worth taking is to the Seven Sisters Falls in the Grand Etang rainforest, in the middle of the island. There are numerous waterfalls in Grenada and its sister islands, Carriacou and Petite Martinique. The Concord Waterfall, for instance, is a smaller falls, easily accessible by car and frequently part of an organized day trip around the island.

But the Seven Sisters Falls is far more majestic, although you do have to take a 30- to 40-minute hike down through the lush, green rainforest.

It is not recommended to do this alone, so I suggest you book an organized tour from your hotel. Your guide will point out all the wild plant life, including the island's famous callaloo (a green root vegetable that when cooked has the consistency of spinach, and used in soups and many local dishes), the cocoa trees and the island's ubiquitous nutmeg trees. More importantly, he will guide you down the at-times rough descent over rocks and steep terrain. You will need good boots and sure, steady feet. It can also get slippery and muddy, especially if it's rained recently. And this being the rainforest, there's a good chance of that.

My group's guide was a 70-year-old professional hiker, Telfor Bedeau, who claims he hikes more than 20,000 kilometers each year. No wonder he didn't break a sweat while I huffed and puffed my way down, tentatively testing each step, sweating from places I didn't know could sweat.

Once you get down, though, you can cool off in the refreshing pool at the foot of the falls.

Hiking down a hill in the rainforest to witness a waterfall is one of those things you just won't get a chance to do in Canada, so I highly recommend it. Depending on your fitness level, it can be a bit demanding. The climb back up to the top, while not as tricky, can be very strenuous on the legs and lungs. My legs felt like jelly for days afterward. Bring a bottle or two of water with you, but otherwise travel lightly.

Known as the Spice Island of the Caribbean, Grenada is located at the southernmost tip of the Windward Islands. There are more than 40 beaches and many natural preserves. The temperatures in winter are ideal. January through May is dry season and temperatures in winter are around 25C to 30C.

The islands have a population of around 108,000, and English is the official language.

Air Canada and Sunwing Vacations operate direct flights from Toronto from January to April. You can also fly via Barbados.

Joseph Serge was a guest of the Grenada Board of Tourism and stayed at the Spice Island Beach Resort.

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Books & Authors

Some recent biographies and autobiographies

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

Samuel Johnson, the 18th-century British literary critic and the subject of the world's best-known biography, once said the art of biography is rarely well executed because only those who live with a person "can write his life with any genuine exactness and discrimination" but that few in such a position "know what to remark about him."

Johnson more or less hand-picked his biographer by drawing a worshipful James Boswell into his inner circle and encouraging him to record his daily life and utterances for posterity. The two travelled together and were often together for days at a time. Johnson occasionally would remind Boswell that a "panegyrick" – an account of a life containing only virtues and no vices – is not a fitting biography: someone professing "to write a life," Johnson contended, "must represent it as it really was."

After diarizing his frequent encounters with Johnson for more than 20 years, Boswell published his monumental *Life of Samuel Johnson*. It's still often cited as the best biography ever written, despite the fact that it largely neglects Johnson's early life and takes a clearly hagiographic attitude toward its subject while not neglecting some of the warts.

The Victorians excelled in highlighting the most heroic, virtuous and Christian aspects of their biographical subjects. But in 1918 Lytton Strachey published *Eminent Victorians*, in which he knocked a quartet of idols off their pedestals. Ever since, biography has continued to explore the degraded lower depths of human experience, sometimes to alarming degrees. Joyce Carol Oates coined a new word – "pathography" – for biographies excessively concerned with character defects, sins and loathsome deeds. Remember *Mommie Dearest*? A parallel trend has been evident in autobiography ever since Rousseau's *Confessions* (1782) and De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821).

Johnson felt that a "judicious and faithful narrative" of almost any person's life could be useful because every man has "great numbers in the same condition with himself, to whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would be of immediate and apparent use."[1] He also contended that despite the vast differences in our lives, human beings share a universal aspect that keeps us interested in reading about each other.

Having perused a handful of such books over the winter holidays, it seems to me that many such entries may enjoy their moment in the sun, but few are likely to make a lasting impression.

Paul Shaffer, a Jewish musician from Thunder Bay, Ont., has written a "swingin' show-biz saga" with *We'll Be Here for the Rest of Our Lives*. Shaffer lapped up his first applause as a 12-year-old organist in his hometown synagogue and continued to bask in audience appreciation as bandleader for *The Late Show with David Letterman* ("the gig of gigs," he calls it). An inveterate name-dropper and storyteller, his star-studded celebrity autobiography presents colourful and entertaining tales about the *Saturday Night Live* crowd, Phil Spector, Jerry Lewis, Eric Clapton, Cher, Britney Spears, Ringo Starr, and many others ad infinitum.

It's interesting to compare Shaffer's book to that of Howie Mandel, another talented Canadian who made it big in the American entertainment industry. Mandel's book, *Here's the Deal – Don't Touch Me*, tends toward the confessional mode as he expands upon his various fears, anxiety disorders and phobias, again ad infinitum. His reason for becoming a comedian, he explains, was basically to distract himself from more serious concerns: "If I'm making myself laugh, then I'm distracted from all the other things going on in my head that are, at times, tortuous."

A former resident of the north Toronto neighbourhood of Bathurst Manor, Mandel catapulted to enormous fame on television, which I rarely watch: I think I've seen him only once, on an old rerun of *St. Elsewhere*. But that has not prevented me from enjoying anecdotes from the book, which jump out from almost any page. *Here's the Deal – Don't Touch Me* details Mandel's rise in show business and provides telling glimpses of celebs met along the way.

As far as celebrities go, I'm far more interested in movie stars from Hollywood's golden era. Donald Spoto is the famed biographer of a whole sidewalk's worth of Hollywood stars, including Audrey Hepburn, Ingrid Bergman, James Dean, Marlene Dietrich, Laurence Olivier and Elizabeth Taylor. He's also crafted worthy books on filmmakers such as Preston Sturges, Stanley Kramer and Alfred Hitchcock. Having enjoyed several of these works, I recently opened the latest Spoto biography – *High Society: The Life of Grace Kelly* – and was not disappointed.

Provided you appreciate movies such as *High Noon*, *Rear Window*, *High Society* and *To Catch A Thief*, you'll find plenty to appreciate in this warmly written bio. It's brimming with cinematic lore and quotes from James Stewart, Hitchcock, Cary Grant and many others – including, of course, Prince Ranier of Monaco, whose marriage to Kelly essentially marked the end of her cinematic career. The book came out only recently because the princess had requested that Spoto not write her life story until 25 years after her death.

Those of us who lived through the Beatles phenomenon or who simply love Beatle music will likely enjoy *John Lennon: The Life*. This recent biography by Philip Norman presents an enjoyable compendium of Beatle lore, supposedly including some new, hitherto unpublicized details of his life. The pleasure lies in the revelation of John's personality and the circumstances under which many of his songs were written.

Often the biography, autobiography or memoir written by a lowly commoner, with no claim to previous celebrity, makes for the best reading of all. I close my brief survey of some current titles with what seems to me the most outstanding title in the lot – Lucette Lagnado's *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit: My Family's Exodus from Old Cairo to the New World*. Here we have an ordinary person spinning a dramatic family saga that far excels the other books in terms of literary merit.

The Lagnados were among the 900,000 Jews who fled the Arab world. The author vividly re-creates the majesty and glamour of life in Cairo in the years from the end of World War II to Nasser's rise to power. The family packed their belongings into 26 suitcases and hid their jewels and gold coins in sealed tins of marmalade. With much poverty and hardship, they made their way to Paris and then New York. Lagnado writes beautifully and compellingly of the crimes committed against her father and the high drama of escaping a dangerous regime, no matter the cost. *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit* is a memorable autobiographical memoir and a valuable addition to our literature about the Sephardi world.

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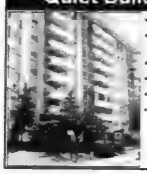

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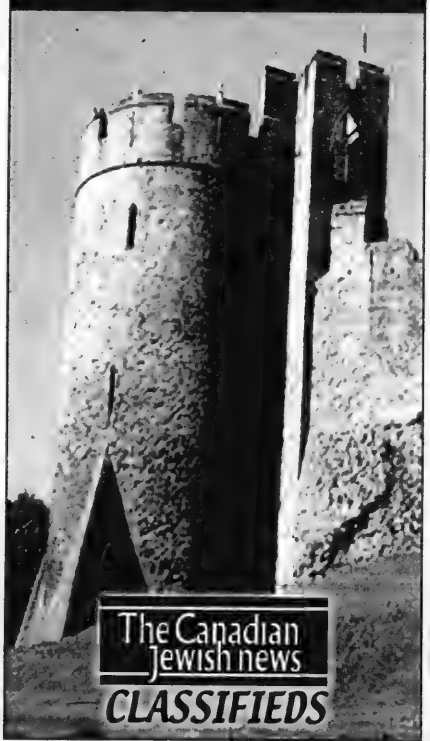

Attack on Crete synagogue carries symbolic meaning

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

ROME — The vandals who torched the historic Etz Hayyim synagogue in Hania, an ancient port on the Greek island of Crete, left no doubt about their motives.

After breaking into the building on the night of Jan. 5 and setting its interior alight, they threw a bar of soap against its outer wall.

A bar of soap? That's because, explains the synagogue's director, Nikos Stavroulakis, "I'll make you into a bar of soap" is a common anti-Semitic taunt in Greece. Since the Holocaust, there has been a persistent belief that the Nazis made soap from Jewish corpses.

Even though scholars have disproved the idea, bars of soap have been buried reverently in some European Jewish cemeteries under solemn memorials.

"In this place lie the remains of Jewish martyrs exterminated by German fascists and turned into soap," reads the inscription on an obelisk in Piatra Neamt, Romania.

The power of this belief was examined in *The Soap Myth*, a play by Jeff Cohen that ran last summer in New York. Based on a true story, the play focused on the efforts of an elderly Holocaust survivor "on a one-man mission to get the 'soap myth' reclassified as fact," Marissa Brostoff wrote in *Tablet* magazine.

But at the heart of the story was something much more.

What was at stake, Brostoff wrote, was "the way we choose to see the past, a struggle between a dispassionate approach relying on facts and figures and another, much more subjective one that holds survivors' testimonies to be unarguably true and ultimately sacred."

Anti-Semitic violence is anything but dispassionate.

The bar of soap hurled against the desecrated synagogue in Hania was a diabolically mixed metaphor: soap usually symbolizes purity and godliness, but in this twisted context it spelled hatred and death.

The attack on the Hania synagogue was not just an assault on a building. It was an assault on the ideals that had transformed the structure from a wrecked relic of Holocaust destruction to a new symbol of community and compassion.

This transformation was accomplished largely through the efforts of Stavroulakis, a remarkable man who has devoted much of the past two decades to restoring a Jewish presence to a city made "Judenrein" by the Nazis.

I met Stavroulakis when I visited Hania in 1996. An artist, author and scholar who co-founded and directed the Jewish Museum in Athens, Stavroulakis had returned to live in his family's rambling house in Hania after many years away.

The synagogue, which dates back to the 15th century, was in ruin. But over the next three years, Stavroulakis made it his mission to raise funds and, with the help of the World Monuments Fund and other donors, oversee the building's rebirth. His aim was to make it a living spiritual presence, not simply a restored reminder of the past.

The synagogue now functions as a museum, and it hosts exhibitions and cultural events.

It's also an active house of worship. A small Havurah community whose members include Christians and some Muslims – as well as Jews of all persuasions – regularly assembles there to celebrate Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

Stavroulakis himself leads daily prayers each morning, whether a minyan is present or not.

Prayers were held as usual at 9 a.m. Jan. 6, the morning after the arson attack. The fire had gutted a stairway, wreaked havoc on the synagogue library, and covered walls and precious furnishings with a thick layer of soot.

"Fortunately," Stavroulakis said, "the fabric of the synagogue was and is intact."

He was referring to the physical structure of the building, but I think he also meant that the symbolic identity of the synagogue also had survived – and would be maintained.

"We must be angry over what has happened to our synagogue," he told the small group of worshippers gathered for prayers amid the soot. "If we were not, it would be an indication that we were either indifferent or morally numb."

But, Stavroulakis asked, just where should the anger be directed? Local indifference and the ignorance that promotes racism had to be addressed.

"We have tried at Etz Hayyim to be a small presence in the midst of what is at times almost aggressive ignorance," he wrote on the synagogue blog. "We have done this to such a degree that our doors are open from early in the morning until late in the day so that the synagogue assumes its role as a place of prayer, recollection and reconciliation."

There is, Stavroulakis wrote, little if any sign of overt security.

"This character of the synagogue must not change and the doors must remain open," he wrote. If not, that means "we have given in to the ignorance that has perpetrated this desecration."

A week after the attack, the Etz Hayyim blog posted pictures showing that thanks in large part to volunteers, the walls of the sanctuary had been painted and other clean-up work was well under way.

"The impact of this [attack] will be wider than simply an act of terrorism against Jews," Stavroulakis told me. "Already it is being seen in a much wider social context that has to do with civic responsibility and care."

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Schneider having fun playing the game in Mooseland

By HARVEY ROSEN
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — My late mother, Sarah, used to tell a story in Yiddish of a king stopping a commoner in the street and asking him where he was going. The latter refused to answer, and before long, the king warned him that he would be jailed if he didn't co-operate. Steadfast in his convictions, the commoner again declined and was summarily locked up.

Days later, the king, still curious, visited him in his cell and said if he would only explain why he refused to answer such a simple question he would immediately be set free. At that juncture, the man explained it was improper to lie to his highness because when someone sets out to go somewhere, he never really knows if he will ever arrive. "I was only going to the butcher shop to buy some bones to make a chicken soup for my family," he said. "How was I to know I would end up in jail?"

I thought of my mother's fable in early January when the Manitoba Moose received a belated Chanukah present. Jewish defenceman Mathieu Schneider, whose prime goal was to play in Vancouver, unexpectedly ended up in Winnipeg.

Last summer, Schneider became an unrestricted free agent following a split season between Montreal and Atlanta. He allegedly had a half-dozen offers in the off-season to sign a one-year contract with a new NHL team. The 40-year-old, who has played with nine different clubs under the big top, noted when he signed a $1.5-million (US) pact, that Vancouver was far and away his preferred choice for him, his wife, Shannon and their four kids. Being a good family man, chosing Vancouver was a slam dunk. At least it appeared that way.

Schneider worked all summer rehabilitating his injured shoulder, and was prepared to use his considerable skills as the quarterback on the Canucks' powerplay. He appeared to be a perfect match for the Canucks. After all, the NHL veteran's point totals (223 goals and 516 assists) resemble those of a decent forward rather than a defenceman.

Well, something went wrong on the way to the butcher shop. It appears Schneider didn't see eye-to-eye with former Moose head coach Alain Vigneault in Vancouver, and the rearguard, a veteran of 1,281 regular season NHL games, didn't see much ice time either. Spending 25 of 42 games as a scratch created the kind of itch that can lead to unpleasant dialogue between employee and management. And it did.

Reports from the West Coast media explained that Schneider left the team on Dec.

New Moose Mathieu Schneider

18, was put on waivers, and nary an NHL team went for the bait. Was it because of his salary, or the feeling he doesn't have much to offer at the price? Or perhaps it was thought he could be had at a bargain-basement price at the March 3 trade deadline.

When, upon his arrival, Schneider appeared at a press conference at the MTS Centre in Winnipeg where the Moose play, he was all smiles. There were queries of course and, not surprisingly, more information was sought about his latest interactions with Canucks' management than how his presence might help the Moose track down the division-leading Hamilton Bulldogs.

But Schneider was diplomatic. "I just want to have some fun, get out there and play the game I love. That's pretty much it," he said.

From most reports, his marriage with the Canucks ended when Schneider was not prepared to accept Vigneault's role for him, which was more limited than the ex-NHLer wanted. The head coach also reportedly stated he has no interest in having Schneider return to his club – a remark that is especially poignant since Kevin Bieksa, a former Moose defender, is now a badly injured Canuck and won't likely suit up again for at least two months.

Should matters deteriorate along the Canucks' blueline, there is always the likelihood of a red alert, and player and coach may hug and make up for the good of the team. In short, the most talented defenceman seen in these parts since 1995 when the Jets were kidnapped to Phoenix may have a fairly limited stay in Winnipeg.

Of all the Jewish players who used to come to town during Winnipeg's exposure to the NHL, Schneider is the one with whom I am most familiar. I would talk with him in the visiting team's dressing room when he played for the Canadiens and the Islanders between 1989 and 1995.

He talked about his ethnic background and how he related to other Jewish players in the league, namely Calgary's tough guy Ron Stern, Chicago's Steve Dubinsky, Steve Richmond of the LA Kings, and enforcer Mike Hartman of the Jets. He conceded there was a bond that they shared.

Synagogue on the High Holidays was important to his family and something that his own father stressed as important.

Hopefully, Schneider will get what he no doubt wants most, and that's a return to the NHL – if not with the Canucks then with another team that requires the contributions of a skilled and savvy player who can still blast them from the point on the powerplay and teach the rookies how to play the game.

It would be a surprise if the highest-scoring Jewish player in the history of the game will find himself celebrating Passover in late March in Mooseland.

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Braun, Feldman named 2009 'Jewish MVPs' in MLB

Compiled by CJN Staff

NEWTON, Mass. — Ryan Braun and Scott Feldman have been named the most valuable Jewish players of the year by Jewish Major Leaguers, Inc. (JML), the not-for-profit baseball history organization that produces Jewish baseball cards and Hall of Fame programs honouring Jews in the game.

The 2009 position player of the year is Braun, the slugging left-fielder for the Milwaukee Brewers. Braun's .319 batting average and 32 homers were tops among Jewish players, and his 203 hits led the National League in that category – a first in Jewish baseball history.

Braun's father is an Israeli-born Jew.

JML's choice as pitcher of the year is Texas Rangers right-hander Feldman. In his fifth season and second as a starter, Feldman went 17-8, with a 4.08 ERA. His 17 wins were the most for a Jewish starter since Steve Stone of Baltimore in 1980.

The JML awards tradition began last season when the winners were Red Sox infielder Kevin Youkilis and Pirates reliever John Grabow.

JML is currently conducting online balloting for Jewish major leaguer of the decade at www.jewishmajorleaguers.org. The winning player will be announced in January.

Braun and Feldman will be featured on a special card in the 2010 edition of Jewish Major Leaguer cards, to be released in the spring.

Jewish Major Leaguers Inc. is an organization dedicated to furthering education on the contributions of Jews to baseball through card products and seminars. The group is headquartered in Newton, Mass., and is headed by Martin Abramowitz, a leading authority on the subject and creator of the concept, which led to the first set of cards, featuring all Jewish players in history, released in 2003.

New CD reflects a love of the Yiddish language

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Sam Hoffer, a retired management consultant, loves Yiddish, and his new CD is an expression of his fondness for his mamaloshen.

The five tales on Hoffer's recently released *S'helft Nisht Keyn Krekhtsn!* (*There's No Use Complaining!*) mirror the dilemmas we face in everyday life. Hoffer says that humour makes his CD enjoyable for those who speak fluent Yiddish as well as for those who love the language but speak it only haltingly.

ס'העלפט נישט קיין קרעכצן!
THERE'S NO USE COMPLAINING!
Sam Hoffer
קאמישע דערציילונגען פון מאדערן-טאג לעבן
COMICAL TALES OF MODERN-DAY LIFE

The cover of Sam Hoffer's Yiddish CD, *There's No Use Complaining*

The diverse topics on the CD reflect on a senior's experience in trying to tackle the use of a computer, the myths surrounding working for the government, neighbourly competition and shopping in a modern-day mall.

Hoffer says it took two years to write the original script and record and produce it. "But," he adds, "the genesis of this CD goes back much farther to Czernowitz, Romania, where I was born in 1945."

Son of survivors of the Shargorod concentration camp in Transnistria, he says that Yiddish was the only language the family spoke until the family immigrated to Canada when he was seven years old.

"We settled in Hoffer, Sask., a frontier Prairie farming community founded in the early 1900s by our distant relatives."

As immigrants from eastern Europe, he says, everyone in the farming community spoke Yiddish except when dealing with the broader community.

"Yiddish was the first language of the settlement, and the use of Yiddish at home and among those in our village gave me an exceptional exposure to the use of Yiddish in all of its facets."

Over the years, Hoffer listened to Yiddish records or saw Yiddish films, and "I increasingly appreciated how expressive the language is," he says.

"Two years ago, I listened to an old video of Yiddish comedians Dzigan and Shumacher, and the next morning, I began writing my first tale in my mamaloshen."

He says the inspiration for the Yiddish CD came from knowing that although the shtetl of eastern Europe is gone, Yiddish remains magical in its ability to capture its humour and its foibles.

As a youngster on the family's farm, as a college student studying economics, as a management consultant and now as a retiree, "one of my most rewarding experiences has been the production of my CD," he says.

"It is very gratifying to me that so many individuals and organizations have responded so enthusiastically."

There's No Use Complaining! is available at major book stores in Toronto and on Hoffer's website, yiddishstories.com.

MEDITERRANEAN HERB-ROASTED CHICKEN

5 tsp fresh rosemary
4 tsp chopped garlic
1/2 tsp salt
3 tbls lemon juice
1 tbls olive oil
1 1/2 tsp thyme
1/2 tsp oregano
1/4 tsp pepper
3 med. red potatoes in wedges
2 med. onions in wedges
4 whole chicken legs
1 red pepper cut into wedges
1 med. zucchini cut into chunks

Heat oven to 375°F. Finely chop rosemary, garlic and salt together; place in small bowl. Stir in lemon juice, oil, thyme, oregano and pepper. Spray wide shallow roasting pan with cooking spray. Scatter potatoes and onions in pan; add chicken. Spoon 2 tblsp of herb mixture over chicken and vegetables in pan; toss to coat. Place chicken on top of potatoes and onion. Bake 45 min. Remove from oven; baste with juices. Scatter peppers and zucchini around chicken; spoon remaining herb mixture over chicken and all vegetables. Bake 20-30 min or until chicken is browned and no longer pink in center. ***4 servings***

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About Life

Dear Ella,

Like so many others, I decided this year I would lose those extra pounds. I am getting older and my BMI is sitting firmly in the overweight category. For both health and vanity reasons, I need to make it work this time.

I was well on my way to a new healthier lifestyle when I noticed little things that my husband was doing to sabotage my diet. Josh is thin regardless of what he eats. We used to dine out all the time, but I have chosen to eat in more often and that bothers him. On one hand he tells me I'm looking great, but at the same time, he's encouraging me to eat that second helping or bringing me a treat. I'm not sure why he does this, or that he even realizes that he is, but it's making my goals much harder, and I'm beginning to resent it. I don't want to bring it up and seem petty or insensitive. What should I do?

Feeling Sabotaged

Dear Feeling Sabotaged

Congratulations on making the decision to get leaner and healthier this year. Changing old habits can be hard and requires mental preparation. You've probably been thinking about this lifestyle change for a while now. Even though you've made this decision, Josh hasn't had that mental head start. He may never understand what it takes to succeed in weight loss, as it's not something he has ever had to deal with. He may be happy with you just the way you are and feel this is an unnecessary intrusion on your lives together.

Although you're motivated to make changes and give up old patterns that the two of you shared, Josh isn't emotionally prepared for this. However, it's your body, your health and your life, and you'll often come across difficult situations along the way. Having your spouse on board can be a major key to your success. Since you spend much of your time together (meals, social situations, etc.), it's important for you to make Josh part of your journey. Discuss your feelings and let him discuss his.

Communication is never petty. Tell him what you need from him for you to succeed. Involve him, and he will benefit automatically from a healthier lifestyle, as well. Replace your dining out together with movies, walks or sports.

Making Josh a partner in your goals will create many rewards you can both celebrate together.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail: ella@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional*

What would you include in your 'wheel of life'?

What will you do to find your bliss in 2010? What would make you happier, more fulfilled and deeply satisfied in the coming year?

I often ask people to break it down into the different areas in their lives: career, money, health and fitness, family, friends, significant other, personal growth and spirituality, fun and recreation, and your environment. The resulting "wheel of life" is a marvellous springboard. So, go through those areas and do a little checklist. Ask yourself how satisfied you are with each area on a scale from one to 10, and then choose the area you know needs the most work. For instance, if you have a four in health and fitness, ask yourself what you need to do to turn this area into a 10!

Life Coach Corner
By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

You'd be amazed at how just asking the question will elicit all sorts of exciting responses. Write them down. Talk them out with a friend or loved one.

Ask yourself what you could start doing to regain balance in your life And what could you stop doing or delegate to others to create more space in your life?

I love a wheel of life that looks at values, and if I were drawing my "finding your bliss" wheel, it would also have a section for each of these categories: putting more love in your heart; an act of kindness; patience; how to create calm and quiet in the busy day; volunteering or giving; keeping in touch with friends and seeing them more often (schedule lunches and coffees to catch up); health, nutrition and fitness for your family; your primary relationship and how to make more time for it (mini-honeymoons, vacations, candlelit dinners); spending more time with each child; and fulfilment and "bliss," where you are taking steps every day toward your purpose and your greatest passion.

What would your wheel of life look like if you were drawing a circle with eight or nine wedges in it, like pieces of a pie? I'd love to hear from you. Write to me about what you will do find your bliss in the coming year. But here are a few ideas to get you started:

• Every day is a new day. Don't trip yourself if you haven't started the diet or fitness program yet, just start right now. And if you have a day where you fall off the wagon, be gentle with yourself and start over. It's never too late.

• Stay in a place of gratitude and be aware of all your blessings. You can't say thank you enough, and I recommend the exercise of writing down five things you are grateful for every night before you go to bed and teaching your kids to say their five things before they go to bed at night.

• Stay connected to who you really are and be genuine in all you do.

• Stay connected to what really jazzes you and make time for the thing you love in addition to kids, your relationship and work.

• Stay cool, find the quiet corner in your day over morning coffee, do some breathing, yoga or meditation, or even just close your eyes for a few moments in your day and remain quiet.

• Find the humour in every situation whenever possible. Charles M. Schulz once said: "Sometimes I lie awake at night and ask, 'Where have I gone wrong?' Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'"

Happy New Year, everyone! Hope it's a great one for you!

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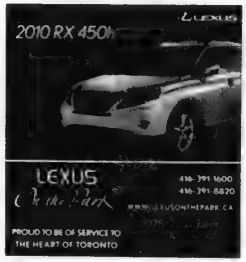

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IDF field hospital in Haiti 'overwhelmed'

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Dr. Ofer Merin and his medical team arrived in Haiti, they were met by hundreds of patients.

Some had chest injuries, others had open wounds, but one thing was clear.

"If they're not treated, they'll die," Merin, the chief of the Israel Defence Forces field hospital in Haiti, said in an exclusive phone interview from Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Merin is in charge of some 120 IDF nurses, physicians and medics, one of the largest medical units in Haiti at this time. His unit arrived in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, three days after the country was hit by the strongest earthquake it has experienced in 200 years.

The death count in Haiti has yet to be finalized. The European Union estimates that it's reached 200,000 since the earthquake struck on Jan. 12, with two million left homeless.

Merin's team left Israel on Jan. 15.

"We had meetings all day [Jan. 13]. The preliminary plan was I'd fly with an army plane to Haiti the same night… Then [the IDF] decided to send a big medical mission," he said.

Merin's medical team was joined by about 120 rescue workers on the 14-hour flight to Haiti. They landed in Port-au-Prince on the afternoon of Jan. 15, but had to wait for a separate cargo plane packed with medical equipment to arrive before setting up the field hospital.

"The cargo plane landed at four in the morning, [and] we started to build up the hospital. By 10 a.m. [Jan. 16], we received the first patients," Merin said.

Continued on page 13

Dr. Avi Abergel holds a baby born in the Israeli field hospital. *[Israel Sun photo]*

TU B'SHVAT HAS ARRIVED

The Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael) has started a project to restore the acacia tree in the Arava desert of Israel. In conjunction with the Central Arava Regional Council, the JNF is planting thousands of Acacia trees in the desert area of the Negev. Acacias are a characteristic feature of the Arava region. They form a unique, beautiful savanna desert landscape and constitute the basis for a rich and important ecological system that's not seen elsewhere in the world. *[JNF/KKL photos]*

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U.S. proposes low-level talks to restart peace process – see page 35

The News in Brief

Canada

Body Found In Case

MONTREAL — Montreal police found the body of an Israeli man inside a suitcase Jan. 16 after a passerby noticed a foot sticking out of the case, which had been left in the snow on a downtown street. Several hours after the discovery, Eran Allon's partner, Michael-Andrew Garreau, 33, of Ottawa, turned himself in to Ottawa police and said he killed Allon, 29. He was charged with second-degree murder. The couple reportedly clashed about Allon's reluctance to return to Israel.

Manslaughter Plea

OTTAWA — A guilty plea to manslaughter made last week by the man who robbed and killed Ottawa's Terry Schwarzfeld, head of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO, on a Barbados beach last year is "a little low," her sister says. "He tried to rob them, left, and then came back after them. It sounds more like second-degree [murder] to me," Joan Schwarzfeld told the *Ottawa Citizen*. Schwarzfeld, 60, and daughter-in-law Luana Cotsman, of Guelph, were beaten unconscious Feb. 28 while walking on a beach after a man tried to rob them. Cotsman recovered, but Schwarzfeld later died in Ottawa. Curtis Joel Foster, 25, who was already in jail for other robberies on the same beach, faced robbery and murder charges in the case. He'll be sentenced Feb. 17.

Educators Meet

TEANECK, N.J. — A delegation of 31 senior educators from Canada joined some 570 of their U.S. counterparts in Teaneck, N.J., last week for the first-ever Jewish Day School Leadership Conference. The Canadians hailed from schools or boards in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver. The three-day event welcomed schools of all denominations and examined "21st-century challenges" such as "economic uncertainties, government funding, demographic changes and teacher retention" as well as "opportunities" such as "technology in classrooms, Jewish service learning, and social media to build educational communities."

World

Gehry Withdraws

JERUSALEM — Award-winning Canadian architect Frank Gehry has withdrawn from the project to build a Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem. *Ha'aretz* reported Gehry was leaving the Simon Wiesenthal Center project amid controversy that the museum was to be built on the site of a former Muslim cemetery. The withdrawal is not related to protests over the site, the paper reported, citing the project's architecture team as saying Gehry resigned over a request by the centre to reduce the plan's scope as well as financial disagreements. The museum is being built on a former parking lot that wasn't being used as part of the cemetery, the centre asserts. Americans for Peace Now applauded Gehry's decision to withdraw, saying it offers "a wonderful face-saving opportunity – a chance to change course and come up with a new plan on a new site."

Tfillin Scare On Plane

NEW YORK — A commercial flight was diverted to Philadelphia after a Jewish passenger's tfillin were mistaken for a bomb. A passenger on a Jan. 21 US Airways flight from New York to Louisville reportedly made the error after the Jewish passenger, 17, took his tfillin out to pray. Passengers and crew were taken off the plane in Philadelphia. Firetrucks and police met it on the runway. The teen was questioned and released. No one was arrested in the incident.

Questions Irk Gibson

LOS ANGELES — Mel Gibson and a Jewish broadcaster sparred over the actor's anti-Semitic rant in 2006. In a recent interview, Gibson became irritated when Sam Rubin of Los Angeles television station KTLA asked about anti-Semitic remarks Gibson made during his arrest that year on suspicion of drunken driving. A Jewish police officer had pulled over the actor. Gibson is promoting a new movie. After Gibson bristled at Rubin's questions about the comments, he asked the reporter, in an allusion to his being Jewish, "I gather you have a dog in this fight? Do you have a dog in this fight? Or are you impartial?" The interview continued without incident after Rubin changed the direction of his questions. Gibson reportedly became aggressive during his 2006 arrest and then said, "F—ng Jews – Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world." He also reportedly asked the arresting officer if he was Jewish. He later apologized.

Teacher Transferred

LAS VEGAS —A Las Vegas gym teacher who reportedly denied the Holocaust in front of her students was reassigned to a new school. Lori Sublette, a teacher at the Northwest Career and Technical Academy, was shifted from the high school to a middle school in the city. The school district reportedly didn't give a reason for the transfer. She had been working at home while getting salary and benefits since the November incident as the school district investigated.

Survivor Testifies

MUNICH — A survivor testifying at the war crimes trial of accused Nazi death camp guard John Demjanjuk said he didn't recall seeing Demjanjuk at Sobibor. The court heard Jan. 19 from Thomas Blatt, 82, one of the few remaining survivors of the death camp. Blatt, who lost his family there, recounted many details about his months at the camp until he escaped in a prisoner uprising in October 1942. He said he couldn't remember seeing Demjanjuk there. Demjanjuk, 89, is being tried in Germany as an accessory to the murder of 27,900 Jews at Sobibor in 1943. Prosecutors say they will present hard evidence that he was a guard there. Blatt said all guards there were accomplices to murder.

Conflict Harming Universities, Report Says

OTTAWA — The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has harmed university education and academic freedom in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel, a Canadian-authored study alleges.

The report, conducted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), says Israel's restrictions on travel in the West Bank and Gaza create an insurmountable hurdle for students and infringe upon scholarly pursuits there, frustrating hopes for a regional peace.

"Both Israeli and Palestinian academics are facing greater pressure from outside political influences and from within the academy itself," according to the report, which adds that there are "clear and consistent violations of internationally recognized academic rights" as set out in United Nations agreements.

The 68-page report was released earlier this month by the CAUT group and Education International, a Belgian-based global federation representing more than 30 million educators in 172 countries and territories. The CAUT represents more than 67,000 academic and general staff at colleges and universities across Canada.

A summary of the study on the CAUT's website states that many academics face arbitrary arrest and detention by both Israeli and Palestinian authorities. But it also cites the violence between Palestinian factions for leaving university workers "caught in the crossfire of the fighting between Hamas and Fatah."

The report also claims Israeli universities face swelling class sizes due to a brain drain, since academics have left Israel as salaries haven't kept pace with the country's 31 per cent inflation since 1997, partly because state resources must be diverted to security.

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Shuls across Canada mark 'Darfur Shabbat'

Annual event overshadowed by disaster in Haiti

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Last week, congregations in at least 12 Jewish communities across the country were preparing for Canadian Jewish Congress' "Darfur Shabbat," which took place this past weekend.

Had organizers known that it would take place so soon after the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, they would have planned differently, Rabbi Reuven Bulka said in a phone interview from his office at Congregation Machzikei Hadas, an Orthodox synagogue in Ottawa. He noted that CJC has sent mass e-mails about earthquake relief efforts to the Jewish community, which has "geared up" to help the survivors.

However, Rabbi Bulka added, plans for Darfur Shabbat were in the works for months, and the genocide in Sudan's Darfur region represents "an ongoing humanitarian issue… that hasn't been front and centre.

"We're talking over half a million who have been killed," said Rabbi Bulka, immediate past CJC co-chair.

The rabbi joined his Conservative colleague Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl of Toronto's Beth Tzedec Congregation and Reform Rabbi Philip Bregman of Temple Sholom in Vancouver to encourage their fellow rabbis to participate in Darfur Shabbat.

"Remaining silent in the face of the Darfur genocide would be to deny Judaism's core concept of not standing idly by while others suffer," they stated in a news release.

As of last Thursday, CJC knew of participating congregations in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Fredericton and St. John's.

As well, said Benjamin Shinewald, the organization's national executive director and general counsel, "students have picked this up with some gusto. There are services and Shabbat programming at Hillels and Jewish student associations across the country."

Rabbi Reuven Bulka

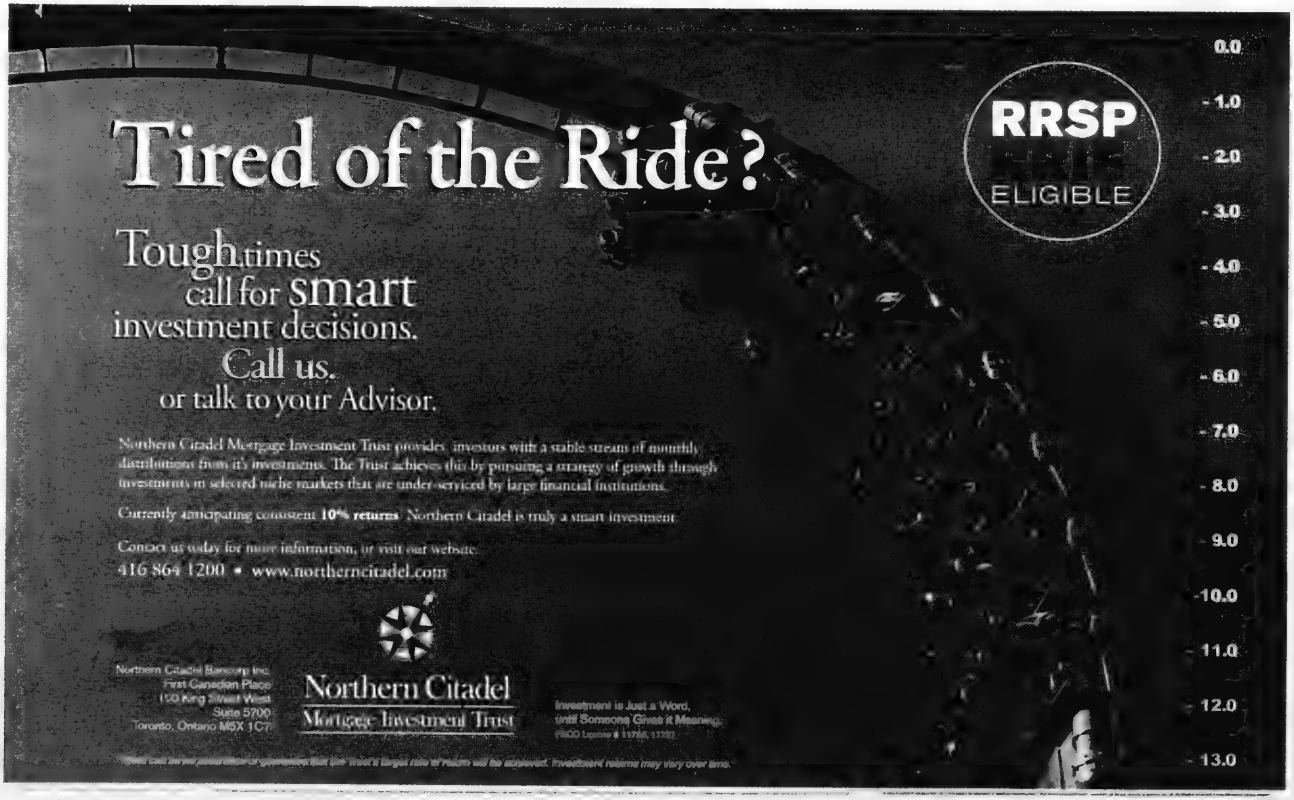
Rabbi Bulka said he and his colleagues would "urge people to write to their MPs, so hopefully Darfur will get back on the radar screen [and] be addressed" through international pressure that "so people there can live in peace."

When reached last Thursday, the rabbi was planning to talk about Darfur in his sermon on Saturday, highlighting the connection Jews have to suffering. "The Torah reading of the week deals with the agonizing suffering we went through in Egypt, and the beginning of redemption."

As well, he added, "I won't hesitate to say that the fact we reacted as we did to what happened in Haiti showed how caring we are as Jews and as Canadians."

Amichai (Ami) Wise, a 32-year-old Ottawa lawyer, is chair of CJC's Darfur action committee, which has been revitalized in the past year and now has almost 40 members.

Continued on page 18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Together for a good purpose

From the editor's desk...

Some time ago, educator, scholar, archeologist Alex Gropper alerted readers of his *CJN* column to the fact that he had begun the process of organizing a conference on olive oil in the Mediterranean.

The conference is not intended to be a Food Channel entrée, Gropper made clear. Rather, it will explore the importance of the olive in the evolution of Mediterranean history and culture. The subject is neither esoteric nor abstract.

Many aspects of Jewish and western culture and values originate in the Mediterranean basin. Gropper wondered whether there are any common historical threads from around the basin that tie the diverse countries of the area together today? To what extent are the olive and the highly significant ancillary olive oil industry one of those threads?

The Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto is one of the sponsors of the conference. However, since he formulated the idea, Gropper's plans have expanded.

The conference, to be co-chaired by Gropper and Prof. Domenico Pietropaolo, chair of Italian studies at U of T, will now be the first part of a two-part olive oil project. The second part will be an exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM).

Building upon the excitement and the success of the recently concluded Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition, the ROM eagerly seized the opportunity to present an exhibition on the impact of the olive on the cultures of the Mediterranean basin.

Gropper told *The CJN* that it was only after the personal involvement of Dimitris Azemopoulos, Greek consul for Ontario and Manitoba, that "things really began to move" on the project. "The olive and olive oil unite all of us who share a Mediterranean background," Gropper said.

He and Azemopoulos hope to use the conference and exhibition "as a way of bringing people together, whether they be of Jewish, Christian or Muslim heritage."

With Gropper's intriguing articulation of so eminently laudable an enterprise, I decided to meet the diplomat whom Gropper enthusiastically endorsed and whose involvement is essential to ensure the project actually happens.

The Greek consulate on Bloor Street East in Toronto is a very busy place. This comes as no surprise, since approximately 250,000 people of Greek origin live in the Greater Toronto Area.

Azemopoulos greeted me effusively and warmly. He smiled broadly. His deeply set, dark brown eyes were part of the smile.

After merely the briefest of introductory comments, it was apparent that though he is a diplomat by function, Azemopoulos is a professor, pastor, theologian by nature.

"The epitome of a diplomat is to be a visionary of a better world," he told me. "We must find common denominators that unite us. This is the essence and quintessence of a human being."

Dimitris Azemopoulos

His message struck particularly deep. The previous day, a monstrous earthquake had struck Haiti. Stark, heartbreaking images of disaster dominated every news medium. The reports emanating from Port-Au-Prince were gruesome and discouraging.

"Seeing the tragedy and massive disaster in Haiti," the consul suggested, "should help us become unstuck from our micro worlds.

"We have to help them to have the courage to go forward," he said.

The consul may sound more like a priest than a foreign service envoy, but he is not to be mistaken for someone untrained in the subtleties, nuances and negotiations of the diplomatic world.

The 48-year-old served for a number of years in the European Union headquarters in Brussels. Prior to his current posting, he served in Norway. He studied at the Sorbonne and in London and speaks several languages.

His empathy for the suffering in Haiti springs from a more profound source than the sorrowful images on the television. In recent times, he told me, "everyone whom I loved, died in my arms." He was referring to both parents and his sister.

Rather than succumb to the self-pity or cynical nihilism that could so easily have accompanied his own personal tragedies, he found inspiration in his faith and purpose in trying to express himself in ways that help others move forward.

"How can we make our world happier?" he asked me rhetorically. "If I could put just one stone [in the structure] of making people feel happier, this would matter to me a great deal."

He then explained how his collaboration with Gropper ties in with his view of life in general and with his vision for the role of a diplomat specifically.

"The olive oil exhibit will include as many Mediterranean countries as possible to give a very clear signal to the people of this community that we can all come together for good purposes."

I understood immediately why his participation in the olive oil event was so important to the consul personally, and essential to the overall success of the project. I look forward to it. It will likely teach us a great deal.

–MBD

SeeJN

MINISTER HEARS CONCERNS OF VENEZUELA'S JEWS

As part of an official trip last week to Venezuela and Bolivia to promote democratic governance, prosperity and security in the Americas, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas), Peter Kent, paid a visit to the Mariperez Synagogue in Caracas where he met with leaders of the Jewish community and discussed issues of concern to them. Left, Perry J. Calderwood, Canada's Ambassador to Venezuela and Minister Kent listen to Abraham Levy Benshimol, President of Confederation of Israeli Associations in Venezuela (CAIV) as he makes a point during his presentation.

[Photo courtesy Office of the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas)]

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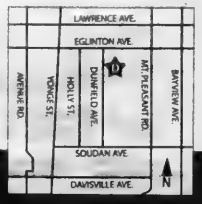

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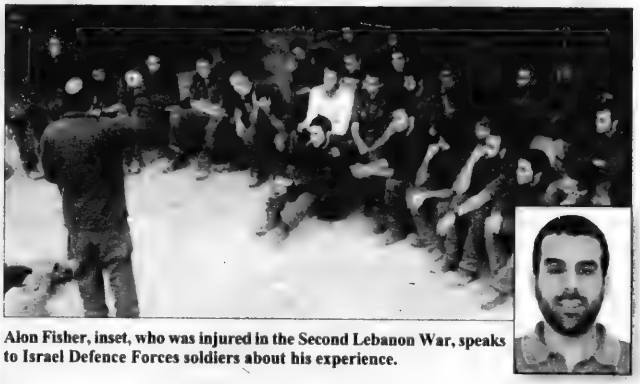

Alon Fisher, inset, who was injured in the Second Lebanon War, speaks to Israel Defence Forces soldiers about his experience.

Former IDF soldier helps youth connect with Israel

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Alon Fisher lost his eye in the Second Lebanon War. But he never lost his faith.

Fisher, then 22, was a commander in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). On the last day of the war, he was leading several of his soldiers toward a small village in Lebanon when a grenade was thrown at them.

"The grenade exploded five metres from us… I just could do one thing, and it was to yell that we're hit," he said in a telephone interview from Israel.

Fisher, who was in front of his soldiers, felt the full force of the explosion. One of the other troops, who wasn't hit, pulled him to safety.

"He ran at me, he grabbed me in my vest and grabbed me a few metres behind. That was how he saved my life," Fisher said, adding that a doctor was there to help.

"They saw all my face was bleeding and my legs and arms were bleeding. My left leg got lots of shrapnel and also the right side of my face. One of the shrapnel came into my right eye and took it out of place."

Shrapnel also got into his brain, Fisher, said.

But the most difficult part of the day was yet to come. Fisher and his troops had to walk 40 minutes through enemy fire to get to a helicopter that would take them to Haifa. Unable to walk, Fisher was carried.

"You need to understand. For me to be a commander – and now you're lying down and all your soldiers need to carry you… It's a very big risk my soldiers took to save me."

When he got to Haifa, Fisher, now 25, spent 11 hours in surgery. Doctors saved his leg, but couldn't save his eye.

"I have glass in the eye. I can't see in the right eye. But thank God, after a very long rehabilitation, I can walk," he said.

To this day, Fisher still has bits of shrapnel in his brain. But he has continued to thank God.

"[God] doesn't give a person a thing that he can't deal with," he said. "Nobody will come to me and… say, 'You need to sacrifice your son,' but they will come and say, 'You need to deal with rehab.'"

And he did. Fisher spent some eight months in rehab, learning to walk again.

"I think that, at the start, it was very difficult… You had questions. Why me? Why should this happen?" he said. "I think it's made me stronger."

After he was discharged from the hospital in Haifa, Fisher moved home to Tel Aviv to continue rehab. After his rehab sessions, he started attending classes at Yeshivat Tel Aviv Maale Eliyahu.

"One of my friends was learning at the yeshiva when I was in rehab. He said maybe I can come learn with him at night," Fisher said.

The former soldier instantly felt at home. "I felt very connected… it was very nice for me," he said.

Now, Fisher helps out at the yeshiva, whose main goal is to help connect Tel Aviv's secular Jews to their heritage through outreach programs. The organization runs initiatives including the Reut Center, which offers Jewish identity programs to elementary and high school students, and the Family Center, which offers premarital advice for Jewish couples.

While Fisher can no longer serve in the IDF, he still gives lectures to soldiers through the yeshiva.

"You know that now 40 per cent of the youth in Israel don't want to go to the army? It's horrible," he said, adding that this is because youth are losing their connection to their country. "Because why should they [serve in the IDF]? Why should I now take three years of my life and give them away?"

For Fisher, the answer to this problem is simple.

"If you know the meaning of the army, the connection to Israel… will be strong. They'll say OK, it's a very big price, but it's a price I need to pay."

Fisher continues to tell his story in hopes that he'll inspire others to understand that connection.

When thinking back to that day in Lebanon, one thing is clear. "If I had a chance to do it again, I would," he said.

During the week of Feb. 3, he will be visiting Toronto with members of his yeshiva to speak to youth about the importance of maintaining a Jewish identity.

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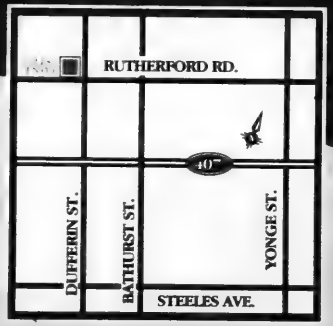

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Of Darfur...

Shabbat services this past weekend in countless synagogues across the country were dedicated to recalling the ongoing genocide and depredations in Darfur. Rabbis of all streams and denominations called upon their congregants to act on behalf of the forsaken of Darfur. For forsaken, alas, they remain.

Since 2003, the Janjaweed militia of Sudan has been slaughtering the black African tribes in Darfur. Some 400,000 men, women and children have died. A further 2 million people have fled their homes

It is imperative, though difficult given the clutter of our lives and the inversion of our values, that we try to recall the suffering in Darfur every day. But there was a particular poignancy to such a communal and individual effort this past Shabbat.

It preceded by four days the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the death camp at Auschwitz and Birkenau. Indeed Jan. 27 has since been set aside in much of the Western world, including in Canada, as a Holocaust remembrance day.

Rabbi Howard Morrison of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Congregation in Toronto pointedly expressed the issue last Shabbat when he asked his congregants: "If we lament that almost no one stood up for our people in eastern Europe, then what do we say now, when almost no one is standing up for the poor and innocent of Darfur?"

Even though other life-affirming, life-saving, existentially vital causes also call to our consciences, the organizers of this past Shabbat's special dedication to Darfur starkly remind us that "remaining silent in the face of the Darfur genocide would be to deny Judaism's core concept of not standing idly by while others suffer."

The Canadian Jewish Congress has reminded us that we must take a stand on Darfur and not be swayed away from it until the genocide stops. They are to be commended for doing so.

...and Haiti

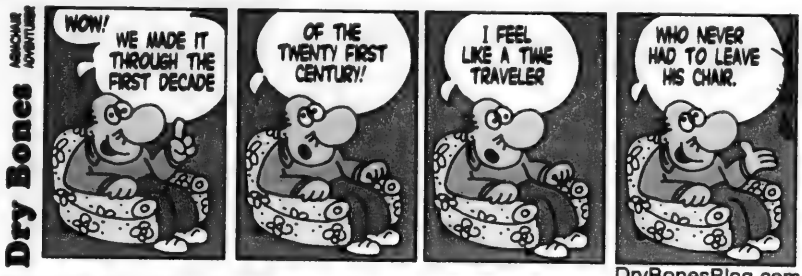
Also to be commended for the breadth and immediacy of their ongoing response to the incomprehensible grief in Haiti are our communal organizations and the individuals now on the ground in Haiti. Jewish federations across the country, United Israel Appeal of Canada, and social action agencies such as Ve'ahavta, B'nai Brith Canada, Magen David Adom and others exemplarize the values – caring and compassion, not standing idly by while others suffer, extending a helping hand – that have been the hallmark of Jewish peoplehood and survival.

And as so many have pointed out, the work of the Israeli search, rescue and medical teams, partly in conjunction with the open-hearted response of our communal organizations, has sparkled in the gloom and chaos of Haiti, saving a great many lives.

For such is the proper and appropriate thing to do.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Frank Miller defeated fellow longtime Ontario cabinet minister Larry Grossman on the third ballot of the Ontario Progressive Conservative leadership convention. Had he won, Grossman would have become the first Jewish premier in Ontario history. He later became PC leader and leader of the Opposition after Miller resigned when his new minority government was defeated in the legislature by a coalition of Liberals and New Democrats.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Why can't we all get along?

The recent public display of animosity in a public forum by one rabbinic group against another pains me greatly. We have always been a unified community with respect and care for one another. For one organization to use an individual and his alleged misdeeds to taint another organization is a low blow and not the Jewish way.

Rabbi Reuben Poupko in a guest voice wrote: "In Montreal, we get along… even our rabbis get along. We are deeply reluctant to criticize each other publicly" ("We're different here in Montreal," Montreal edition, Oct. 8). These words unfortunately didn't prevent Rabbi Poupko, along with other rabbis from the Rabbinical Council of Canada, from publicly criticizing the Vaad Ha'ir as being a divisive force here in our community. ("Orthodox conversion dispute goes public," Jan. 14). The Talmud in Sanhedrin says that those who won't let go of an argument transgress a negative commandment of the Torah ("Do not be like Korach and his congregation"). I personally know Rabbi Saul Emanuel, executive director of the Vaad, to be a man of principle and believe him when he states that there is no dispute. If both organizations work *l'shem shamayim* (for the sake of heaven) and adhere to Torah laws, then there should be no argument.

Montreal has always been known as a city where everyone respected one another and got along. We might have had our disagreements, but we always tried to work them out among the parties involved. Sadly, that has now changed. Do we wonder why Mashiach hasn't come yet?

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

* * *

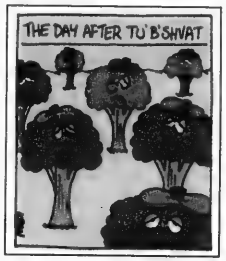
A proud secular Jew

I am alarmed that Rabbi Dow Marmur refers to Judaism in North America as "self-centred and idiosyncratic" in his column "Me-Jews or We-Jews" (Jan. 7). I do not doubt the sincerity with which he writes. I think living in Israel and living in Canada is remarkably different. When I visited Israel as part of the Birthright program, my faith in Judaism and my commitment to the Jewish community was reinvigorated. And yet, I do not feel the need to follow Halachah. I do not think that my valuing my "spirituality" is a cop-out.

I am a proud secular Jew. What Rabbi Marmur seems to disavow is the sanctity of the individual over and against the collective. I live every day of my life as Michael Helfield, Jew. What this means to me, and how I negotiate my individuality with my role in the Jewish community of Montreal is my own decision. Next to Hillel, I think the wisest Jew I know is my father, Naaman Helfield, whose "live and let live" arguments should perhaps be heard by more Jews and more rabbis. Be they from the haredi, Reconstructionist or secular communities, I respect the individual's natural right to define on their own authority how they decide to be a part of Judaism.

I think Rabbi Marmur has unwittingly expressed a "straw man" logical fallacy: North American culture is materialistic and hungry to assimilate the religious and the devout. Josephus was a devout Jew, a priest, a descendant of the Hasmoneans, and highly knowledgeable in Jewish law. And yet he became a Roman citizen and wrote in Greek. While this might not be everyone's cup of tea, Josephus was able to live in Rome without sacrificing the care he felt for his people and their history. I am like Josephus, a complex man who chooses and defines how he connects to the Jewish community.

Michael Helfield
Montreal



* * *

Pope Pius' beatification

As a child survivor from Slovakia, I am terribly shocked to hear that the Catholic church proposes that Pope Pius XII be made a saint ("Jew ask Vatican to reconsider Pope Pius' beatification," Toronto, Jan. 14). He was the man who allowed and supported Bishop Jozef Tiso to rule Slovakia during World War II. Bishop Tiso persecuted Jews and got paid by the Germans for deporting them to Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Bishop Tiso also punished Catholic Slovaks who helped Jews. My family was among the Jews saved by Catholic Slovaks. Pope Pius obviously knew what Bishop Tiso was doing and did not protest. Does that make him a saint?

Mira Koschitzky
Toronto

* * *

Committee's letter is timid, bland

If the best the Canada-Israel Committee can do on the arrest of women attempting to pray at the permitted section of the Western Wall is a timid and bland two-sentence letter to the editor ("Access to Israel's holy sites," Jan 21) reaffirming its view "that the pluralistic nature of Israel is an essential value that characterizes the Jewish state" and that "there must be equal access to Israel's holy sites," then the Canada-Israel Committee would have been well advised to say nothing rather than insult a significant segment of your readership and embarrass itself in the process.

Austin Beutel
Toronto

LET THEM GO...
Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Delegitimizers threaten existence of Jewish state

By GIDI GRINSTEIN
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A year after Operation Cast Lead, it is increasingly clear: together with the Second Lebanon War in 2006, the Gaza campaign exposed a dire need for Israel to reform its security and foreign policy doctrine.

Many Israelis are frustrated. Over a three-year period, despite overwhelming military, technological and economic superiority, we failed to achieve decisive successes in confrontations with both Hezbollah and Hamas. In 2006, Israel was dragged through a 33-day exchange, with a cost of 133 dead and a trauma to Israeli society that will take years to heal. And in last year's Gaza operation, our superior military power was offset by an offensive on Israel's legitimacy that led to a significant setback in our international standing, and will constrain future Israeli military planning and operations as effectively as any Arab army could. This is a scorecard Israel can't afford to accept.

Israel's wars are won, or lost, as much on the drawing boards of strategists and planners as on the battlefield. In its first 20 years of existence, Israel had remarkable military successes, but, notwithstanding the bravery of our soldiers, they were primarily the outcome of an intellectual victory in the war of ideas and concepts. David Ben-Gurion's 1947 "seminar," by which he prepared himself for leading the nascent state in an existential military confrontation, generated a set of principles for Israeli national security, many of which are relevant today. By 1967, it was secure in its borders.

In the more than four decades since then, Israel's physical existence has been an unchallenged reality, even if at times its citizens have been subjected to terrorism and violence. Arab intentions to destroy Israel were repeatedly frustrated, to a point where any such effort was effectively abandoned, and Egypt and Jordan signed peace treaties with Israel. Even though Iran may grow into an existential threat, Israel's successes to date have been truly phenomenal.

Frustrated by Israel's military might, its adversaries – primarily Iran and its Arab allies in Hezbollah and Hamas – have experimented with politics and violence in their attempt to cap our power and diminish it. Over time, they were able to crystallize a set of ideas that have proven effective. Rather than seeking to conquer Israel, they would aim to bring about its implosion, as with South Africa or the Soviet Union, by attacking its political and economic values. While Israel aims to avoid civilian casualties, they systematically involve civilians on both sides of the frontier. While Israel seeks decisive "victory" in direct confrontations, they value "resistance" and low-intensity conflict.

Turning Israel into a pariah state is central to its adversaries' efforts. Israel is a geopolitical island. Its survival and prosperity depend on its relations with the world in trade, science, arts and culture – all of which rely on its legitimacy. When the latter is compromised, the former may be severed, with harsh political, social and economic consequences.

FORMER SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA ON ISRAELI APARTHEID:
APARTHEID:
WRONG FOR SOUTH AFRICANS, WRONG FOR PALESTINIANS
END ISRAELI APARTHEID!

A protester in Washington, D.C., promotes the message that Israel is an apartheid state.

[Carrie Devorah photo]

The transformative change taking place stems from an unholy alliance with some European elites. The radical, brutal, sometimes fascist Islamic states and organizations that reject Israel share aims with Europeans that deny the right of Jews to self-determination.

And so, our politicians and military personnel are threatened with lawsuits and arrest when they travel abroad, campaigns to boycott our products gain traction, and our very existence is challenged in academic institutions and intellectual circles. The country is increasingly isolated.

To date, Israel has failed to recognize these trends for the strategically significant, potentially existential, threat they constitute. It has mustered neither resources nor personnel to fight them, and lacks a comprehensive approach to the challenge.

Many frame the problem as one of public relations, as if what's required is a task force of eloquent speakers who can deliver a three-point punch line in polished English in 30 seconds. This may have been useful in the early days of global news, 20 years ago. Today, it is insufficient.

Others say that Israel's policy is key, and that a genuine and credible commitment to the peace process will decrease both criticism and delegitimization of the country. But the delegitimization effort would continue even if Israel were to sign a comprehensive peace treaty with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Indeed, the forces that drive this effort are not Palestinian moderates, but rather people who oppose Israel's very existence. An agreement would only fuel their campaign to converge around the next outstanding issue that comes up between Israel and the Arab world.

Israel's delegitimacy is propagated in a few global metropolises – such as London, Madrid and the Bay Area in San Francisco – that are hubs of international NGOs, media outlets, academia and multinational corporations. Therefore, an extraordinary effort is required to respond to and isolate Israel's delegitimizers. We must play offence and not just defence.

The most effective barrier to fundamental delegitimization is personal relationships. In every major country, Israel and its supporters must develop and sustain personal connections with the entire elite in business, politics, arts and culture, science and academia. This requires not only an overhaul of Israel's Foreign Ministry, and particularly of its larger embassies, by infusing them with significantly larger operating budgets, but also the mobilization of our civil elite in Israel and overseas for the task.

Operation Cast Lead may have ushered in a new era in Israeli national security. The frontiers of our survival have shifted from the battlefields and military to our formal and informal diplomats the world over. This is a struggle that may be less bloody, but is as existentially important.

Gidi Grinstein is founder and president of the Reut Institute.

Popular Dutch novel envisions Israel's destruction

By CNAAN LIPHSHIZ
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Western European readers are snatching up copies of a novel that shows Israel's fiery destruction through the eyes of an immigrant from Holland.

The Dutch-language book, titled *Het Recht op Terugkeer* (*The Right of Return*) has sold more than 100,000 copies in Holland alone, where it stayed in the best-seller lists for weeks.

The German translation (*Das Recht auf Rucktehr*) hit bookstores a few weeks ago, and is on its way to making the best-seller lists in Germany and Austria, with English, French and Spanish translations in the works.

The 55-year-old author, Leon de Winter, says that a Hebrew translation of the book "will naturally have to follow."

Set in 2024, de Winter's novel tells the story of Bram Mannheim, a 53-year-old ex-scientist who has lived in Israel for 35 years.

The story describes Mannheim's life, which fell apart after the unsolved disappearance of his son in 2008. His dysfunction mirrors Israel's own sorry fate.

In the novel, the state is no larger than the greater Tel Aviv region and is forced to contend with constant attacks by Arab neighbours. Following an especially bloody attack on a border post, Mannheim, who volunteers as an ambulance rescue worker, makes a discovery that puts him on the trail of a plot in which his son may have been involved.

"In my book, I painted the nightmare of which I and many other Jews are so afraid," de Winter told *Ha'aretz* in a telephone interview from his home in Los Angeles.

De Winter says one "can't exclude the possibility that some readers derive pleasure from hearing about how the Jews lose and are defeated. It's possible, but it would be a perverse pleasure from a novel about anguish and destruction."

The author, who was born to a Jewish Orthodox family in the Dutch city of Den Bosch, says that "Israel's enemies would probably not buy" a book with his name on the cover. "They know I am the enemy," he said, citing dozens of strongly worded opinion pieces he has penned in defence of Israel over the years in Dutch and German publications.

De Winter, who has never lived in Israel but visits regularly, attributes the attention that the book has received in European media to a "general uncertainty as to the survivability of the Zionist enterprise," which his novel touches on. This uncertainty, he argues, has never left the Jewish psyche since Israel's formation in 1948 and has set the tone for the world at large.

The fear for Israel's survival among European Zionists is as acute now as it was 40 years ago, according to de Winter, whose brother used to live here.

"It goes back to the refusal by Arab states and peoples and others to accept the existence of the Jewish state," he said. "The opposition is constantly growing despite Israel's peace agreements with some of its neighbours, and it's creating mounting pressure."

But he says his book is not a prophecy. "The book deals with real threats and fears, yes," de Winter said. "But in writing it, I gave into the deepest pessimistic corners of my soul. It is not what I think will happen, but rather what I fear could happen."

Opinions

Speak up for Women of the Wall

When the editor of *The CJN* asked me to write this column, I refused. Afraid of the challenge, I didn't realize what an opportunity it was. Democracy is founded on the principle of participation. Voting is only one format. The responsibility of good citizenship is to speak up, whether in criticism or advocacy. How do you make yourself heard? How do you get your opinion cited? I write.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

All this is to explain that in the past, I supported Israel, but I now find myself in the uncomfortable position of loyal opposition.

In 2009 and again in 2010, two women were arrested for praying at the Kotel. It seems absurd to even write these lines. In 1989, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist women began to pray at the Kotel on rosh chodesh as a group. In quiet modesty, they persevered for 20 years.

Early on, there was a cartoon of two women in jail, one scantily clad, the other modestly dressed. Scantily clad asked modest, "What are you in for, honey?" Answer: "Praying at the Kotel!" Then it was a joke. Now it's real. How could it be?

How could the government of Israel criminalize behaviour that is halachically viable? The women, Nofrat Frenkel and Anat Hoffman, weren't breaking any Jewish laws. Wearing a tallit and carrying a Torah are both permissible according to the great halachic leaders of our heritage. When the Women of the Wall (WOW) pressed their legal case to the Supreme Court of Israel, it ruled that nothing the women did was against Jewish law, but in order to keep public order, the state should find a solution to satisfy those who pray there.

"Those who pray there" was a euphemism for only one sector of the Jewish world – the haredi community. The argument is preposterous. In order to satisfy and pacify the haredi element, the state justified their disturbances, ruling that the women were a source of disorder and, therefore, must be restricted.

WOW wishes to pray according to Halachah, not haredi Halachah.

This is not religious freedom. This is not justice.

Since when does Israel back down when faced with a vocal minority that attempts to exclude the rights of others?

The Kotel is not a synagogue belonging to one group. Even the army is no longer able to hold its ceremonies there. When did we give the Western Wall away?

Write to your Israeli ambassador. Write to friends in Israel. Jewish women should not be harassed by police or haredi Jews for praying at the Kotel. Speak up.

We share the burden of the immigrant

When our family crossed the Canadian border in 1965 with all our worldly goods in the trunk of a beater of a car and $1,500 in the bank, the worst thing we had to endure was the $300 fine levelled on our car – it had been purchased only five months previously (big mistake), rather than the required six.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

We knew we would be able to go home whenever we wanted to, and that we had all sorts of opportunities open to us. Yes, we started with practically nothing, but we felt we could find our way in a new country that seemed so familiar, yet was full of surprises, as we learned the differences between Canada and the United States. Let's just say that we've managed.

When others have had to leave their homelands under duress, the story is not so pretty. In three books I've read recently, the process of leaving one place – where all the comforts of a pleasant existence were expected to continue indefinitely – for another destination was not pleasant.

Helene Cooper, author of *The House on Sugar Beach*, is a direct descendant on both sides of her family of the founders of Liberia, the country founded by emancipated slaves. (who in turn subdued the native population of the area). She lived in comfort with servants, a summer home in Spain and a "sister" who was hired to be her companion. That all changed when Liberia was engulfed in civil war and she had to leave, penniless, to come to North America. She eventually became a respected journalist. Only after many years in "exile" did she return to her native country, a country much changed from her childhood and no longer her home.

In a poignant portrait of her Egyptian Jewish family and its trials on the way out of Egypt in *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit*, Lucette Lagnado gives us a picture of life before the Jewish community of Egypt was forced out in the wake of the founding of Israel and the 1956 Suez conflict. Like Cooper's family, the Lagnados descended quickly from privilege to poverty and were much misunderstood by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and other agencies who looked on these French-speaking strangers as primitive and ungrateful. In fact, the settlement agencies of the Jewish community, thoroughly Ashkenazi and assimilated, treated them worse than had their Muslim neighbours in Egypt.

She, too, becomes a journalist. The book chronicles the ways her family disintegrates under the pressures of their lives in North America.

Stephan Zweig's *The World of Yesterday* looks back at his lost world of middle-class Jewish life as it was lived in Germany until Hitler's ascendance. Although Zweig escaped, he eventually committed suicide in South America, unable to go home or to find a place of rest in a new and unfamiliar world.

Unlike our family, these and hundreds of thousands of other immigrants couldn't go home again. Their lives might be different – and for their children, even successful – but never the same. There was a hole in their hearts that could never be filled.

For survivors of the Holocaust whom I have met, there is also a hole in their hearts. Part of that is the loss of their families, which most have had to bear, even when life here has been good. As well, their homes are not only gone forever, but have been turned into ash. Many, however, may still recall life before the war, when they flourished in their countries of origin.

We often forget that immigrants – and know that about one-third of Canadian Jews were not born in this country – had lives that they may not have left voluntarily, and that home cannot always be moved so easily across borders. We should always be aware that others, too, have holes in their hearts where home and family once resided, and where they will never be able to go again.

We share the burden of the immigrant. Let's show compassion to those who seek refuge on our shores.

Serving a broader world

Jewish organizations internationally, nationally and locally are committed to the well-being of their constituents.

However, they are also committed to serving the world at large, irrespective of religion or creed. This has been evidenced most recently in the genocide occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan and the devastating aftermath of the massive earthquake that struck Haiti this month.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

With respect to Darfur, the Canadian Jewish Congress has established the Darfur Action Committee. The committee has published a monograph titled *Darfur: A Jewish Response*, in which Congress outlines the rationale underlying why there must be a Jewish response to tragedies such as Darfur wherever they occur. The commitment and obligation to address humanitarian concerns is a vital part of Judaism and our very Jewish identity, but they can also be traced back to the message promulgated through the Tanach and other Jewish texts.

The Darfur publication serves as a guide to what we can all do in the context of our synagogues, local communities, schools, campuses and even in our summer camps to confront the suffering in Sudan. In addition, Congress recently encouraged congregations through all branches of organized Judaism to participate in a Darfur Shabbat across the nation.

In mid-January, a horrific earthquake wrought devastation to the already impoverished tiny nation of Haiti, including the death of an estimated 200,000 Haitians. Immediately, the World Jewish Congress, the Canadian Jewish Congress, local federations and other institutions within our community sprang to action. The UJA of Greater Toronto, the Combined Jewish Appeal of Montreal, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg and Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver established funds to support relief aid to the area.

A press release from the Canadian Jewish Congress explained that these funds support the concept of tikkun olam. Although tikkun olam "is usually meant in a metaphorical sense, in this instance it will be literal as Haiti works to recover from this devastating earthquake," the release states.

Canadian federations raised more than $682,000 by Jan. 20. These funds are to be matched by the federal government.

This is not, of course, the first time our community has responded the need abroad. For example, the United Jewish Appeal also raised funds when a similar catastrophe struck in Indonesia recently.

Reaching out to the broader world is not restricted to international aid. Here in Edmonton, Jewish organizations work to promote a better life for the non-Jewish components of the community. For example, Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Edmonton serves many persons, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. In fact, with respect to some of the programs offered by JFS, the majority of the clients served are not Jewish.

For the past 13 years, Edmonton's Jewish community has conducted its annual Mitzvah Day. Each year, during a three-month period, more than 20,000 items, including cash donations, vouchers for grocery stores and transit tickets are collected. An army of volunteers sort, box and deliver these items to 23 different charitable organizations for redistribution to those in need. This year, over 300 volunteers participated.

Why do we feel the obligation to assist those in need – in our local communities, in Haiti and in Darfur? The notion of tikkun olam is a core value of our religious tradition. Moreover, in parshat Vayikra, we are admonished "not to stand by idly." Maimonides interpretation of this commandment is: "Whenever a person can save another person's life but fails to do so, he transgresses the commandment not to stand by idly." The central message is clear.

We have an obligation to come to the aid of those in need, whether close to home or in distant lands. We must make time in our busy lives to contribute our fair share, to assist those in need and to do what is necessary to repair the world. Too often in the past, the world has stood back and watched as Jewish communities experienced terrible suffering and unimaginable losses. We must not stand by idly.

The Kirshner File

A decade marked by terrorism and wars

The decade we've just left behind was book-ended by terrorism, punctuated by four wars and a Palestinian uprising, marked by failed Arab-Israeli peace talks, lashed by the emergence of a virulent form of Islamic radicalism and underscored by Iran's efforts to build a militarized nuclear arsenal.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Herewith, in chronological order more or less, is an itemized list of the disasters, missteps and false dawns that unfolded during a turbulent, deadly decade.

Toward the close of March 2000, the then president of the United States, Bill Clinton, went to Geneva, Switzerland, to meet his ailing Syrian counterpart, Hafez Assad, in a last-ditch attempt to breathe life into Israel's flickering peace process with Syria. Had he succeeded, Israel and Syria might have signed a peace treaty. (Seven years later, Turkey tried but failed to revive the on-again, off-again negotiations, which began in the early 1990s.)

Shortly afterward, Israel's prime minister, Ehud Barak, ordered a unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in compliance with United Nations Resolution 425, thus ending a problematic occupation. Israel invaded Lebanon in 1978 and again in 1982 to squelch Palestinian terrorism and to create a fresh geopolitical reality in the region, but found itself bogged down in a costly war of attrition with Hezbollah, an Islamist Lebanese militia supported by Syria and Iran.

Israel pulled out of Lebanon within a few days in May 2000, but its withdrawal, widely regarded by Arabs as a sign of weakness, burnished Hezbollah's credentials in Arab nationalist circles.

Israel's pullout emboldened the Palestinians to launch a violent rebellion in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in September 2000, following the breakdown of the Camp David summit in July. This intifadah was far bloodier than the first, which erupted in 1987 and fizzled out amid hopes stirred by the 1991 Madrid peace conference.

On Sept. 11, 2001, in a development of historic proportions, 19 Arab terrorists, 15 of whom were Saudis, hijacked four U.S. airliners, crashing them into the World Trade Center in Manhattan, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and an empty field in rural Pennsylvania. The death toll was 2,973.

The hijackers, all Muslim extremists in the service of Al Qaeda, were motivated by a matrix of reasons: a resentment of western colonialism in the Middle East, a hatred of modernism, secularism and Israel, and a widely warped interpretation of Islam.

Responding to the most serious violation of its soil since Pearl Harbor, the United States attacked Al Qaeda bases and the radical Taliban regime in Afghanistan, thereby launching an international war on terrorism. Sept. 11, however, was not Al Qaeda's first blow. Under the guidance of Osama bin Laden, who has yet to be captured or killed, Al Qaeda previously struck the destroyer U.S.S. Cole in Yemen, U.S. embassies in eastern Africa and American sites in Saudi Arabia.

Nine years on, the United States and its allies, including Cánada, still confront Al Qaeda terrorism – its latest plot in Detroit on Dec. 25 was mercifully foiled – and continue to fight a protracted, increasingly bloody guerrilla war with a resurgent Taliban in Afghanistan. The war has forced the United States to send an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan and has spilled into neighbouring Pakistan, whose resolve is questionable.

Palestinian suicide bombers from the West Bank made life miserable for Israelis in 2002, when a record number of such attacks occurred. For Israel, the last straw was the so-called Passover massacre in Netanya, which claimed the lives of 30 Israeli civilians.

On March 29, the Israeli army stormed into the West Bank in Operation Defensive Shield, reoccupying towns given up during the Oslo peace era, which effectively ended with the eruption of the second intifadah. The aim of the offensive, Israel's biggest in the West Bank since the Six Day War, was the eradication of terrorism. But needing more than boots on the ground to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, Israel began building a separation barrier along the the West Bank. Since much of it cuts into the West Bank, Israel was criticized by friends and foe alike.

Israel's shaky relationship with the president of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, collapsed as the intifadah intensified. The Israeli prime minister of the day, Ariel Sharon, who would succumb to a massive stroke, concluded that Arafat was neither a reliable nor trustworthy partner.

The big event of 2003 and beyond was the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The roots of the conflict were entangled in Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the UN's decision to impose sanctions on Iraq. Iraq's refusal to leave Kuwait precipitated the 1991 Gulf War, during which Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles at Israel. After 2001, the United States accused Baghdad of concealing weapons of mass destruction, supporting terrorism and destabilizing the region.

The United States and its allies invaded Iraq, easily deposing Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime in an impressive "shock and awe" campaign. The political vacuum was violently exploited by Iraqi Baathists, nationalists, foreign jihadists and common criminals. They took to the streets in a sectarian insurgency that has cost the U.S. military more than 4,000 fatalities and greatly dampened enthusiasm for the war in the United States. Seven years on, with Iraq polarized along ethnic lines but with suicide bombings having drastically declined, Iraq is still a work in progress. Washington has promised to withdraw from Iraq by 2012, but Iraq's future remains murky at best.

A Palestinian suicide bomber blew up this bus in Jerusalem during the second intifadah. *[Israel Sun photo]*

To win pan-Arab backing for its presence in Iraq, the United States signed on to the Arab-Israeli "road map" peace plan. Unveiled shortly after Baghdad's liberation in April 2003, the performance-based plan obliged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to negotiate a two-state solution. But talks yielded little of lasting value, Israel continued battling terrorists in the West Bank and Gaza, and the Israeli government expanded its maze of settlements in the West Bank, pushing back the prospects of peace even further. The Bush administration, in an attempt at peacemaking, convened the Annapolis conference in 2007, but it was a bust.

In April 2005, Syrian troops withdrew from Lebanon under duress, following accusations of Syria's complicity in the assassination of Lebanon's prime minister, Rafik Hariri. For Syria, which regarded Lebanon as an integral component of its territory, it was a bitter blow.

Israel withdrew unilaterally from Gaza in 2005, having decided that its occupation jeopardized its character as a Jewish state. Gaza descended into chaos as Hamas (an Islamist rejectionist group opposed to Israel's existence) and Fatah (a mainstream secular organization in favour of peace talks with Israel) jousted for control. The issue was settled by two interlocking events: Hamas' election victory in 2006 and Hamas' seizure of Gaza in 2007.

Israel's first war with the forces of Islamic radicalism occurred in the summer of 2006, when Israel and Hezbollah fought an inconclusive month-long border war. Israel hit Hezbollah hard, but Hezbollah managed to launch nearly 4,000 rockets into Israeli communities, exposing Israel's Achilles heel. Israel's second war with Islamic fundamentalists, in the Gaza Strip, started in late December 2008 and spilled into January 2009, after Hamas refused to extend a ceasefire and continued firing rockets and mortars at Israeli towns. The war ended three weeks later.

Throughout the decade, Israel's most dangerous adversary, Iran, developed a highly controversial nuclear program, an issue that will muddy the waters of the Middle East for years to come. Yet nothing is carved in concrete. Libya, in 2003, gave up its nuclear and chemical weapons program, and the Israeli Air Force, in 2007, bombed what was said to be a secret nuclear facility in Syria.

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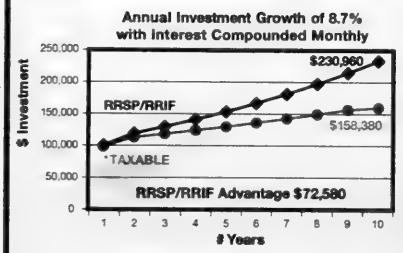

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Tragedy in Haiti

Haiti relief fundraising

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The United Israel Appeal raised just under $900,000 for Haiti relief as of last Friday.

Linda Kislowicz, the CEO of UIA, thinks the numbers may go over the $1-million mark in the near future.

"Let's just say money is still coming in. The response has been very steady," she said. "I think at some point it will probably dwindle. People respond to what they perceive is an emergency."

The UIA will work with IsraAID, an Israeli-based search and rescue team, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), which helps communities worldwide. Among its initiatives, the JDC raised funds for incubators, which were needed for the Israel Defence Forces' field hospital in Haiti.

The UJA Federation of Greater Toronto raised $514,000 as of Monday.

Howard English, the vice-president of communications at the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, hasn't seen a decline in donations.

"The response has been amazing. Within the first half hour of the [Hope for Haiti Relief] fund being established, we raised about $10,000. That pace has kept up throughout," he said.

"All you have to do is watch TV for two minutes to see the combination of homelessness, hunger, sickness and desperation [in Haiti] to understand why it's so important to contribute."

The money raised for Haiti relief will go to IsraAID through the UIA.

Federation CJA in Montreal raised $250,000 as of last Friday.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg raised $34,099 as of last Friday.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver raised about $48,000 as of last Friday.

Ve'ahavta: the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee's Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund raised about $200,000 as of Monday and has started distributing funds to the House of Hope Orphanage and the Israeli relief workers in Haiti.

According to Sarah Zelcer, the director of international projects and education at Ve'ahavta, the response from the Jewish community has been strong throughout last week, but donations are beginning to slow down.

"People are probably starting to focus on longer term rebuilding issues," she said.

Israel Defence Forces officers Brig. Gen. Ben Arye, left, and Maj. Zohar Moshe speak to a 22-year-old Haitian man who was rescued by the Israeli search and rescue team last week. ***[Flash90 photo]***

Chief Medical Officer Col. Dr. Ariel Bar, left, and Lt.-Col. Dr. Chaim Levon operate on a patient in Haiti. ***[Flash90 photo]***

Tragedy in Haiti

'Hundreds and hundreds of wounded people'

Continued from page 1

While flying to Haiti, Merin and his team talked logistics. Upon arrival, they were shocked.

"There were hundreds and hundreds of wounded people on the streets," he said, adding that patients began to line up before the hospital had been set up.

Merin's days start early, at about 5 a.m., and although they're supposed to end at 12 a.m., it's hard to turn down a patient.

"I'm just up all the time, patients come in the day, evening, night. They just keep on coming," Merin said. "We are overwhelmed with patients."

The field hospital often sees more than 100 people every day and performs around 50 surgeries per day. Most patients have to wait up to 10 hours for what could be life-saving treatment.

Merin, who is a surgeon at the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem and who worked in a Toronto hospital for several years, says many of the injuries are orthopedic, such as fractures and open wounds. Those with more serious injuries probably died before they could be treated, he said.

Dr. Ofer Merin works with patients in the field.

When Merin landed in Haiti, he found unique challenges.

"The hospital… is a reserve hospital, which is meant for… soldiers. It doesn't have any people treating any children, illnesses, women giving birth," he said, adding that experts and equipment were brought in for the mission.

Apart from healing wounds and binding broken bones, the hospital has helped about 10 women give birth as of last Thursday. Merin is also seeing patients as a result of local violence. By last Thursday, the hospital had treated about seven or eight people with gunshot wounds.

The hospital, which has an emergency room, a neonatal unit for newborns, X-ray machines and blood-test labs, has begun to see more repeat patients, but it doesn't have the resources to treat many in-patients, Merin said.

"We're working in a very different environment than any of us are used to. We're getting patients that we would keep for days [in regular hospitals]. We're doing our best to discharge them," he said. "We cannot afford to keep too many in-patients. We can manage 40. We're getting 50 or 60. We can not go beyond these numbers."

After the first three or four days, the field hospital started to run out of equipment.

"No one thought we'd [see] those numbers [of patients]," Merin said, adding that staff was sent to the city's abandoned hospitals to gather more supplies.

"There was no point of time since we came here that we didn't… treat people because of a shortage of equipment," he said.

Since the initial earthquake, there have been several aftershocks, the largest of which was a 6.1 magnitude quake that hit about 56 kilometres from Port-au-Prince. While Merin's field hospital wasn't affected, he has seen several patients who were.

Merin doesn't know how much longer his unit will stay in Haiti, but he knows why he's there.

"To help people in need," he said.

Members of the IDF medical team tend to a newborn in a neonatal unit that they established in the field hospital in Port-au-Prince.

[Israel Sun photo]

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Tragedy in Haiti

Montreal man's family holds out hope he's alive

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Alexandre Bitton's family continued to hold on to what seemed an impossible glimmer of hope late last week that he was somehow alive in the rubble of a Haitian hotel 10 days after the impoverished country was hit by a devastating earthquake.

"The latest news is that there is still no news at all," Jocelyne Bitton said in an interview last Friday about her son, the only Canadian Jew known so far to have been a victim in the quake.

"We pray a lot, cry a lot. We hope and we pray."

"They are still looking," Bitton's wife, Line Dufresne, told *The CJN* on the telephone from her Pierrefonds home last Thursday. "He's still missing. There is no news."

Alexandre Bitton

Dufresne; her parents, Yves and Micheline; Alexandre's parents, Jocelyne and Ralph; his younger brothers Guillaume Mikhael and Geoffrey Emmanuel, and other family members continue to keep an almost constant vigil by their phones, as they have since Bitton's disappearance Jan. 12.

Jocelyne Bitton said she has been in daily contact with the Israeli embassy but has been told "nothing is going on" in terms of making progress in locating Alexandre.

According to reports on the Internet – and confirmed by Jocelyne Bitton – an Israeli team from ZAKA, a volunteer Israeli emergency response unit, responded within 24 hours to family requests to search for Alexandre, in conjunction with the Israel Defence Forces Front Command, which is also present in the country.

But she was much less satisfied with the initial feedback the family got from Ottawa in determining the status of her son.

"The last few days have been better, but no one told us anything," Bitton said. "It was very frustrating."

Bitton, 36, was among a group of Canadians checking in at around 4 p.m. at Porte-au-Prince's best hotel, the Montana, 90 minutes after landing on Air Canada flight 950.

An information technology consultant with a company called HDNM International Inc., Bitton was in Haiti for the first time with company owner Martin Turgeon to spend a week meeting with clients.

Turgeon, Dufresne said, had picked up her husband at their Pierrefonds home to go to the airport.

It was the last time she and her husband spoke.

Bitton and Turgeon had agreed to meet for a drink at the poolside hotel bar, and Turgeon had just gone outside when the earthquake struck, avoiding the collapse by mere metres.

"The last time I saw Alexandre was at the check-in desk," Turgeon told *The CJN*.

Turgeon returned to Montreal Jan. 15, and it remained unclear where exactly Bitton was situated in the hotel when the quake hit at 4:53 p.m. One report said he was still checking in, but Jocelyne Bitton said it's known that at some point, Alexandre went up to his room.

"We know that he is in the hotel for sure," she said. "We know he was not outside." At *The CJN*'s deadline, Bitton was among 11 Canadians still reported to be missing in the rubble. Bitton's colleagues also reportedly were in contact with Red Cross and United Nations officials by e-mail in the effort to locate him.

Bitton and his wife met in 1997, but were married only last August by Rabbi Allan Bright of Montreal's Shaare Zedek Congregation. Rabbi Bright converted Dufresne to Judaism, and performed the bris on their son, Joshua, after his birth close to 2-1/2 years ago.

Bright said he has been in touch with the family "at least" twice a day since Bitton went missing.

"They are members [of the shul] and friends," Rabbi Bright said.

He described Bitton as "a good soul, a wonderful husband, father, son. It's a real tragedy."

Dufresne, meanwhile, last Thursday was struggling to maintain a semblance of normalcy in the household, especially for the sake of her son.

"He doesn't realize too much yet, but he's young, only two," she said.

"I'm doing the best I can," she added. "I'm covering all my bases right now, because I have to make sure Joshua is fine, too.

"I hope he comes back, but, you know, it's already nine days," Dufresne said as she began to sob.

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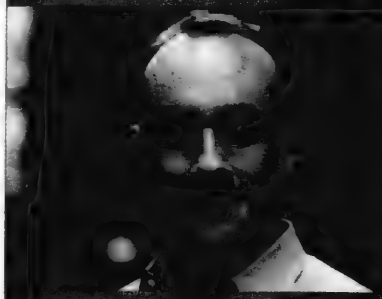

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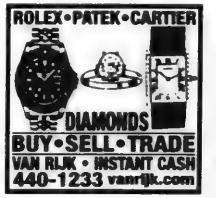
Community agencies provide service to caregivers

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Now in its second year, Family Caregiver Connections, a collaboration of seven agencies, helps caregivers by offering support and education.



Co-led by Baycrest and Circle of Care, the agencies include Bernard Betel Centre, Chai Tikvah Foundation, Jewish Family & Child, Jewish Immigrant Aid Services Toronto, and Reena.

Patricia Wendy, program co-ordinator, said that commonly, caregivers are children of elderly parents; parents of adult children who are disabled; spouses or siblings.

"Caring for a family member can be overwhelming, and caregivers often feel stressed and isolated. It can be a financial and emotional strain, and caregivers often have their own health problems.

"Most, though, they don't think of the impact on themselves, and they don't seek out services. They feel that caring for their loved one is their own responsibility, and they feel guilty for any negative feelings."

She said that 450 caregivers requested services in the program's first year, "and that number is growing quickly. We are quite pleased, because caregivers have to take care of themselves, as well as taking care of their loved one."

Services Family Caregiver Connections offers educational workshops related to seniors and caregiving, transportation services, in-home respite care, groups for Russian-speaking caregivers, individual counselling and support, information and referral services and group education and support.

"Reaching out to the Russian population is important, because they're often not well connected. We've translated a lot of our material into Russian so they have access to a lot of information they had been missing," she said.

The partnership organizations can connect caregivers with day programs, financial assistance, Holocaust survivor services, social programming, wellness services, kosher meals on wheels, and friendly visitor and phone pal programs.

Some caregivers want to connect to others, but they don't know where to start, she said. "Start with us, we're here to help."

They have run a support group for couples, in which one takes care of the other, Wendy said. "It had a recreational and therapeutic component, and the couples shared activities with each other, and with other members. We are planning to run it again."

Patricia Wendy, left, and Natalie Zabolotsky

She said that they plan educational events based on the needs of participants. "They often don't realize what they need until they get here. They like to hear about others, and then they relate it to themselves. All educational events have a social component."

In order to make it easier for caregivers to participate, she said, transportation is provided to and from events, and all programs are free.

For information, call 416-373-4093 or visit www.supportingfamilycare.com, which offers space to share experiences with others.

Teacher reinvented himself in mid-career

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Nicholas Maes – a novelist with a PhD in classical studies and an adjunct faculty member at the University of Waterloo – decided about a decade ago that he needed to reinvent himself.

"They are our teachers..."

When he began his career, Maes, now 49, thought he was being practical by planning to teach classics during the academic year so he could have the summer off to write fiction, he explained in a recent interview at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan, where he became head of the history department last year.

But university classics departments are shrinking, Maes noted, explaining his decision to return to school in 2001to obtain his bachelor of education degree from the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. He also completed his doctorate at U of T.

A lesson from the teacher: *"When you study history, you're getting a front-row seat to the greatest show on earth."*

In addition to his duties at Tanenbaum-CHAT – where he is in his seventh year of teaching – and the time he devotes to writing and spending time with his wife and three children, Maes also teaches one evening course a week at the University of Waterloo.

In his most recent novel – *Laughing Wolf*, which was published last June and is set 200 years in the future – Maes neatly connects his love of classics with his understanding of teenagers. The book's protagonist is a 15-year-old who knows Latin, a fact that is key to the welfare of the world.

Maes, who has had four books published, has been writing since a 1981 cycling trip through Greece. Among his four published books are a young adult biography of Robertson Davies, and *Dead Man's Float*, a post-Holocaust-themed adult novel published in 2006, which borrows loosely from aspects of his own Dutch and Jewish backgrounds.

A native of Windsor, Ont., Maes spent most of his childhood in Montreal, aside from a year-and-a-half-long stint in Holland when he was a young teenager. He has lived in Toronto since 1979.

Currently, Maes has two books in the works – an adult novel that he has almost finished, and another one for children. "I like working on both at the same time," he said.

In his classroom, he said, there is a lot of discussion. "There's so much to talk about."

Maes gets excited about the connections between history and the day's headlines, and the way class discussions move from past to present, and back again.

"You realize [that what happens today is] a product of this long evolution… therefore, it's not preposterous to draw comparisons between the situation in Israel and the situation Napoleon was faced with in Spain… That's what makes it so interesting."

He considers technology a double-edged sword and uses "very little" of it in the classroom. "It's the cut and thrust of conversation that counts," he believes.

Maes recognizes that history is sometimes a hard sell, particularly in a Jewish school with a dual curriculum.

But, he said, "history gives you an opportunity to admire human brilliance, and then you see the other side of the coin too – the sheer nastiness that we bring to the table. I like to concentrate on the brilliance."

As well, he added, "the subject is just fascinating. If you're interested in fashion, there's a history to fashion. If you're interested in technology, there's a history to technology... Wherever we are, whatever we enjoy, there's a history to it. History draws everything together."

Nick Maes *[Frances Kraft photo]*

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Survivors' stories live on through exhibit

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

There was one thing that saved Faye Schulman from being killed in the Holocaust. Her camera.

Schulman, a Holocaust survivor from Poland, was 16 when a group of Nazis arrived at the ghetto in Lenin, Poland, where her family had been living. Their goal was clear – to kill the entire community.

"I woke up, I heard crying, screaming. My sister was changing her children. She wanted her children to die in clean underwear," she said. "I helped. I can still feel their skin."

Schulman was a photographer at the time. She had taken photos for the Nazis and ran into an officer that she had photographed. He recognized the teenager and told her to follow another Nazi officer.

"He took me into the new synagogue, which was not in the ghetto. I noticed there were five families, a shoemaker, a tailor, a carpenter, someone who looked after horses," she said. "I understood that those are people the killer picked to be alive. I didn't want to be alive, I wanted to be killed with my mother and father."

But Schulman wasn't killed. And on Jan. 14, at the March of the Living photography, art and prose exhibit, the survivor shared her story with a new generation of photographers.

The exhibit, called "Reflections Through our Eyes: March of the Living 2009," was a collection of paintings, poems and photos. The art was submitted by Toronto high school student participants of last year's March of the Living, a two-week trip to Poland and Israel that promotes Holocaust education and a three-kilometre walk from Auschwitz to the Birkenau concentration camp.

The gallery event was organized by the Toronto March of the Living and the House, a centre for Jewish youth.

High school students from around Toronto submitted their paintings, poems and photos to the March of the Living art exhibit, held on Jan. 14 at the Lipa Green Building.

For Romy Pilarski, the co-organizer and a March of the Living participant, the artwork is a way of keeping stories like Schulman's alive.

"Each photo or poem has its own story of a participant who was in the place where [Jews] were killed," she said.

"It's a very moving experience," she said. "Hitler didn't win. They failed and we're here to tell the tale."

For Pilarski, each photo, poem and painting is proof of that. In the Lipa Green Building, where the exhibit was mounted, the walls were lined with pictures of barbed wire, empty barracks, Israeli flags and, in one of Daniel Navy's photos, the path to the gas chambers in Auschwitz.

"I'm proud of my work being displayed," said Navy, 17, a student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. "I just think it's an awesome event. Having everyone's memories, you're taking a trip back in time. It's a really important journey to take."

Navy took part in the three-kilometre march. His most striking memory is stopping halfway through to look back.

"You see people for kilometres. It's an amazing feeling to be there and say, 'We conquered [the Holocaust].'"

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'Darfur Shabbat'

Continued from page 3

He was planning to have Friday night dinner as part of Darfur Shabbat with more than 100 students at Hillel Ottawa who would hear a speaker about Darfur. As well, he said that on Saturday morning he would be at his synagogue, Agudath Israel Congregation, which was also taking part in the event.

"I do believe instinctively that this is an important issue to take up as a Jew," said Wise, a native of Toronto who is the grandson of four Holocaust survivors.

The committee's first initiative last year was the launch, with actor Mia Farrow, of the online publication Darfur: A Jewish Response. As well, said Shinewald, "we're trying to develop programs that will engage the Jewish community more deeply in Darfur advocacy and lobbying government to bring about a definitive end to the conflict in Darfur."

Wise said he hoped that Darfur Shabbat will increase overall awareness of the situation in Darfur within the Jewish community. "It's still a dire situation for a lot of Darfuris. If the Jewish community continues to be aware, then I believe we could eventually put pressure on the Canadian government to act in a way that will improve the lives of Darfuris... perhaps to help reach a lasting and peaceful resolution."

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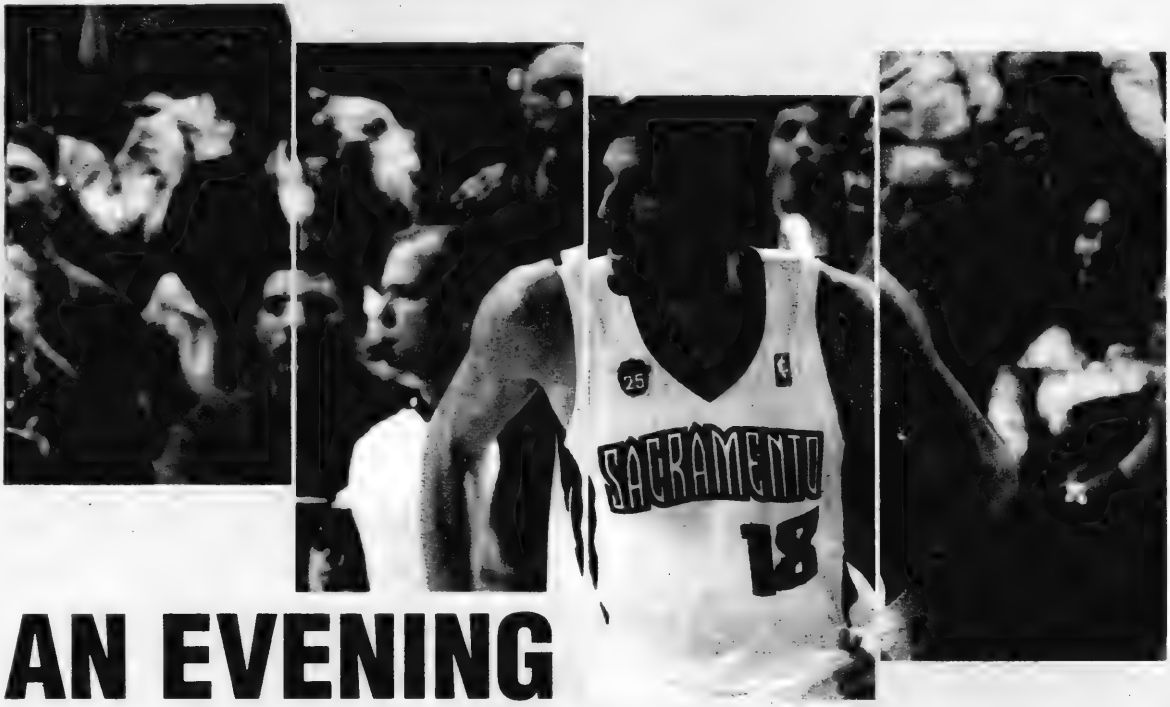

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Jewish Life

Sowing the seeds for a greener future

By SHAYLA GUNTER-GOLDSTEIN
Special to The CJN

"It was once religion which told us that we are all sinners... it is now the ecology of our planet which pronounces us all to be sinners because of the excessive exploits of human inventiveness. It was once religion which threatened us with a last judgment at the end of days. It is now our tortured planet which predicts the arrival of such a day..."

– Hans Jonas, excerpted from *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good After Auschwitz*

"I believe these words are true prophesy," said Rabbi Lawrence Troster, who was the guest rabbi in residence at Congregation Darchei Noam, the Reconstructionist Synagogue of Toronto, earlier this month.

Rabbi Troster was in Toronto on the weekend of Jan. 9 and 10 to lead the congregants in sessions exploring Jewish ecology, environmentalism and environmental justice, to help examine such questions as: "How can Jewish wisdom guide us in our quest for happiness and a more sustainable lifestyle?" "What is Jewish environmental justice?" and "How does a synagogue embody Jewish environmental values?"

A native Torontonian and former assistant rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation in the early '90s, Rabbi Troster is a recognized religious-environmental leader. Besides his pulpit work in Toronto and New Jersey, he is also rabbinic fellow of the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, co-chair of the Interfaith Partnership for the Environment of the United Nations Environment Program, and fellowship director of GreenFaith – a New Jersey-based interfaith coalition for the environment.

The weekend, organized by Darchei Noam's Shomrei Adamah committee, was part of the synagogue's commitment to environmental issues using a number of different programs and initiatives, including its eco-conscious "green" building.

Asked what questions and lessons he wanted to leave the members thinking about, Rabbi Troster replied, "We are at a critical point in the fate of the planet: climate change, environmental responsibility and environmental justice are the critical issues facing humankind. If Judaism cannot help us with this, where else can we turn? If Judaism cannot respond... that speaks to the relevance of our religion.

"I want congregations to think about how a community can make environmental learning and responsibility a core value... as much as prayer, kashrut and teaching Torah are to our faith," he said.

"Twenty per cent of the world is using 80 per cent of the resources... generating 80 per cent of the waste. Consumerism is threatening the planet and threatening the way we deal with fellow human beings. It leads to toxic air and water, and ultimately results in climate change. Climate change contributes to rising water levels, which threaten coastal cities and countries. Why is this important to Jews? Think about it... New York – where the Jewish population is immense – is coastal. Israel is coastal. What will climate change and rising water levels mean to Israel?"

Faced with these conditions, he said Jews must ask: "What can I do?... How can I make a difference?"

To find the answers, Rabbi Troster believes that Jewish wisdom literature – from the Torah to Rashi and beyond – holds the ultimate truths.

"Central to Judaism are the concepts of bal tashchit [do not destroy] and tikkun olam [repair of the world]. There exist myriad texts we can study on these issues, which outline ideas of righteous practices in dealing with other people and with the Earth. But all of these teachings are about much more than just giving charity and being eco-conscious," he said. "They are also about environmental justice."

The environmental justice movement combines environmental activism with ideas of social justice – for the goal of protecting those who are economically, racially and politically disadvantaged from suffering disproportionately as a result of environmental harm. Rabbi Troster referred to literature on the Principles of Environmental Justice, which have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement. (See www.ejnet.org for a full list of the principles.)

Rabbi Troster also suggested that every faith wants to believe it is the most "green," but "the reality is that none of our traditions had to deal with the environmental crises we are facing today. Environmentalism is a challenge to our whole theology."

So, where is Judaism when it comes to environmental impact? The news is not all dreary.

"Judaism is an optimistic religion. We believe in tikkun olam. Jews are strong supporters and activists for environmental causes and organizations."

It is only recently, though, that these issues have become strongholds in the consciousness of the Canadian Jewish community, he said.

Celebrating Tu b'Shvat in Guelph

By HOWARD PARTNOY
Special to The CJN

GUELPH, Ont. — In keeping with a concept adhered to by the Jewish People since biblical times – protecting the environment – Tu b'Shvat, or the New Year of the Trees, will be marked by Guelph's Beth Isaiah Synagogue on Friday evening, Jan. 29, with a service and special dinner.

"Tu b'Shvat is an opportunity for us to reconnect to the importance of land, the trees, the resources, and to connect to the land of Israel... by eating fruit and reading different literature speaking of the beauty of nature, importance of trees and importance of resources," Beth Isaiah's spiritual leader, Cantor Avraham Fisher, said in an interview.

Cantor Avraham Fisher *[H. Partnoy photo]*

The prayers on Tu b'Shvat are modelled after the Passover service, which tells of the Exodus from Egypt. The Tu b'Shvat service tells of the different kinds of fruit and the beauty of nature, the importance of trees and our responsibility to the next generation.

These are obligations that we have throughout the year, he explained.

Israel is the only place in the world that has more trees than it did 100 years ago, and it's one of the leading countries in preserving nature and making the desert bloom, Fisher added.

The holiday occurs on the 15th of the Jewish month of Shvat. Jewish tradition emphasizes the wise use of resources. In Moses' speech before the Jews enter the Land of Israel, he said that if you lay siege to a city of the enemy, you're not allowed to cut down trees that bear fruit in order to conquer the city, Fisher noted.

In Israel it's a custom for people to plant trees across the country. For example, all members of the Israeli parliament, including the prime minister, plant trees. It's also becoming a custom to eat seven species of food grown in Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, dates, olives and pomegranates.

Underlining the importance of natural resources, Fisher noted that in rabbinic literature from around 200 BCE, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai said, "If you are holding a seedling in your hand and you hear that the Messiah is coming, plant the seedling and then greet the Messiah."

Also, in the book of Genesis, it's said that when God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, they were to till and protect the land.

"Our task is twofold – to protect the world we have and to make it a better place to live for the coming generation," Fisher said. "In prayers, we pray there will be rain in Israel and it will be fruitful."

Jewish Life

The Jewish way of responding to natural disasters

By RABBI TZVI HERSH WEINREB
JTA

Guest Voice

See. Feel. Act.

These three words are Judaism's answer to the questions that occur to religious people at this time of great human suffering in Haiti.

There are two kinds of questions that we find ourselves asking when we are confronted with scenes such as the disaster that has struck the island nation.

On the one hand, we ask "why?" Or, more intensely, "How can God have allowed this to happen?"

On the other hand, we ask "what?" "What can I, a single helpless individual hundreds of miles away from the tragic scene, do to help?"

Quite simply, our tradition insists that we shelve the first type of question. It has been asked before, perhaps millions of times over the course of history. Answers abound, and the theological literature deals with it at length. But none of the answers has ever totally dispelled the question.

Judaism insists instead that we ask the question of the second type. We must inquire as to the response that God requires of us. And to that inquiry the answer is powerful and clear: See! Feel! Act!

First, we must "see." We cannot yield to the understandable temptation to block the scenes of suffering from our visual senses. We must watch scenes of the catastrophe and allow ourselves to be affected by them.

Second, we must feel the pain of those who are suffering so horribly. We dare not anesthetize ourselves to that pain. We cannot allow ourselves to in any way explain the suffering away, with sick, silly, smug but sadly comforting statements such as "they must have deserved it." We must see the victims as humans no different from ourselves, innocent and blameless, who are in a condition of desperation and dire need.

And then we must act to respond to that need. There are always ways to act, no matter how distant we are from the scene of tragedy, no matter how impotent we might legitimately feel.

Moments of tragedy and crisis are not the times to philosophize about God. This is not the time to speculate about "why bad things happen to good people." It is the time to ask, "What can I do to help those poor good people?"

Those of us who have lived lives of faith and religious commitment know that the answers to our doubts about God do not come forth from our philosophical quest. Rather, they slowly issue from the context of a life of moral action, from deeds of charity and compassion.

The Jewish community, in its entirety, can be proud of its response thus far to the Haitian catastrophe. Rescue teams from the State of Israel and millions of dollars from the Jews of America are clear examples of our response. Whatever the motivation for these responses, this has been a religious response, a Jewish response.

The way to deal with religious doubt and skepticism about God is to act compassionately and to respond generously, in faith and certainty, and in confidence that our actions will allow us ultimately to bear witness to God's benevolent love.

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is the executive vice-president emeritus of the Orthodox Union.

Setting priorities

Money Matters

Usually, when we think of politicians and money, our thoughts turn to government waste, deficits or tax policy. And that's when things are going well. All too often, however, our thoughts turn to mismanagement, undue patronage, corruption and kickbacks. And when the focus isn't on money, we often associate politicians with polls, re-election campaigns, arrogance, deal-making and abandonment of principles. While such a description may be unduly harsh, for too many, it's not far off the mark.

Thankfully, there are other models. I was tremendously moved by the comments of former Ontario Conservative leader and Toronto mayoral candidate John Tory announcing his decision not to run again for mayor of Toronto. Luckily, I was in the car and heard an excerpt from his press conference, yet, sadly, I haven't seen his remarkable words mentioned elsewhere.

Asked by a reporter (unfortunately, many in the media make politicians look like saints) if he wasn't running for fear of losing yet again, he responded by stating, and I paraphrase: "In life one can not dwell on the past. While I wish things would have turned out differently, it was not to be. I noticed that I have been described in the media as a man of integrity who stands up for what he believes. When the time comes to look back on my life, I cannot think of a more important message to leave my children. That is so much more important than any political office could ever be." What beautiful words. If they were emulated by others, imagine how much more would be accomplished.

We in Ontario's Jewish community (and other faith-based communities) feel Tory's defeat in the 2007 provincial election much more acutely than others, to the tune of well over $100 million every year. It's not at all surprising that the same person who puts values before votes would support extending education funding to all children in Ontario. Despite its political cost, he refused to change course and has never regretted that decision. Some things are more important than winning.

Economics and moral character are inextricably linked. Those whose overarching principle is integrity share little in common with those whose overarching principle is making money, even if the two work side by side. Perhaps the most important and most difficult concept to grasp for one who aspires to climb the moral ladder (at least from a Jewish point of view) is that money is no more than a means to an end. This is something that needs constant reinforcement and is a much more valuable lesson than anything learned in business school.

The Talmud notes that God sheds three tears daily. The first two are for those who are unqualified yet assume positions of rabbinic authority, and for those who are qualified yet are employed elsewhere. How tragic it is when the wrong people are in the wrong jobs. Each job carries its own moral challenges, and we must prepare accordingly. I'm reminded of the comment by the 19th-century ethicist Rabbi Yisroel Salanter who said it takes much greater moral strength to be an honest businessperson than to be a rabbi – not many are going to give their rabbi the opportunity to fraudulently lose their money.

It's the businessman who must be more "religious" than the rabbi, not vice versa. Having worked both in the business world and in the rabbinate, I can personally attest to the truthfulness of this observation. While it may be true that nice guys finish last, this is so in the games that matter for little. In the game that really counts – where how we get to the bottom line is more important than the bottom line itself – nice guys are the true gold medalists.

Comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

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The President, Board of Directors and Board of Governors of Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto express sincere condolences to

Tracy Zepp
Member of the Board of Directors
and to her family on the loss of her father

Mort Krieger ז"ל

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Jewish Toronto

Celebrate United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010

Closing event features Dan Senor

By Daniel Horowitz

If you were asked what country – excluding the United States - has more companies listed on the NASDAQ than any other, you would be excused if you didn't come up with Israel right away.

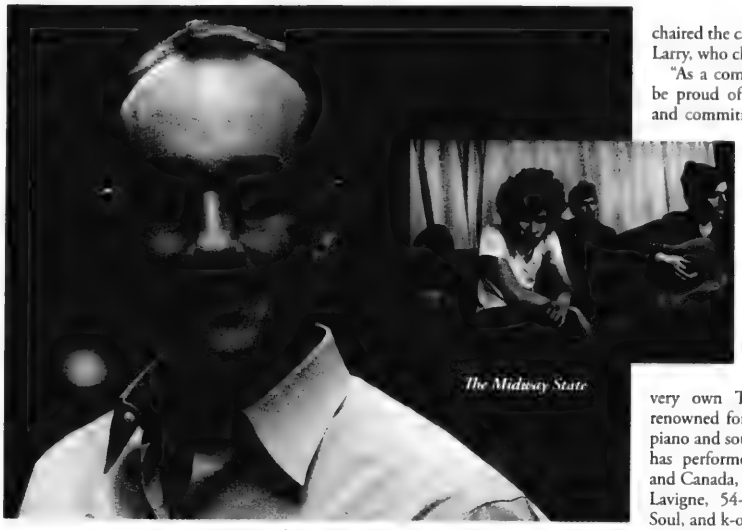
The fact is, in only 61 years of existence, the Jewish state has become a true powerhouse in the world of high-tech.

That's just one of the interesting facts that will be discussed by the author of *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*, Dan Senor, during United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010 Closing Celebration on February 16, at Events On the Park.

Senor, an accomplished, entertaining and enlightening speaker, is also a geopolitical expert, investor and adjunct senior fellow for Middle East Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. He will discuss how Israel's ever-changing global political situation has transformed the state into that high-tech powerhouse.

Campaign 2010, chaired by Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, is specifically aimed at raising funds in four areas of interest:

- Meeting the urgent needs of our most vulnerable
- Transforming lives in Israel
- Battling anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism on campus
- Building a vibrant Jewish future



Author Dan Senor

"Debbie and I have had a front row seat in the greatest Jewish community in the Diaspora. It has responded positively in difficult economic times to make sure that those in need among us are not left behind," said Tanenbaum. "I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to have played this role with Debbie, which, for me, carries on a tradition in my family going back three generations to my grandfather Max, who chaired the campaign in 1961 and my dad, Larry, who chaired in 1999."

"As a community, we have so much to be proud of, but most of all, the depth and commitment of our leadership, both professional and volunteer, is what truly stood out to me," said Kimel. "Having seen, first-hand, the incredible commitment and passion held by our community was awe-inspiring. It made me even prouder, if that's possible, to live in this wonderful community."

Musical entertainment at the closing celebration will be provided by Toronto's very own The Midway State, a band renowned for their unique blend of rock, piano and soulful lyrics. The Midway State has performed across the United States and Canada, opening for such acts as Avril Lavigne, 54-40, Evanescence, Collective Soul, and k-os.

Tickets, if purchased on or before February 9th are $20 ($25 after that time), include a dessert reception.

To purchase tickets visit ujaevents.com/registration/closing, or call 416.635.2883 extension 5229.

Don't miss an evening with an Israeli King

The National Basketball Association is coming to Vaughan!

Actually, before you apply for season tickets, an explanation is due.

On Saturday, February 6, at 7:30 p.m. Omri Casspi of the NBA's Sacramento Kings, the only Israeli ever chosen in the first round of the NBA's annual draft, and one of the league's top rookies, will take his skills to TanenbaumCHAT's Kimel Family Education Centre on Vaughan's Lebovic Campus. The UJA Federation event promises an evening of unique entertainment with something for everyone.

"This event promises to be an entertaining way of bringing together many of York Region's Jewish residents," says an enthusiastic Jeff Ross, chair, UJA's York Region Division. "And having an internationally known professional athlete visit – with our community's youngsters on hand - at TanenbaumCHAT's Kimel Family Education Centre, one of Vaughan's shining jewels, is the icing on the cake. It's the perfect opportunity for us to display the wonderful, growing community that lives north of Steeles Avenue."

Omri Casspi

For every one of us who ever dreamt of going one-on-one with a professional athlete, or who wanted to rub shoulders with an NBA player, this is your chance.

The six-foot, nine inch Casspi, who used to wake up at 4:00 a.m. to watch the Chicago Bulls and Michael Jordan, signed with Israel's elite basketball team, Maccabi Tel Aviv at the age of 17. According to Sports Illustrated, "During an early-season game against the Warriors, Casspi went face-to-face with notorious brawler Stephen Jackson. Even in practice, Casspi is constantly hand-checking teammates, bucking the image of the soft Euro."

He developed his tough, grinding style under the watchful eye of Svika Sherf, coach of the Israeli national team who, according to *Sports Illustrated*, used to tell his players before big tournaments, "We are not going to be the tallest or the strongest or the most talented. But we have something different. We are Israel. We are going to play harder, and that's how we are going to win."

"I think it's also important for York Region Jewry to understand that they have long-been the fortunate recipients of a dynamic and growing infrastructure complete with services and facilities necessary for our burgeoning community," said Ross. "And now, with many of those services being relocated north of Steeles, we are even more fortunate and I think the Jews of this region need to know about their responsibility to give back to the community through UJA Federation of Greater Toronto."

Register early. Space is limited. Tickets are $10 per person or $25 per family (3 or more people living in the same household). Children 3 and under are free. The evening will include sports, games, music, entertainment and complimentary refreshments (Kashruth observed).

Purchase your tickets online at ujaevents.com/registration/casspi or contact Michelle Spring at mspring@ujafed.org or call 416.631.5685 for more information.

UJA Hope for Haiti Relief Fund surpasses $400,000

Israeli organizations playing major role in relief efforts

By Daniel Horowitz

Responding to the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that wreaked havoc on the Caribbean nation of Haiti on Tuesday, January 12, IsraAID, an Israeli-based search and rescue team supported by United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto*, landed in Port-au-Prince less than three days later and its life-saving efforts continue today.

In fact, thanks to the generous and compassionate response from Toronto's Jewish community, a second IsraAID team landed in Haiti this week in order to expand the scale of its operation to meet the needs of the victims following last week's powerful 6.1 magnitude aftershock.

So far, United Jewish Appeal's Hope for Haiti Relief Fund, which is raising money to support IsraAid's efforts, has raised over $400,000. Every dollar donated to the fund will be matched by the government of Canada. These matching dollars will be sent by the government to its Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund to support vital relief efforts.

IsraAID is a coordinating body of Israeli and Jewish NGOs in Israel that provides humanitarian aid worldwide. United Jewish Appeal has previously supported its work following earthquakes in Peru and Pakistan, on the border of Darfur, and after Hurricane Katrina and the recent typhoon in the Philippines.

Donations made to the Hope for Haiti Relief Fund support the work of IsraAID, specifically in the areas of emergency medicine, search and rescue, post-trauma counseling and water purification. IsraAID members are also in talks with various hi-tech companies specializing in restoring collapsed communications networks.

Members of IsraAID's medical team treat a 6-year-old girl pulled from the rubble in Haiti.

Immediately upon arriving in Port-au-Prince, IsraAID's medical professionals rushed to join local physicians at the site of the city's collapsed central hospital where thousands of wounded gathered, desperate for help.

"The scenes in the hospital were horrible," said Nurse Sheva Cohen from Kibbutz Ein Yahav in the Negev. "We saw people everywhere on the floors, in the building and outside; people with amputations and bone-deep wounds, hundreds of them. The size of the catastrophe is unbelievable. Until we arrived, all of the injured were treated by only one local doctor and we were the first foreign backup team to operate in the hospital."

"It's been said that a community's true nature is determined by how it rallies around those in need," said Alan Winer, chair, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "If that's true, we should all be so proud of how our community has rallied around the people of Haiti. And I can't express just how proud I am of the State of Israel which, through IsraAid, ZAKA, the IDF, and other organizations, has responded at a time of great need. Israel's relief workers are jeopardizing their own lives to assist complete strangers facing incredible challenges."

The IsraAID operation is part of an overall Herculean Israeli relief effort. Two IDF teams, comprised of search and rescue personnel and canine operators are going out on rescue missions. The IDF Medical and Rescue team has been treating patients at a field hospital in Port-au-Prince. The field hospital is prepared to receive dozens of ambulances evacuating injured children from the different disaster stricken areas. The hospital, which can treat 500 patients a day, includes 40 doctors, 25 nurses, paramedics, a pharmacy, a children's ward, a radiology department, an intensive care unit, an emergency room, two operating rooms, a surgical department, an internal medicine department and a maternity ward.

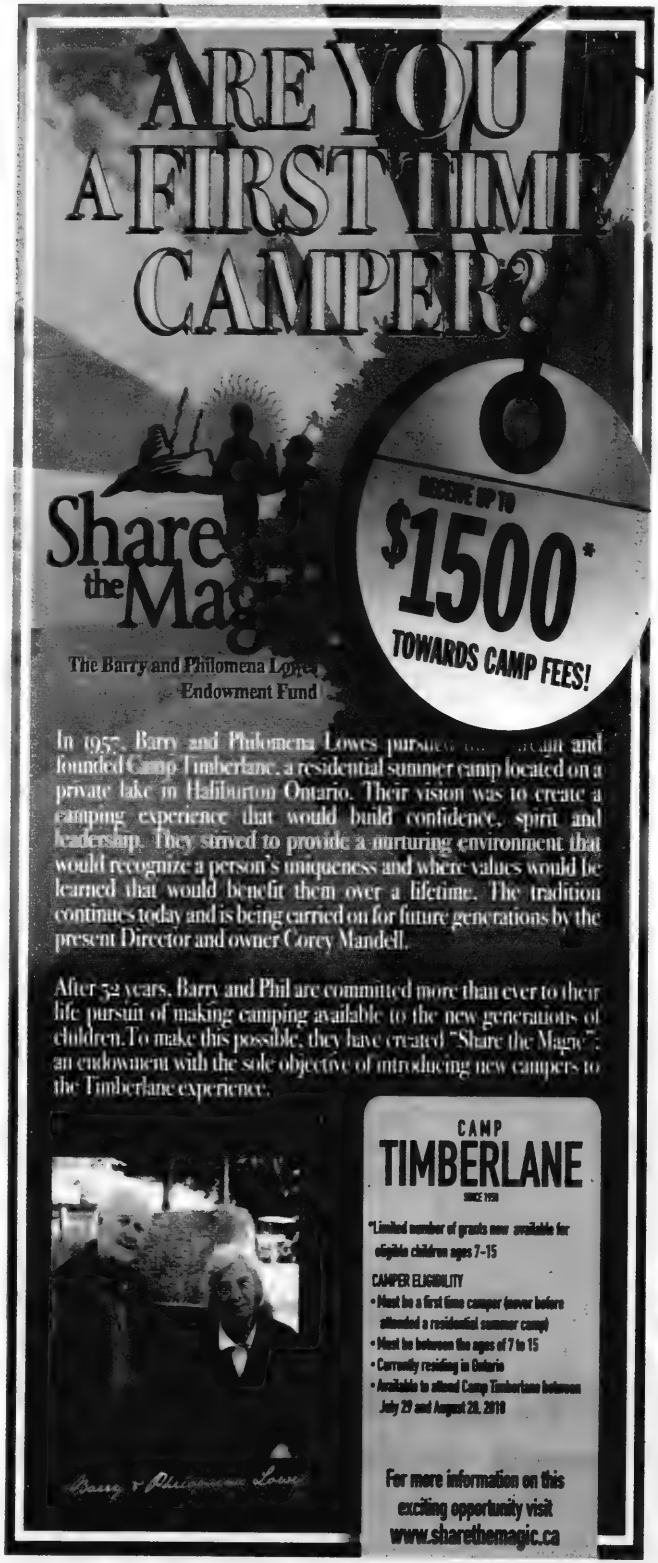
One week after the hurricane struck CNN reported that Israel was the only state to have sent a field hospital equipped with all that is required for surgical operations. Doctors from various missions send patients requiring surgery to Israel's makeshift hospital, particularly those whose condition is critical, the news network said.

According to the report, other field hospitals contain no more than stretcher beds and medical teams who administer first aid, and are not prepared for complex surgery. In addition, a six-man delegation from ZAKA's International Rescue Unit organization (four from Israel and two from Mexico) succeeded, after 38 grueling hours, in pulling eight students from a collapsed eight-storey Port-au-Prince university building.

Donations to United Jewish Appeal's Hope for Haiti Relief Fund can be made through www.ujadonations.com/haiti or by calling 416.631.5705.

** Funds raised are allocated to United Israel Appeal Canada. IsraAid delivers relief services in Haiti for UIA Canada.*

IsraAID team members treat hundreds of sick and injured Haitians in Port-au-Prince.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After 52 years, Barry and Phil are committed more than ever to their life pursuit of making camping available to the new generations of children. To make this possible, they have created "Share the Magic": an endowment with the sole objective of introducing new campers to the Timberlane experience.
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Bone marrow drive organized by teen

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

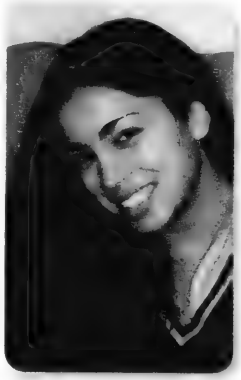
Shari Ichelson Silverman and Yael Chapman have one thing in common. They don't take no for an answer.

When Ichelson Silverman, 34, found out she had leukemia, she refused to stop fighting.

When she was told that her only hope was a bone marrow transplant, she became determined. Not just to find herself a bone marrow donor, but to help everyone on the donor list, her father said.

"After we found out she needed the transplant, she... said, 'Daddy, you have to find me a match,'" said Mike Ichelson. "I had no idea how I was going to do that. I said, 'Yes, honey, I will.' She said, 'Daddy, if I'm not here, if I don't make it, you have to promise you won't stop looking. That will be my legacy.'"

This is how Shari's Mission, an organization that tries to find bone marrow matches, was born.



Yael Chapman

And this is what Chapman, a Grade 11 student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, is refusing to give up on.

Chapman, 16, first learned about Shari's Mission from a family friend. She attended a bone marrow drive last October, but was told that she was too young to be tested.

"I think that sometimes, as a teenager, I find it a little frustrating. You can have a lot of fervour and you want to get involved and change the world, but it's not always that simple," she said.

But, like Ichelson Silverman, the teen is resolute. Since she couldn't get tested, she decided to organize a drive of her own, which takes place on Feb. 7 at Beth Sholom Synagogue.

"I e-mailed the shul at 11:30 at night, and the next night I had e-mails from three people. It just took off within a week," she said, adding that she's part of the shul's youth council.

Chapman understood the importance of Shari's Mission when she met Ichelson Silverman and her father at the bone marrow drive in October.

"It was really interesting to actually get to meet her. You hear about people all the time. It's very rare that you actually see the cause," she said.

While the drive at Beth Sholom is an important initiative to Shari's Mission, Chapman and the shul decided to go a step further. They'll be helping Ichelson and his daughter create bone-marrow-drive kits which will include step-by-step instructions on how to organize a drive. The kits will be sent out to synagogues and churches nationwide.

It doesn't take much to get tested at a bone marrow drive, Ichelson said. Drives, which are run by organizers such as Chapman and experienced volunteers, ask community members aged 17 to 50 to do a swab test. This means each person will be asked to swab their cheeks. The swab will be tested and, if a match is found, the person will be called in for a blood test. As of now, there are more than 800 people in need of bone marrow donors in Canada. Often times, this number will only go down as people die, Ichelson said.

Since Ichelson Silverman is an Ashkenazi Jew, she has about a 70 per cent chance of finding a match.

"The other 30 per cent keeps me awake at night," her father said.

This is why, when Shari's Mission was started last year, Ichelson and his daughter reached out to the Jewish community first. But the organization is not a Jewish charity.

"There's a huge misconception that it's a Jewish organization," Ichelson said. "No, we're not. Shari said, 'You've got to get everybody off the list.' We're going beyond the Jewish community."

Ichelson is reaching out to businesses and various communities, including the Chinese and Latin communities.

Shari's Mission is currently looking for volunteers to start chapters throughout the country.

For more information, e-mail mike@sharismission.com. The bone marrow drive at Beth Sholom will be held on Feb. 7 at 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. To volunteer, call 416-783-6103.

Class Acts

HELPING HAITI: As part of their involvement with Project Giveback, Grade 5 students at Leo Baeck Day School organized a school-wide shoe drive, collecting new and lightly used shoes to send to Haiti and help with relief efforts there. With the help of Ellen Schwartz, founder of Project Giveback in conjunction with SoftMoc and Soles4Soles, the shoes were to be shipped to Haiti at the end of last week. Here, Thornhill campus students organize numerous boxes of shoes to send.

NEW YEAR FOR TREES: Students in Netivot HaTorah Day School's Gan Netivot gathered in celebration of Tu b'Shvat, Rosh Hashanah Lailanot. From left, Avigail, Aaron, Nava, Hannah, Ilai, Joshua and Maset, along with the rest of their junior kindergarten class, led their fellow students in songs for the holiday.

[Rebecca Ansel photo]

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

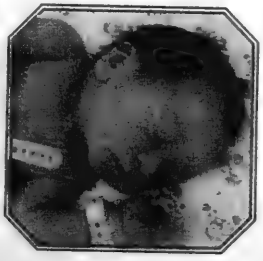
The Canadian Jewish news

as featured on

onlysimchas!
Celebrating Jewish Life
www.onlysimchas.com

Mazel tov on the engagement of Eli Lovi & Malky Rosenberg.

Andrea (Heckler) & Guy Aboodi are thrilled to announce the birth of their daughter Noa Gabrielle. Noa is welcomed by family in Canada, U.S. and Israel.



Mazel tov to Ilan & Shani Falik Roth on the birth of a baby boy.

Mazel tov to Donna Spector & Matsi Chinskey on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Daniel Chernikoff & Ariella Wruble.

Mazel tov on the birth of Ariella and Mason to Ginnine & Avi Fried.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation
YT

What's New deadlines: Submissions for the Feb. 11 issue must be in on Feb. 1. Deadline for the Feb. 18 issue is Feb. 8. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Friday, Jan. 29

TEMPLE HAR ZION

Shabbat evening services followed by Rabbi Ilyse Glickman, speaking on "Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Haifa: An Exploration of Gender Roles in Israeli Society." 8 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 30

ISRAELI PARTY

Party dedicated to Zionism and Israel. Sing along and dance to the best hits of Israel with **Cantor Tibor Kovari** and friends, accompanied by the Beth Tikvah Shul Band. *Havdalah*, karaoke contest, Israeli folk dancing, prizes, kids programming, $15/adult, $8/students, kids 12 and under are free. 416-221-3433.

BEAT THE BLUES

Dance the night away with Mid-Life Crisis, 8 p.m., Solel Congregation, Mississauga. $20 in advance, $22 at the door, tables of 10, $180. 905-820-5915.

EXTREME SHABBAT

An all-day celebration of Shabbat Shirah and Tu b'Shvat devoted to the environment, Temple Har Zion.Activities for all ages, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 905-889-2252.

TU B'SHVAT SEDERS

Celebrate Tu b'Shvat with exotic fruits, songs and activities. For families with children ages 5-13, Beth Sholom Synagogue, 11 a.m. andrea@bethsholom.net, 416-783-6103.

Tu b'Shvat celebration at Beth Isaiah Synagogue of Guelph. Service at 5:30 p.m., followed by a special dinner. Registration required. info@guelphsynagogue.ca or phone 519-265-1591.

Sunday, Jan. 31`

CAMP FAIR

Ontario Camps Association's camp fair featuring Wendy Mogel, author and child psychologist, Sheraton Parkway North (Leslie and Hwy. 7) 1-4:30 p.m. Talk, 2-3:30 p.m. Fair is free, lecture $20, 416-485-0425 or www.ontariocamps.ca.

Wednesday, Feb. 3

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 3, "Faith" series no charge, everyone welcome. 416-633-3838.

EATING DISORDERS

Panel discussion: "Eating Disorders: Fact and Fiction," 7-9 p.m., Indigo, 8705 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. **Janice**, janice_morgante@edoyr.com, 905-886-6632.

Thursday, Feb. 4

SEPHARDI CHALLENGES

New Israel Fund of Canada and Adath Israel Congregation present Israeli legal activist **Prof. Yifat Bitton** on "The Challenges Facing the Sephardi Community in Israel," Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation, 416-781-4322.

IRAN

Kehillat Shaarei Torah, continues its two-part series on Iran, "The Threat to Security: Global and Local Perspectives" with **Doron Horowitz**, director of community security, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, "The Local Impact," refreshments 7:30, presentation, 8 p.m., 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

ORAYNU CONGREGATION

Adult education series, Texts and Traditions, led by **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**. Session 4, "New Halachah: Contemporary Pathways on Old Roads," non-members welcome, $15, 18 Wynford Dr. 7 p.m. Call **Roby**, 416-385-3910.

Continued on page 27

Host
Libby Znaimer

VP, News & Information
The New Classical 96.3 & The New AM 740 - Zoomer Radio

Fe[illegible] Scientist
D[illegible]

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What's New

Continued from page 26

OTHER NEWS

JF&CS GROUPS

Looking Ahead: A six-session group for newly separated or divorced individuals who are dealing with the initial feelings of loss, anger, loneliness and wanting to let go of the past. Monday, Feb. 1, 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor, 7-9 p.m.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: A 6-session group for women wanting to discuss relevant issues and wanting to make a change in their lives. Topics include: time and stress management, building self-esteem, assertiveness and improving communication skills. Begins Wednesday, Feb. 3, 7-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Topics include: changing roles and expectations, finances, conflict negotiation and resolution, communication, and Jewish home. Offered in partnership with the Rabbinical Assembly, Ontario region. Begins Feb. 4, 7:30 -9 p.m., Beth Tikvah.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way, Feb. 4, 7:30-9 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor.

One Family Two Homes: A 3-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate age appropriate groups. Topics for parents include: tips for keeping the kids out of the conflict, trends in family law and the impact of separation and divorce. Feb. 23, 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800 Ext 215 or www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides hand-knitted hats and mittens to schoolchildren. Call 416-630-9313.

SHABBAT SHIRAH

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presents a Shabbat Shirah of Music and Fun: Friday, Jan. 29, Carlebach Kabalat Shabbat; Shabbat davening Jan. 30 with elaborate melodies; Motza'ei Shabbat kumzitz featuring Shema Koleinu, at 8 p.m. Wine and cheese. No charge, **Carol Handelman**, 416-789-3213, ext. 204.

CABARET EVENING

English, French, Russian and Yiddish songs featured in benefit for Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, with singers **Miriam Eskin** and **Stella Walker**, Feb. 6, 8 p.m., Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave., $25, $15 for children under 16, 416-789-5502.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse in the Jewish community is often considered a taboo subject, but it does exist and we all have a responsibility to learn more about it. Domestic abuse, also known as violence against women is very complex. It can happen to you or to someone you love. Trained speakers are available for your group. No charge. Call JWIC at 416-630-9313

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. "Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity" begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are reliable, friendly, and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for winter/spring courses at the Prosserman JCC, including: King David: Traitorous Serial Killer or National Religious Hero? on Wednesdays, Feb. 17-March 17 at 8 p.m. with **Prof. James Diamond** of the University of Waterloo, and the Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn, Thursdays, April 15-May 6 at 9:30 a.m. with **Prof. Paul Franks**. Courses at Shaarei Shomayim: Trei Asar: The 12 Prophets with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner,** Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., "Amos," Jan. 12-March 16; "Yoel," Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., from April 13-June 8. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca.

LEARN HEBREW

Kachol Lavan, The Centre for Hebrew and Israel Studies, presents a unique Hebrew language program. Learn how to speak, read and write Hebrew, as well as everything you wanted to know about the Jewish state. Sundays 1:15-2:30 p.m., Tuesdays 6:30-8 p.m. Starts Feb. 2. For more information, **Ariel**, 416-985-1216, or **Dorit**, info@kachol-lavan.com.

MIFGASH THEATRE

The only Hebrew-speaking theatre in Toronto presents *Was It a Dream*, with English subtitles, Feb. 7, City Playhouse, Thornhill. $25, **Sarit Shor**, 416-635-2883, ext. 5280 or sshor@ujafed.org.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 -11: 30 a.m. Social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, Feb. 3, Departure 10 a.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim Program, discussion and slides of "History of the Toronto Jewish Community," with **Ellen Scheinberg**, director, Ontario Jewish Archives, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Feb. 1, 1:30 p.m., Nathan O & Roey Hurwich boardroom.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Wellness lectures: "Nutrition Labels and Food Marketing," with **Nicole Shuckett**, dietician, Baycrest, Jan. 28, 1:30-2:30 p.m.; "Love Your Heart," **Melissa Coleman**, cardiac rehab kinesiologist, 1:30-2:30 p.m., no charge.

Lecture series, "Hollywood and Society; Hollywood Looks at Race," **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, educator and film critic, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

New programs at the culinary arts studio featuring chef **Ellen Grossman** include Ode to Julia Child Series, Chou Paste, Feb. 1, 9:30-11:30 a.m.; You Are My Sunshine, Winter Citrus Fruits, Feb. 4, 7:00-9:30 p.m.; and Sushi 101 For Teens (12-18) featuring Umami chefs, Feb. 7, 4-6 p.m., ext. 235.

Let's Talk bulletin is available. Programs include, Ryerson/Chang courses, memoir writing, and more. Tickets available for *Little House on the Prairie*, *Young Frankenstein* and Stage West, ext. 4235.

Seniors Lunch & Learn, Friday Feb. 5, 12-1:00 p.m., Room 107. Free.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Tu b'Shvat seder with Habonim Dror, Camp Gesher Ken, Jan. 31, 1:30-3:30 p.m., ext. 154.

I'll Never Smile Again, musical legacy of Ruth Lowe Sandler with Tommy Sandler, Jan. 31, 2 p.m., $9, ext. 133.

Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space, opening – "Myriam Nafte: New and Recent Works," Jan. 31, 11 a.m.-1 p.m,. runs until March 7. Ext. 112.

Media Mondays: Hollywood and Society with Shlomo Schwartzberg, Feb. 1, 7:30-9:30 p.m., "How Hollywood Looks at Crime and Criminals," includes film clips. Drop in, $12, ext. 606.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

ARTWORK DONATED: The Caroline Dukes Artwork Trust has donated the painting *Tribute to Jean* to the Canadian Breast Cancer Society (CBCS), Ontario, 20 Victoria St., Toronto, where it is on permanent display. Seen are Jennifer Duchesne, director of development, CBCS, Ontario, and Alfred Dukes, Caroline's husband.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Lahmany, Carlos	Jan. 11/10	6000 Bathurst St
Rapoport, Moisey	Jan. 11/10	Private
Rubinstein, Hela	Jan. 11/10	205 Cummer Ave
Mendlowicz, Phillip	Jan. 12/10	765 Steeles Ave. W
Slutsky, Nina	Jan. 12/10	429 Walmer Rd
Wolf, Ignac	Jan. 13/10	175 Hilda Ave
Stein, Leonid	Jan. 14/10	601 Clark Ave. W
Shulgin, Vladimir	Jan. 14/10	
Schwartzberg, Mendel	Jan. 14/10	4300 Bathurst St
Fried, Eta	Jan. 14/10	99 Charleswood Dr
Zelmansky, Berta	Jan. 15/10	107 Thornway Ave
Tatarchuk, Lia	Jan. 14/10	
Sedley, Evelyn	Jan. 13/10	Private
Walsh, Thelma (Skye)	Jan. 15/10	
Oulitskaia, Sarah	Jan. 15/10	
Kur, Bunia	Jan. 16/10	11 Townsgate Dr
Muskat, Luba	Jan. 16/10	3830 Bathurst St
Zis, Isaak	Jan. 15/10	Private
Abitbol, Rebecca	Jan. 17/10	36 Blue Spruce Lane
Vaisman, Raissa	Jan. 17/10	205 Cummer Ave
Durbach, Sonia Ann	Jan. 17/10	1555 Finch Ave. E
Bespalay, Bronislava	Jan. 17/10	Private

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Shirley Fruitman	Jan 8/10	65 Skymark Drive
Florence Gordon	Jan 8/10	22 Bridgeford Street, South
Lily Kramer	Jan 10/10	645 Castlefield Avenue
Betty Goldman	Jan 12/10	30 Lippincott Street
Lorraine Lazarus	Jan 13/10	80 Antibes Drive
Eva Epstein	Jan 12/10	1101 Steeles Ave. West
Paul Marcoe	Jan 12/10	261 Robina Avenue
Simon Harris	Jan 12/10	65 Skymark Drive
Bertha Starkman	Jan 13/10	155 Millwood Road
Moshe Krieger	Jan 14/10	400 Walmer Road
Bernie Rosen	Jan 12/10	15 Barberry Place
Ruth Drubich	Jan 13/10	205 Cummer Avenue
Jason Cash	Jan 16/10	30 Greenfield Ave
Jean Lichman	Jan 14/10	12 Samuel Oster Avenue
Sophie Jacobs	Jan 16/10	650 Finch Avenue West

The family of the late
ADAM (KARL) SANDERS ז"ל
would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the support given during our recent bereavement and for the many donations made in his memory.
Your kindness has been a great source of comfort.
The Sanders Family

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Coast to Coast

Media marvel at Israel's Haiti reponse

According to Reports
By PAUL MICHAELS

The devastating earthquake in Haiti dominated the news last week. And on U.S. television networks, several news reports focused on the speed with which Israel – although 7,000 miles away from Haiti – managed to establish a sophisticated field hospital.

This story had special resonance in the United States, because, as intense as the American relief effort was, it had not managed to match the Israeli accomplishment, even as the number of Haitians in dire need of medical attention remained overwhelming.

For instance, on ABC World News (Jan. 18), anchor Diane Sawyer introduced a story by saying that Israel's medical unit had already become "legendary."

Sawyer interviewed Dr. Richard Besser, ABC's senior medical editor and an expert in emergency response.

"What do you make of this?" Sawyer asked.

Besser pointed to the contrast between the U.S. and Israeli response: "The timeline is very different," he said.

"The Israelis arrived here Friday night [Jan.15]. By Saturday morning they had set up a field hospital. The Americans were just getting started this morning [last Monday]. I can't understand that difference when Haiti is so close to our shore."

Sawyer and Besser remarked on the specialization within the Israeli field hospital: a surgical unit, intensive care units for children, a pediatric ward, a maternity ward and so on.

On Jan. 19, NBC Nightly News carried much the same report, with an additional focus on the high-tech nature of the hospital: X-rays and other diagnostic procedures could be digitized and transmitted to Israel – or anywhere else for that matter – for consultation. The medical technology was all in the interest of reaching the best and quickest decision for the patient.

With its quick reaction to the Haitian disaster, Israel provided the world with a model of emergency medical response.

* * *

What are the facts about Iran's nuclear weapons program?

In "Don't bomb Iran's hopes for change" (*Globe and Mail*, Jan. 9), Doug Saunders argued that Iran's nuclear program is slowing down and doesn't pose an immediate threat.

"Iran is close to a making a weapon the way an owner of an iron mine is close to making an automobile," he wrote.

Saunders added: "Their [nuclear] program is dropping away, probably because the [political] protests have created other priorities.

"Given this and other intelligence discoveries, the White House now believes it will be as long as three years before Iran is even capable of beginning the enrichment of its fuel into weapons-grade purity. Even then, under the most desirable of circumstances, even one weapon would take five or six additional years."

However, in "Iran's Path to the Bomb," published in the Jan. 14 *New York Review of Books* (a publication known for being anything but hawkish and alarmist on foreign affairs), nuclear physicist Jeremy Bernstein wrote that, depending on how the centrifuges are configured at its recently disclosed Qom nuclear site, Iran "could enrich enough uranium for two or more bombs a year."

Bernstein argued that the more immediate threat is at the main Natanz nuclear enrichment site where, given the technical procedure he outlines as possible, "the 1,700 kilograms of low-enriched uranium now available [there] could produce enough uranium 235 to make one bomb in as little as six months."

Bernstein's article is worth reading in full. It can be found at www.nybooks.com/articles/article-preview?article_id=23560.

* * *

Further to last week's column on British MP George Galloway, not to be overlooked is how Galloway's feverish anti-Jewish bigotry may well be a strong motivating factor in his pro-Palestinian crusade.

In a Dec. 28 piece for the *Scottish Daily Record* under the headline, "Dark Echoes of the Holocaust," Galloway bolstered a Swedish journalist's notorious blood-libel allegation (in the paper *Aftonbladet*) that Israel harvested organs from dead Palestinians, and then went on to compare Israeli doctors with infamous Nazi doctor Joseph Mengele. (Galloway wrote that these doctors were "playing mini-Mengele on Palestinian prisoners in Israel jails.")

In case anyone needed additional proof of Galloway's twisted, hateful mind, there it is.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

Winnipeg judge dies at age 76

WINNIPEG — Manitoba Provincial Court Judge Ron Myers was a leader in Winnipeg's theatre community and the legal profession. On Jan. 15, Myers died after suffering a heart attack, just two weeks after stepping down from 33 years on the bench.

For full story, please go to *cjnews.com*

BB in court dispute with Vancouver lodge members

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

B'nai Brith Canada (BBC) is embroiled in a legal dispute with members of a Jewish building society in Vancouver who are disputing the Toronto-based organization's efforts to take control of two large seniors residences.

"Historic members" of the Lions Gate B'nai B'rith Building Society say B'nai Brith Canada had no connection to Haro Park Centre and B'nai B'rith Manor, which were constructed locally with government money.

B'nai Brith, however, alleges that control over the properties falls to it as heir of B'nai Brith International (BBI), which it claims had jurisdiction over Vancouver B'nai Brith lodges and properties until it transferred them to the Canadian organization in 2008.

At the heart of the legal dispute is a question of who can appoint members to the Building Society, which operates the seniors residences. According to the Building Society's bylaws, its members are drawn from Lions Gate Lodge. The lodge has been dormant for years, but historic members are attempting to revitalize it. At the same time, B'nai Brith Canada has been operating on a parallel track with supporters in Vancouver to reconstitute the lodge. If successful, the BBC-supported lodge would be in a position to appoint members to the Building Society.

B'nai Brith Canada and Jack Chivo, a member of the Lions Gate board, petitioned the Supreme Court of British Columbia to stop a planned annual general meeting of the Building Society in early December. They claim the meeting was improperly constituted and that changing the Building Society's bylaws, as was proposed for the meeting, would jeopardize its funding.

Revolves around control of two seniors residences

"The primary funding of the Building Society, which allows it to continue to meet its objective of providing affordable senior's housing, is the British Columbia Housing Management Commission. Under the terms of the agreement of BCHMC, any bylaw change must obtain the prior written consent of BCHMC. This consent has not been obtained," states the B'nai Brith claim.

The five respondents to the petition, who are purported members of the Building Society board, reject the claim that B'nai Brith has any jurisdiction over the Building Society's affairs.

They state in court documents that Lions Gate Lodge was connected with "B'nai Brith USA" until 2008. The Building Society is a separate legal entity and unconnected to either the Canadian or American B'nai Brith organizations. It draws its members from the lodge.

The directors acknowledge that the Lions Gate Lodge is defunct and so no new members could be added to serve as a pool for the membership of the Building Society. As a result, they say "historic members" have control over the society and its assets.

They allege B'nai Brith has wrongly attempted to reconstitute the lodge, so as to get control of the building society.

"BBC, with its base in Toronto, has attempted to assert power and control of the society with no basis in the society's constitution, bylaws, any other rules or laws," state the respondents' court documents.

The documents assert the building society is an independent entity over which BBI never had control. "You cannot give what you do not have."

"B'nai Brith [Canada] did not provide any financial or other support to the [Building Society]. B'nai Brith did not contribute any funds or effort to the society obtaining any interest in the property owned by the society. All the funds and land were obtained from governments, some donations and mortgages on the properties... [Building Society] members were not required to and did not pay dues to B'nai Brith International, Canada or any other B'nai Brith organization."

The two properties at the heart of the dispute provide housing for low income seniors. Haro Park Centre is a 13-storey apartment tower with 68 suites and which also provides nursing care to 212 senior citizens. B'nai B'rith Manor is a 65-suite apartment building.

The Mark and Gail Appel Program in Holocaust and Antiracism Education at York University is pleased to present:

two lectures by ANTHONY JULIUS

Anthony Julius is an eminent British lawyer, academic, and public intellectual, who successfully defended historian Deborah Lipstadt against Holocaust denier David Irving. Julius also acted for Princess Diana.

A visiting professor at Birkbeck College, University of London, Julius participated in the Metropolitan Police Race and Faith Inquiry and has actively opposed boycotts of Israel. His first book was T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form. *His newest book,* Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England, *will be available for signing at the lectures.*

HOLOCAUST DENIAL, WHAT'S THE POINT?
Saturday, 13 February, 8:00 pm

HOW CAN GOOD LITERATURE BE BAD FOR THE JEWS?
Sunday, 14 February, 2:30 pm

Both sessions will take place in the Founders College Assembly Hall (152 Founders College), York University, Keele Campus. The sessions are open to the public free of charge. Parking is available nearby.

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For information, contact Bridget Newson (tfif2@yorku.ca or 416 736-5695).
www.yorku.ca/tfif

THE SPEAKERS ACTION GROUP AND BETH TZEDEC MEN'S CLUB

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DR. TAWFIK HAMID
FORMER MUSLIM EXTREMIST
Tuesday, February 9, 8PM
Beth Tzedec Congregation
1700 Bathurst St.

Prominent Islamic intellectual and reformer, Dr. Tawfik Hamid is Senior Fellow and Chair for the Study of Islamic Radicalism at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, DC. Dr. Hamid was a medical student in Cairo when he was persuaded to join the jihadist movement. Now a leading authority on the mindset of the jihadi, he is frequently interviewed on CNN, Fox News, and published in international media. He has been guest speaker to the US Congress, European Parliament, and many international security and counter-terrorism organizations. Dr. Hamid is author of Inside *Jihad: Understanding and Confronting Radical Islam.*

MODERATOR: Jonathan Kay, Managing Editor, *Comment*, National Post

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THE SPEAKERS ACTION GROUP

Coast to Coast

Wallenberg Day program focuses on Iranian threat

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — The CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee says that if we have learned anything from history, it is that in the absence of taking positive and meaningful action to confront and defeat evil, we become enablers.

"We don't have the luxury of saying that it doesn't matter to us," Shimon Fogel told students at the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's fourth annual Raoul Wallenberg Day Student Conference, which is held in conjunction with the Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

"Everything in the world today matters. Whatever happens in the world, it is just a matter of time before it reaches Winnipeg, Halifax and London, England," Fogel said.

Each year, the conference focuses on a different issue. "Previously, we have learned about world hot spots Darfur and Afghanistan. This year, our focus was on Iran and the threat that Iran poses to Israel and the world," said Shelley Faintuch, the federation's community relations director, who was one of the conference organizers.

The conference speakers included the Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, who spoke about Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust; Sayeh Hassan, an Iranian-born pro-democracy activist who practises law in Toronto, and Daniel Ashrafi, an Iranian-born Jew living in Winnipeg who was an eyewitness to the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Manitoba Conservative MP James Bezan briefed the students on the federal government's position on Iran, and Manitoba Liberal MP Anita Neville introduced Cotler.

Shimon Fogel

Fogel outlined the Iranian regime's many sins, including its suppression of political opponents; the fostering and funding of Islamic terror throughout the Middle East, and the leadership's reported efforts to develop nuclear weapons – with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's stated goal of "wiping Israel off the map."

Iran has put the lie to the accepted wisdom over the past few decades that showing tolerance and encouraging mutual respect get results, Fogel said. "It has become a matter of win or lose."

However, he added, the Iranian regime is shaky and showing signs of desperation.

One of the fruits of this year's Wallenberg conference is a petition signed by Gray Academy and other students (from St. John's-Ravenscourt School and Grant Park High School, who accepted Gray Academy students' invitation to participate) asking that the Canadian government hold Iran's leadership accountable for its oppressive actions in Iran and its actions abroad.

The students were encouraged to send letters to MPs demanding that Canada put Iran's Revolutionary Guard on the government's list of terrorist organizations.

Fogel also encouraged the students to use social networking contacts to get the word out about Iran. "You have an edge on older people," he said, "because you understand the power of the new media [such as Facebook and Twitter].

"You can each make a huge difference," he added.

Fogel spoke about Wallenberg's courage. "Wallenberg kept fighting to save Hungarian Jews right up until his own last day of freedom," he said. (Wallenberg disappeared in January 1945 and is presumed to have died in a Soviet prison.) "His example inspired other diplomats in wartime Hungary to issue visas to Jews and save their lives."

On a personal note, Fogel recalled that his Hungarian-born parents – who are Holocaust survivors – went back to Hungary several years ago.

"They came back quite depressed," Fogel said. "They had gone back to my mother's home village and attempted to visit her old house. The resident thought she wanted to reclaim the house, and everyone in the village shunned my parents.

"What brightened their mood was Canada's decision at that time to make Wallenberg an honorary citizen of Canada," he said. "Although my parents hadn't known Wallenberg, the fact that someone was prepared to stand up against oppression and take risks restored their faith in humanity."

One student asked Fogel why Saudi Arabia is given a free pass as a human rights violator. Fogel replied that the difference between Iran and Saudi Arabia is that the latter is engaged with other countries, while Iran flagrantly thumbs its nose at the world.

Fogel said he's perplexed that "women's groups throughout North America aren't up in arms about the lack of women's rights in Saudi Arabia."

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Iranian lawyer speaks at Wallenberg conference

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Sayeh Hassan, an Iranian pro-democracy activist and criminal lawyer living in Toronto, told a student conference that "Iranian people are no longer satisfied with reforming [Iran's] existing Islamic regime, but want regime change entirely."

She said that the media often try to paint Mir Hossein Mousavi, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rival, as a "reformer" who is in favour of regime change, but that's not the case.

Sayeh Hassan
[R. Spivak photo]

Hassan, 29, said that all Iranian presidential candidates, including Mousavi, were "hand-picked" by the Guardian Council and the Supreme Leader of Iran, and would not have been approved if they had been advocating for "real change in Iran."

Hassan spoke at the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's fourth annual Raoul Wallenberg Day Student Conference, which is held in conjunction with the Gray Academy of Jewish Education.

If he were to come to power in place of Ahmadinejad, "Mousavi will just extend the life of the Islamic regime, but not lead to real reform," and the formation of a democratic republic of Iran, Hassan said.

Mousavi was the prime minister of Iran "when 10,000 political prisoners were summarily executed in the summer of 1988," she added.

Hassan told *The CJN* that as a result of openly calling for Iranian regime change in Canada, and writing on her blog, shiro-khorshid-forever, at www.shiro-khorshid-forever.blogspot.com, she has "received a lot of threatening anonymous e-mail from people associated with the Iranian regime." The writers say, "If you don't shut up, we'll shut you up."

Hassan added that it's difficult for journalists reporting from Iran to speak about the desire for regime change, as the reporter could "be thrown out" of the country.

Hassan, who left Iran with her family to live in Turkey when she was seven, because her father was "a political activist who had to leave," said that it "was good I left Iran, otherwise I'd be in prison now."

From her contact with activists in Iran and watching YouTube videos, Hassan said it's clear that people are directly "attacking the foundation of the Islamic regime."

She said that for the first time in Iranian universities, students have raised Iran's current flag, without the Islamic regime sign in the middle, adding that activists in some Iranian cities have also raised the pre-Revolutionary green, white and red Iranian flag, which has the symbol of a lion and sun in the middle.

Hassan said that the appearance of the lion and sun flag indicates people are harking back to days when Iran wasn't controlled by an Islamic regime.

She added that "religious minorities including Baha'is, Christians and Jews are systematically oppressed and abused by the Islamic regime."

She told *The CJN* that there are many different political parties and groups abroad that could form a democratic government in Iran, as well as numerous monarchist groups, Communist groups and the People's Mujahedin of Iran, an Islamic socialist organization that advocates the overthrow of the Islamic Republic. "The Shah's son [son of former Shah of Iran] is one of the opposition abroad," Hassan said.

"If there is a revolution and people are able to participate in a free and democratic election, a secular and democratic leader may rise from inside Iran. That would be impossible at this point, because any opposition will be jailed and eliminated immediately," she added

Hassan said it's "terrible" that U.S. President Barack Obama's is dialoguing with Iran. "By saying, 'Let's have a dialogue,' he is accepting the legitimacy of the regime."

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Adath Israel Congregation

Yifat Bitton
The Challenges Facing the Sephardic Community In Israel Today

Professor Yifat Bitton is a leading legal activist and founder and current co-chair of Tmura Center – The Israeli Anti-discrimination Center. An expert in antidiscrimination law and utilizing civil cases and private law for nation-wide social change, Bitton is Associate Professor at the School of Management Law School in Israel. A Yale Law School alumnae with a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Bitton has been visiting researcher at Harvard University Law School. Professor Bitton is a New Israel Fund board member and co-founder of several civil society organizations in Israel.

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דאָ, אין טאָראָנטאָ, מיט אַ פּאָר וואָכן צוריק, האָט די "אָריינט סעקולאָר הומאַניסט קאָנגרעגיישאַן" געפֿיערט די אינסטאַלירונג פֿון זייער נייעם ראַביי, קערען לעווי.

איך געדענק אַ צייט וען וועלטלעכע יידן האָבן זיך נישט פֿאַרנומען מיט רבנים און רבנים האָבן נישט אָנגעפֿירט מיט וועלטלעכע אָרגאַניזאַציעס. אָריינט און אָנדערע הומאַניסטישע, וועלטלעכע קאָנגרעגאַציעס זענען פֿאַרבונדען מיט אַ באַוועגונג וואָס איז טעקיף אויך אין אַמעריקע, אייראָפּע און ישׂראל.

די אָלטע וועלטלעכע באַוועגונגען–ארבעטער-רינג, פֿאַרבאַנד, באַראַקאָוו, לינקע און רעכטע פּועלי ציון, און אַרדן– סאַציאַליסטן, קאָמוניסטן און ציוניסטן– זענען באַשטאַנען פֿון אַ ראַדיקאַלער יוגנט וואָס האָט זיך, אין מערסטן, אָפּגעזאָגט פֿון די פֿאַרמען פֿון דעם אַלט יידישן לעבן מיט אָלע אירע וויכטיקסטע דינים און מנהגים און דעם איבערגאַמירלעכן גלויבן. זייער פֿאָקוס איז געווען וועלטלעך– צו בויען אַ שענערע בעסערע וועלט דאָ–אין קאַנאַדע. אָדער ישׂראל. אָם די יונגע שטאָלצע, יידן האָבן געבויט אַ פּרעסע, שולעס פֿאַר זייערע קינדער, ביבליאָטעקן, דראַמע- גרופּעס. זיי האָבן זיך געפֿרײַט אין זייער פּרטיקדיקן צו פּיזערן זייער יידישקײט אָן רבנים און סידורים. זיי האָבן אַרויסגעקוקט צו חיים זשיטלאָווסקין, זרובבל, דובנאָוו, אחד העם, און אימשע גאָלדבערג ווי די דרשנים וואָס האָבן געשטאַלטיקט זייער יידישקײט.

אָבער די בענקשאַפֿט פֿאַר אַ רעליגיעזן לעבן איז נישט אין גאַנצן אויסגעלאָשן געוואָרן אין די וועלטלעכע באַוועגונגען. ד"ר חיים זשיטלאָווסקי, דער לערער פֿון וועלטלעכקײט, האָט נאָך באַמערקט אין די ערשטע יאָרן פֿון צוואַנציקסטן יאָרהונדערט, "אין דער אמתן אָבער געפֿינען מיר אין יעדער רעליגיע אַ סך עלעמענטן, ריין מענטשלעכע, וואָס קענען בלײַבן באַשטײַן אָפֿילו דעמאָלט, וען דער פֿרײַער גדאַנק זאָל האָבן אינגאַנצן אויסגעברענט פֿון זיי אָלע שפּורן פֿון אַ יענער וועלט און פֿון אַן איבערנאַטירלעכן גלויבן....רעליגיעז אויסלעבן זיך אין געפֿילן פֿון הייליקײט און נשמהדיקײט קאָנען אָפֿט די עקסטרעמסטע מאַניפֿעסטאַציעס פֿון די קאָנסעקווענטסטע אַטעיסטן... למשל וען ס'קומט צו אַ לוויה, אָדער אַ חתונה.

און ניט נאָר שטימונגען פֿון הייליקן טרויער לעבן אויבער ראַדיקאַלע אַטעיסטן און מאַטעריאַליסטן. אויך די געפֿילן פֿון הילקער פֿרײַד, פֿון הילקע יום-טוב-געפֿילן, מיט די פּאָסיקע צערעמאָניעס און פֿרייד-קלאָנגען, מיט זייערע ריין-רעליגיעזן טעמבער, קאָן מען באַמערקן, לאָז זאָגן,-אין די ימים-טובים פֿון אַ וועלטער עס איז ראַדיקאַלער באַוועגונג."

די וועלטלעכע, יידישע ארבעטער באַוועגונגען, פֿון אָלע אידעאָלאָגישע שטראָמען, וואָס האָבן אַזוי פֿיל בייגעשטײַערט צו דער אַנטוויקלונג פֿון דער מאָדערנער יידישקײט, אָנצוד שטײַען זיי אויף הינערנע פֿיסלעך. די מיטגלידער זענען אָלט אין זייערע קינדער האָבן איבערגענומען די מיטל-קלאָס וועדסן: אַ שול, טעמפּל אָדער קאָנגרעגאַציע. אין אָלע די אינסטיטוציעס געפֿינען זיך רבנים. די אָריינט סעקולאָר הומאַניסט קאָנגרעגיישאַן מיט זייער ראַביי, קאַרען לעווי, זענען צווישן די יורשים פֿון דער אָלטער וועלטלעכער באַוועגונג. זיי גיינן אָן מיט אַ וועלטלעכער, הומאַניסטישער פֿילאָזאָפֿיע וואָס אַנערקענט אַז מע קען גיין אין וועלטלעכע וועגן און נוצן אָלטע פֿאַרמען צו אויסצודרוקן איבעריק-מענטשלעכע שטרעבונגען און האָפֿענונגען. קערען לעווי זאָגט אַז זי איז נישט אַ פּסק געבער נאָר אַ לערער און אַ וועגווײַזער וואָס ארבעט בשותפֿות מיט איר קאָנגרעגאַציע.

אויב איר האָט נעדענקען וועגן אומדער וויכל לאָט וויסן. שרײַבט דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליץ פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

Hillels raise funds, awareness for Haiti

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Judy Schwartz, the director of the Jewish Student Association at McMaster University, knows why she needs to help people in Haiti.

"It is commanded of us," she said. "From the Babylonian Talmud… 'We sustain the non-Jewish poor with the Jewish poor.'"

Schwartz's organization is one of several Canadian Hillels that have started raising funds and awareness about the recent earthquake in Haiti, which left hundreds of thousands homeless, injured or dead.

McMaster's Jewish Student Association has started collecting donations for the country and will partner with the African Caribbean Association to raise more money.

"The collections are starting," Schwartz said. "We have a responsibility as humans and as Jews to do the best for the world that we can."

The JSA would also like to plan a karaoke night at McMaster, in which students would pay to sing, with the money going to relief efforts in Haiti.

Hillel of Greater Toronto will also be taking part in relief efforts. It's planning a coffee house event featuring the Kol Neshama choir. Proceeds will go toward efforts in Haiti, said Joel Pearl, program associate for Hillel at York, although Pearl doesn't yet know which charity Hillel will give the money to.

"[The event is] the number 1 thing at our table," he said, adding that Hillel is still working out details for the event.

For Pearl, fundraising is about more than just money. It's about awareness.

"It's important for students to understand what's happening," he said. "It's giving them an opportunity to learn and grow and understand what happens outside the bubble that is their campus and home life," he said.

Margot Bychutsky of Hillel at York, agrees.

"You're so far away, it's not like you can jump on a plane and go there and help. We may not be able to rebuild houses physically. By holding events, we can help," she said.

Hillel at the University of Ottawa took part in a coffee house event held at Carleton University last Thursday. The coffee house, which included musical performances, was organized by the Carleton's International Student Centre to raise money for Haiti relief.

It raised about $500 for the Red Cross, which will be matched by the Carleton University Student Association.

For Jennifer Hadad, student president for Hillel at U of O, fundraising efforts are a way to unite students in Ottawa.

"It's something that all student clubs are coming together to support," she said. "It shows that… we're all on this Earth together and we can have sympathy for [people in need] even though they're so far away."

Students can donate to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Haiti relief fund through Hillel of Greater Toronto's website at www.hilleltoronto.org.

Ethnic media on the rise, panellists say

By MICHELLE BITRAN
Special to The CJN

As mainstream print media face a worldwide crisis, multicultural and multilingual media in Canada have been growing steadily along with the country's immigrant population, speakers said at the University of Toronto last week.

The Canadian Journalism Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting excellence in journalism, held a forum called The Rise of Ethnic Media, at the U of T's Innis Town Hall last Tuesday evening.

The four panellists were Lori Abittan, president and C.E.O. of Multimedia Nova Corporation, Shirley Chan, managing editor of the magazine and supplement section of *Ming Pao Daily News*, Jagdish Grewal, editor-in-chief of *Punjabi Post*, and Madeline Ziniak, national vice-president of OMNI television. Noëlle Richardson, chief diversity officer of the Ontario Public Service, moderated the panel.

"I'm proud of the word ethnic," Ziniak said, adding that identifying with one's culture and language helps raise self-esteem. Ziniak, who helped bring programming in more than 15 languages to OMNI1, believes that ethnicity is a main feature of Canadian culture.

At the panel, Abittan emphasized the importance of multilingual media in assisting new immigrants to integrate into Canadian culture.

Abittan branded the Canadian cultural mosaic as the "new mainstream." Her company and its divisions produce cultural publications, create ethnoculturally targeted marketing and run a multilingual job board.

A major issue surrounding ethnic media in Canada, which includes publications like *The CJN*, is whether or not they cover too little local news and too much homeland news. Grewal admitted that *Punjabi Post*, the first daily Punjabi language paper outside India, often focuses on Indian news. He added that he hosts a Punjabi language radio show that deals solely with Canadian issues and politics in order to keep his community informed.

"It is our responsibility to continue cross-cultural media efforts," Ziniak said, adding that it is the audiences who request homeland news as opposed to Canadian news. Ziniak recognizes the importance of homeland news, but believes that culturally informed local news is of great use to new Canadians as well.

Ziniak also said that, as newsrooms begin to reflect the cultural demographics of Canadian society, coverage of Canadian and world news will become stronger and more relevant to immigrant communities.

Abittan believes in the importance of informing the immigrant population of Canada's history.

"How can we take part in Canadian society if we don't know where Canada has been and where Canada is going?" she asked. Her company is preparing to distribute a series on Canadian history to many of their cultural publications.

The future of ethnic media in Canada depends largely on new waves of immigrants and interest from second- and third-generation Canadians, said Chan of the *Ming Pao Daily News*.

Chan said the *Daily News*, which has a readership of more than 275,000 for its eastern edition alone, has begun to remedy this concern with outreach to Chinese-Canadian youth. Their Little Reporter program teaches children to write news articles in Chinese. So far, the program has been a success.

"We feel optimistic about the future," Chan said.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Businessman aims to help build African middle class

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

For Tal Dehtiar, Africa is about more than just AIDS, poverty and death.

It's about potential.

Dehtiar saw this potential when he helped found MBA's Without Borders (MWB), a not-for-profit group that matches MBAs with small businesses in developing countries.

It was MWB that lured him to Kenya about four years ago. He instantly fell in love.

"I just loved the people, I loved the place, but I was sick and tired of everybody talking about it like everybody's starving or like everybody has AIDS," he said. "[Africa] isn't as bad and scary as everyone says it is."

When in Africa, Dehtiar can't ignore the poverty, but it isn't all he sees.

"There are pockets of... war and starvation, but maybe if we start talking positively, we'll give [the people of Africa] hope."

Dehtiar, 29, started MWB when he was 25, after getting his MBA at McMaster University.

"I was kind of not feeling... it in terms of where I was going. The master's of business focused on Bay Street, I was interested in international development," he said.

This led him to launch MWB with a friend.

Since then, the group, which is now part of a larger NGO, has helped HIV-positive women make and sell handbags in Swaziland, has started a radio show in Singapore and has created an agri-business in Belize that supports rural communities.

Through the non-profit, Dehtiar learned the power of business. But he also learned that he wanted to do something outside the charity sector.

"I knew the charity world wasn't where I wanted to be," he said. "I've seen so much charity money wasted away on things that don't make sense."

Around May 2009, Dehtiar left MWB to start Oliberté Footwear, a shoe company that makes its products entirely in Africa. His goal is to help build the middle class in Africa through the company.

"In Africa, there are no small businesses. If you want to change an economy and the poverty in Africa, you need to build up the middle class," he said. "I love business, that's the truth. I love what business can do if used in the right way."

Oliberté uses leather from Ethiopia and will use rubber from Liberia. Right now, Dehtiar's working with three factories in Ethiopia, and hopes to reach other countries in the next few years. He's selling his shoes online and is starting to sell through some stores in North America.

Through his new company, Dehtiar is trying to prove

While Tal Dehtiar's friends travelled to Europe after high school, the founder of Oliberté Footwear decided to visit Central America and Africa instead.

that Africans can succeed if given the right tools.

"There's a lot more poverty, but these people don't want handouts, they just want to have the same life we have. Maybe they want to travel, maybe they want to have kids. They just don't have the same opportunities in terms of jobs," he said. "They want to work, but there's not enough decent jobs."

When working with factories in Africa, Dehtiar puts pressure on the employers to pay decent wages, treat women equally and give daily lunch breaks.

"We have some strict policies. If we're going to do this, we'll do this the right way," he said.

Dehtiar's love of business came from his parents, who have run a small furniture store for more than 25 years.

"I've seen first-hand what small businesses can do," he said, adding that his parents hired dozens of employees over the years.

"All these people... now have jobs because two immigrants decided to say, 'Hey, we're going to start a business.'"

Oliberté and MWB was also influenced by Dehtiar's love of travel.

When he was 17, most of Dehtiar's friends were talking about touring Europe, but he was always interested in developing countries.

"When [my friends] thought of travel, they thought Europe. It wasn't for me. I said, 'Europe's not going anywhere, but these developing countries are changing at such a fast pace,'" he said.

His first trip was to Belize in Central America. While in university, he also studied for four months in Singapore. Since then, he's helped build tree nurseries in Belize, has sold sandwiches on a beach in Chile and has backpacked through Kenya.

One of his favourite parts of travelling is finding Jewish communities.

"In [some] countries, I'm the first Jewish person most of these people have ever met, whether in Pakistan or... Liberia, they're not used to seeing a Jewish guy on his own," he said. "I look for the Jewish community everywhere I go."

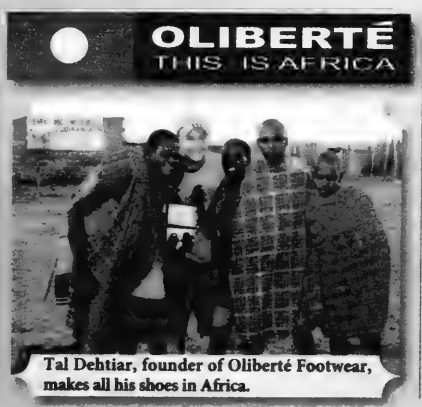
While travelling alone in Zimbabwe, Dehtiar found the local synagogue.

"I'm not by any means a religious person, but I do love the idea that there are Jewish people all over the place," he said. "It's a nice little safe haven."

For Dehtiar, Jewish values are connected with his work in Africa.

"There's a lot of things as a Jewish person that you can really give. You've seen what your people have gone through and you see there's a lot of people in need," he said.

For more information, visit www.oliberte.com.



Tal Dehtiar, founder of Oliberté Footwear, makes all his shoes in Africa.

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U.S. proposes direct, but low-level Mideast talks

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JERUSALEM — President Mahmoud Abbas is studying a U.S. proposal for talks between the Palestinians and Israel at a level below full-scale negotiations between their leaders, a Palestinian official said on Monday.

The proposal is U.S. Middle East peace envoy George Mitchell's latest idea to bring about a resumption of peace talks that have been frozen for 13 months.

Palestinian sources familiar with Mitchell's weekend diplomacy said he had proposed confidence-building measures that would improve conditions in the Palestinian territories.

Israeli officials – noting that on Sunday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had welcomed unspecified "new ideas" for talks from Mitchell – said their government stood ready to take part in U.S.-mediated discussions with Palestinian officials.

The confidence-building steps cited by Palestinians as areas they would be keen to discuss included the transfer of authority from the Israeli army to the Palestinians in more of the West Bank's territory, the removal of some Israeli checkpoints and the release of a number of Palestinian prisoners.

These measures would be discussed at a meeting of senior ministers from each side, but not the top leaders.

Israeli political sources said they were not aware of specific secondary issues, such as prisoners, that might be discussed with the Palestinians. They spoke rather of talks at a ministerial or lower level that would look at narrowing differences over "core issues" in suspended peace negotiations.

Core issues include the future borders of a Palestinian state, the status of Jerusalem and the fate of Palestinian refugees.

A year of U.S. diplomatic effort has so far failed to relaunch talks aimed at ending the decades-old conflict through a peace treaty agreeing to the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

U.S. Mideast envoy Geroge Mitchell met this week in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"Holding a low-level meeting with the Israelis that tackles issues related to the daily life of Palestinians will not be an alternative to political negotiations," said the Palestinian official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Abbas, who is facing U.S. pressure to return to peace talks, would discuss Mitchell's ideas with Arab leaders over the coming days "so that the Palestinian position will be backed by the Arabs," the official said.

Netanyahu said on Sunday he had heard "some interesting ideas [from Mitchell] for renewing the [peace] process.

"I also expressed my hope that these new ideas will allow for the renewal of the process. Certainly, if the Palestinians express a similar readiness, then we will find ourselves in a diplomatic process," Netanyahu said.

A spokesperson for Netanyahu declined to comment Monday on the content of discussions with Mitchell.

The Palestinian official said Abbas would stick to his insistence on a total halt to Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank, including east Jerusalem, before any resumption of full peace talks. He has rejected a 10-month, partial Israeli freeze announced in November as insufficient.

U.S. President Barack Obama said in an interview published last week that he had underestimated the difficulty of resolving the Middle East conflict and had set his expectations too high in his first year.

In related developments, Deputy Defence Minister Matan Vilnai said on Sunday said that while Israel was faced with military threats on all sides, it has strategically chosen to make every effort to avoid armed conflict with its enemies.

Vilnai said that Israel has its eyes on Hezbollah, who it believes is rearming in violation of a United Nations resolution, and is ready to deal with any threat.

Northern Commander Maj.-Gen. Gadi Eizenkot earlier Sunday said there was no truth to reports of imminent conflict between Israel and Lebanon, which he said represented a "virtual escalation" that has no basis in reality.

Eizenkot was referring to remarks made Saturday by minister without portfolio Yossi Peled, who said that Israel "can't sleep easy" with respect to its shared border with Lebanon and also to reports in Arab media that Israel is preparing to launch an attack.

Peled emphasized that "we're in for another round in the north, but I don't know when," with the first round being the 34 days of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006.

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon on Sunday told the United Nations envoy to Lebanon that Israel views the flow of weapons from Iran and Syria to Hezbollah as the greatest threat to the northern border.

Hours after Peled said that a military conflict between Israel and the Lebanese militia Hezbollah was inevitable, Netanyahu announced on Saturday that Israel has no intention of carrying out an offensive against Lebanon.

"The State of Israel is not looking for any kind of confrontation with Lebanon," Netanyahu said in a statement released by his office. "Israel seeks peace with all of its neighbours."

But, according to Army Radio, Eizenkot said that "[Hezbollah chief Hassan] Nasrallah would be happy to return to the days prior to July 2006, before the Second Lebanon War, when everything was intact.

"The group hasn't executed an attack since the Second Lebanon War," he added. "But Hezbollah is getting stronger and we are preparing for all options in order to be able to act effectively."

Anti-Semitism up dramatically in 2009, report says

JTA

JERUSALEM — Anti-Semitic incidents increased dramatically around the world and particularly in western Europe during 2009, according to a new annual report.

The report by the Coordination Forum for Countering Anti-Semitism, was unveiled Sunday by the chair of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky, ahead of the International Day against Fascism and Anti-Semitism and the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, observed on Jan. 27.

The joint report conducted by the Agency and Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs found that there were more anti-Semitic incidents recorded during the first three months of 2009 than during the entire previous year. The report says this was caused by Israel's invasion of Gaza last winter.

France recorded the largest increase, with 631 anti-Semitic incidents in the first half of 2009, compared with 474 in all of 2008, and Britain came in second with more than 600 incidents.

The incidents were also notable for being more serious, according to the report, with hundreds being considered extremely violent. There were eight murders attributed to anti-Semitism.

A poll by the University of Bielefeld in Germany found that 42 per cent of those interviewed agreed that "Jews exploit the past to extort money." Poland and Spain were the countries with the highest percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement,

Israel's cabinet decided at its regular meeting on Sunday to establish a team to recommend ways to step up the struggle against anti-Semitism around the world and to strengthen co-ordination between government bodies, research institutes and organizations that deal with the issue.The team will present its recommendations to the cabinet within 120 days.

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IDF sets up Haiti link

An Israel Defence Forces team in Haiti has set up a satellite-based communications system. The $2-million system is one of the area's main means of communications, according to a report in the Israeli business daily *Globes*. The system enabled doctors at Israel's field hospital in Port-au-Prince to conduct surgery using video conferencing with surgeons at Israeli hospitals. Communications lines in Haiti were destroyed in the devastating earthquake on Jan. 12. Journalists from around the world have used the system to file stories, and members of the Israeli delegation have been able to call home. A survivor pulled from the rubble after six days also was able to call her mother using the system.

More arrests in mosque arson

Israeli police arrested two more teens in connection with last month's torching of a Palestinian mosque. The further arrests bring to eight the number of people who have been arrested in the attack.

Falash Mora coming to Israel

Some 150 Ethiopians claiming Jewish links came to Israel last week, the first groups to immigrate in more than a year. Eighty-one Ethiopians, known as Falash Mora, landed at Ben-Gurion International Airport early in the morning on Jan. 18, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel. Another 63 Ethiopians were scheduled to arrive this week. The Ethiopians claim to be the descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity generations ago. Representatives of Israel's Interior Ministry and Jewish Agency emissaries have been in Ethiopia in recent months examining the eligibility of members of the Falash Mora community to immigrate to Israel, according to criteria set by the Interior Ministry. Some 600 members of the community have received permission to immigrate. The Jewish Agency estimates that another 2,000 will receive permission during 2010. Most of the new immigrants have relatives who came to Israel in recent years.

Elton John returning to Israel

British singer Elton John will perform in Israel for the first time in nearly two decades. The single performance set for June 17 was announced last week. John last appeared in Israel in 1993. Landing in Israel on the day of a concert, he was swarmed by media and left without performing. He was persuaded to return and perform the next day. He first performed in Tel Aviv in 1979.

Israel-Palestinian conflict major Christian challenge: Vatican

JTA

ROME — Two days after Pope Benedict XVI's visit to a Rome synagogue, the Vatican issued a document citing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the main challenges facing Christians in the Middle East.

The 30-page document released last week also cited Muslim extremism as a major challenge.

"Several conflicts in the Middle East have arisen as a result of the main point of global attention, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," the document said.

The document contains the guidelines for an assembly of Catholic bishops from the Middle East to be held at the Vatican in October.

"Political conflicts in the region have a direct influence on the lives of Christians, both as citizens and as Christians," the document said, as part of a lengthy discussion of issues facing Arab-Christian communities and their relationships with local governments, as well as with Jews and Muslims.

"The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories makes daily life difficult with regard to freedom of movement, the economy and religious life," the document said, adding that "certain Christian fundamentalist theologies use sacred scripture to justify Israel's occupation of Palestine, making the position of Christian Arabs even more sensitive."

Christians living in Muslim countries face specific challenges, according to the document.

"Muslims frequently mix religion and politics, putting Christians in a precarious situation of being considered as non-citizens," it said. "Religious freedom and freedom of conscience are foreign to a Muslim mentality."

With the Internet, Islamic fundamentalist groups have become widespread. And, "with the rise of Islamism," the document added, "incidents against Christians are increasing almost everywhere."

During the visit to the synagogue last week, the Pope said Church authorities played an active role in saving Jews during the Holocaust, though "often hidden and discreet."

Italian Jewish leaders had welcomed the Pope to Rome's main synagogue for a visit they said would help strengthen relations between Jews and Catholics.

"Despite a dramatic history, the unresolved problems and the misunderstandings, it is our shared visions and common goals that should be given pride of place," Rome's Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni told a packed sanctuary during the visit. "The image of respect and friendship that emanates from this encounter must be an example for all those who are watching."

In the weeks before the visit, Jewish-Catholic relations were strained by the Pope's decision to move World War II-era Pope Pius XII closer to sainthood. Critics accuse Pius of having turned a blind eye to Jewish suffering in the Shoah.

The president of the Italian Rabbinical Assembly boycotted the papal synagogue visit in protest.

In his speech, Rome Jewish Community president Riccardo Pacifici renewed calls for the Vatican to open its secret wartime archives to clarify the Pius issue. The Pope did not mention Pius by name, but recalling the horrors of the Holocaust, he praised Catholic individuals for saving Jewish lives. Pope Benedict, 82, was applauded repeatedly during his speech.

Memory of the Holocaust, he said, "compels us to strengthen the bonds that unite us so that our mutual understanding, respect and acceptance may always increase."

Benedict repeated the prayers for forgiveness for Catholic anti-Semitism made by his predecessor, Pope John Paul II.

The visit was only the second time a pope had visited the synagogue. John Paul II's visit in 1986 was a milestone in Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Four arrested for torching Greek synagogue

JTA

ATHENS — Four men have been arrested in connection with two arson attacks on a synagogue on the island of Crete.

Two of the men in Greek police custody are British, one is American and one is Greek. They are aged 23 and 33 and have not been named.

The four are being held in the coastal town of Hania, where the Etz Hayyim synagogue is located. Police said they are all being held on charges of arson.

The men work as bouncers and waiters at local clubs, according to police.

Asked why they committed the crime, the accused reportedly said it was because they do not like Jews. The Greek man was arrested first, at which point he confessed and gave the names of the others.

The first attack occurred on Jan. 5, but it was the second attack on Jan. 16 that caused extensive damage to the synagogue's interior, archive material and technical equipment.

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

Passover Supplement,
The Canadian Jewish News
1500 Don Mills Rd. Suite 205
Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4

Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.

Submissions can not be returned.

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Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selctions based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

Evolution of International Holocaust Day reflects changing times

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

On the same day this week, Israeli President Shimon Peres was scheduled to address the German parliament and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel was slated to appear before a special session of the Italian Chamber of Deputies in Rome.

The timing is not coincidental.

The events are focal points of international Holocaust Memorial Day, an annual observance on the anniversary of the Soviet army's Jan. 27, 1945 liberation of Auschwitz, which is marked now by the United Nations and more than two dozen individual countries.

Each year, hundreds of events take place on or near that date. Britain, Italy and Germany have particularly extensive programs.

"There is a great sensitivity to this theme on both the local and institutional levels," said Alessandro Ruben, a Jewish Italian member of parliament in Italy, where Holocaust Memorial Day has been marked since 2001. "Every year there are more and more events connected with it, including many, many educational initiatives in schools."

The nature of the commemorations is a reflection of the times, too.

While most Holocaust Memorial Day initiatives are linked directly to the memory and impact of the Nazi genocide against the Jews, there is increasing emphasis on what the experience of the Holocaust can teach in the face of other genocides and persecution, such as those in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Darfur. World War II-era persecution of Roma (Gypsies) and gays also is examined.

Rabbi Andrew Baker, the American Jewish Committee's director of international Jewish affairs, said the shift in focus is to be expected.

"For Jews," he said, the Holocaust "was a unique and unprecedented tragedy. But national and international commemoration events by their nature also stress the universal lessons that should be drawn from the event. As survivors and other eyewitnesses pass from our midst, those universal expressions naturally grow larger."

At the same time, pro-Palestinian groups are trying to transform the international day of remembrance into an opportunity to criticize Israel.

Last year, for example, to protest Israel's military operation against Hamas in the Gaza Strip, a British Muslim organization boycotted events in Britain, and the local government in Barcelona canceled a public candlelighting as part of the Holocaust Day commemoration.

"Marking the Jewish Holocaust while a Palestinian Holocaust is taking place is not right," said a statement by an official, described as a representative of Barcelona City Hall, quoted in the *La Vanguardia* newspaper.

The move drew an outraged response from Britain's Board of Deputies, the body that represents British Jews.

"The conflict between Israel and Hamas should have absolutely no bearing on a day which represents the global fight against hatred," board spokesperson Mark Frazer said.

"Apart from the obvious flawed logic in making the decision, this is an affront to all Holocaust survivors and to the memory of the millions of victims. This move should draw criticism in the strongest terms from all parts of the Spanish government."

Though Germany has marked a Holocaust memorial day on Jan. 27 since 1996, the impetus for the observance in most countries came from a landmark Holocaust education forum that took place in Stockholm in 2000, a decade after the fall of Communism enabled an uncensored exploration of history. In most Communist states, Jewish issues had been suppressed and study or commemoration of the Shoah had been limited.

At the Stockholm Forum, leaders from 46 countries pledged to promote education and research about the Holocaust, and to "encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance."

Most participating countries chose Jan. 27, given the importance of Auschwitz as a symbol of the Holocaust, and the UN General Assembly in 2005 designated the date as an International Day of Commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust.

But a number of countries chose dates that reflected Holocaust events on their own territory.

In Poland, for example, it's April 19, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Romania chose Oct. 9, the date when deportations of Jews by the Nazi-allied Romanian government began in 1941.

The institution of Holocaust Memorial Day has not been without its critics. Some have voiced concern that institutionalizing Holocaust memory as an official date in a calendar risked turning commemoration into a cliche.

By and large, however, this doesn't seem to be the case.

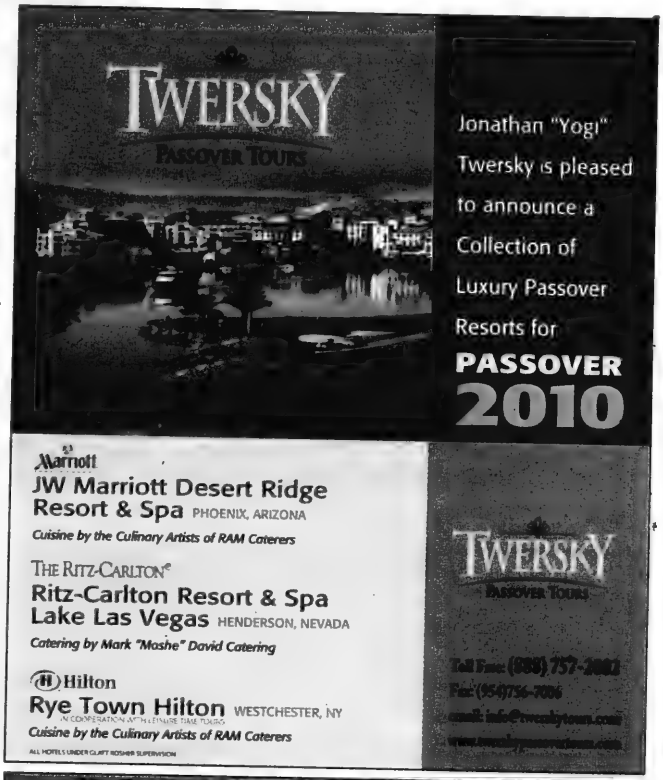
"Consider how other historical events are remembered," said Baker, who is also the representative for combating anti-Semitism of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. "Veterans Day in the United States seems primarily marked by department store sales, for example. In contrast, the Holocaust is recalled seriously and soberly."

He added, "While I do not want to sound overly sanguine, I don't think we should fear that the memory of the Holocaust will disappear or that Holocaust deniers will find new adherents.

"These last 20 years have witnessed a steady increase in educational and commemorative activities. And Holocaust denial is primarily a cudgel wielded by anti-Semites and haters of Israel, not something that is genuinely debated in any legitimate forum."

Deborah Lipstadt, an Emory University historian who has written widely about the phenomenon of Holocaust denial, said she was "gratified as a historian that there is this attention to this event that is now in the past, especially as the survivor generation is passing."

But, she said, "One hopes that there is attention in a deeper way: to examine how this emerged and happened, while the world stood silently by."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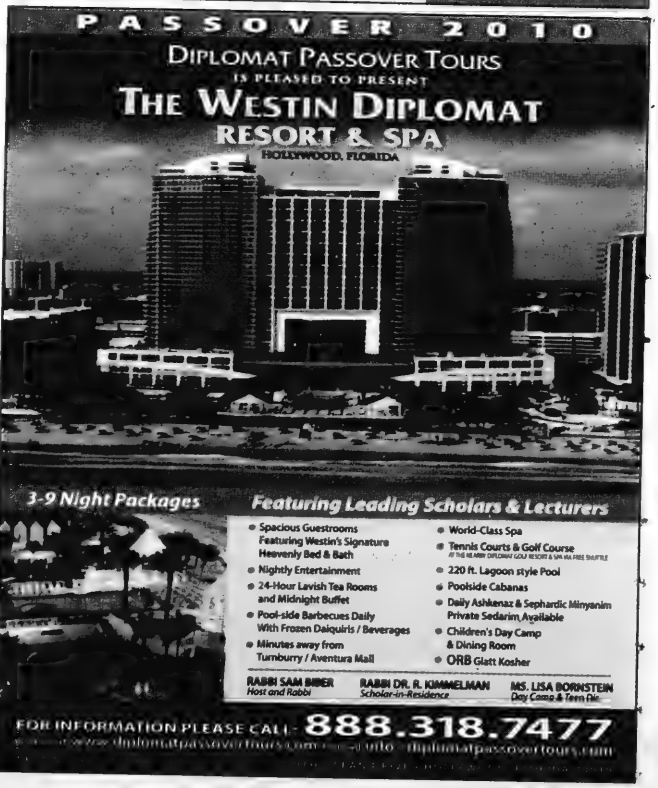
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NASA AND ISRAEL

One week before the seventh anniversary of the death of the crew on the space shuttle Columbia on Feb. 1, 2003, NASA administrator Charles Bolden Jr. was in Israel to convey the agency's best wishes to the State of Israel and to Israeli President Shimon Peres. Bolden left, presents a plaque to Peres as Rona Ramon, Columbia crew member Ilan Ramon's widow, looks on. The plaque's text reads in part: "To His Excellency Shimon Peres, president of the State of Israel, with special thanks for your leadership in building co-operation between the United States and Israel, Jan. 24, 2010."

[Israel Sun photo]

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Israeli advocacy targets China

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

In an altogether new twist in Israeli public diplomacy, a pro-Israel advocacy organization has taken its message to China for the first time.

StandWithUs, based in Los Angeles, brought a group of Israeli students and a photographic exhibition about Israel to the northeastern Chinese city of Harbin early in the new year to coincide with the International Ice and Snow Festival and the 18th anniversary of the renewal of Israel's diplomatic relations with China.

StandWithUs also sponsored a series of lectures at local universities and forged academic partnerships, all in a clear attempt to educate Chinese visitors about the diversity of Israeli society, culture and landscapes.

Michael Dickson, the Israel director of StandWithUs, said the public relations campaign, featuring the work of Israel's top 50 photographers, was successful, judging by the many visitors to the exhibition and their positive reaction to it.

"It was clear that there is a greater scope for building cultural links between Israel and China, and that there is a depth of interest among the Chinese people in Israel," he said in an interview last week.

He added, "The Israeli students touched people, and I believe we will see the benefits of this relationship-building in both the near and far future."

Zach Cutler, a StandWithUs official, said the exhibition opened with a video message from Israeli Minister of Information and Diaspora Yuli Edelstein and was attended by, among other dignitaries, the governor of Harbin and Israel's ambassador to China, Amos Nidai.

Harbin, the 10th largest city in China, was chosen as a venue due to its importance as a Jewish community centre in the 1920s and China's growing importance on the international stage, Dickson explained.

"If Israel is compiling a list of countries that count, China ought to be pretty near the top, because it is rapidly becoming the most important economy in the world."

As well, he noted, China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, and its voice will be heard in the debate on Iran's nuclear program.

"We identify China as a country in which we can make a difference," he added.

Dickson said the Chinese are generally misinformed about Israel.

"They have a two-dimensional view of Israelis and Jews, though there is no concept of anti-Semitism in China. Chinese respect Jews, but there is a lot of misinformation in the Chinese media about Israel.

"There are also signs of growing Islamic anti-Israel propaganda on university campuses. So there is much to be gained from engaging the next generation of Chinese leadership."

Dickson plans more PR campaigns in China.

"Our engagement with China will continue. A follow-up event teaming up Chinese students in Israel with Israelis will take place soon."

StandWithUs, founded in 2001 to tell Israel's side of the story in the Arab-Israeli conflict, has branches in the United States, Britain, Australia and Israel.

"We don't have a formal chapter in Canada, but we do hold events in Canadian universities and communities," said Dickson.

Former Eitz Chaim student sings jazz in N.Y.

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Two things stand out that make Brigitte Zarie unique in the world of contemporary jazz singing.

First, unlike many modern jazz singers, she sings in an old-school big band style reminiscent of Frank Sinatra.

Second, Zarie doesn't reinterpret jazz standards. She writes her own songs.

"People have said it's very unique to write my own jazz songs," Zarie says over the phone from New York. "Writing these songs comes very natural to me. Critics say the songs are very reminiscent of Billie Holiday or Frank Sinatra. That's a huge compliment."

Zarie was born and raised in Toronto by her Moroccan parents, and attended Eitz Chaim Hebrew School. She moved to New York about 12 years ago to pursue her music career.

She attributes her love of jazz to her parents, especially her father. "I've always had a love of jazz. I have a very musical family. My father was a jazz musician in Casablanca, and my mother was a singer. There are definitely jazz genes in my family."

She admits it was somewhat unusual to grow up listening to jazz instead of pop and that, as a teenager, her friends thought she was weird.

"I always listened to jazz in the house and grew up listening to Stan Getz, for instance, which was a bit peculiar for someone my age," she says. "I think I've always been a bit of a weirdo musically. Singers tend to listen to other singers, but I like listening to horn players."

Horns play a big part of Zarie's sound, which can be heard on her new CD *Make Room For Me*. There are 11 songs, all written by her and her producer, Neil Jason.

Jason is a renowned New York bassist, producer and composer who, in addition to being in the *Saturday Night Live* house band in the '80s, and playing with the *David Letterman Show* band, has worked with John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Kiss, Cindy Lauper, Paul Simon and Hall & Oates.

"Neil Jason heard my voice on TV [she is well-known in New York for singing in commercials] and sought me out for my voice," she says. "He hired me to do some commercials and film scores with him."

"It's worked out really well. It's hard to find someone whom you gel with, and [when we started to work on my own material] I was really thrilled he understood what I was all about and that I didn't want to cover traditional jazz songs, I wanted to do my own."

There are plenty of different sounds and moods on *Make Room For Me*, from the finger-snapping, big band sounds of the title track, *Money, Money, Money, Money*, and *I Love Las Vegas* to the orchestral *What's Wrong With Me* and the more mournful *See You Again*, which evokes images of a smoke-filled nightclub in a film noir.

"I'm learning about my music by what the critics say about me. It's been described as some Ella Fitzgerald, some Frank Sinatra and some Billie Holiday," she says. "Ella because of the old-school sound, Frank because of the big band sound and Billie because of the moving [emotional] sound. But, really, I just hope it touches people."

She mentions one person who told her he was listening to her CD in his car and was surprised he didn't recognize the songs, because he thought he knew all of Sinatra's songs. "I've come across lots of people who like Frank Sinatra who bought my CD."

Complementing her band's sound are stellar guest artists, including award-winning trumpet player Randy Brecker, (who does an amazing solo on the opening track *See You Again*) guitarist Jeff Golub and the David Letterman band's horn section.

"Randy Brecker and Jeff Golub heard my stuff and wanted to be a part of it. They dug me," she says, laughing. "It's one thing to write good stuff, but it's hard to bring it to life. They've all helped me bring this to life."

Zarie makes good use of her French background, singing one of the songs, *Make Room For Me*, in English and again in French. "I thought it would be wonderful to sing in French and cater to my French culture – and make my mom happy."

Zarie has been surprised with the positive response to her CD, which has had airplay on more than 350 radio stations, including Toronto's Jazz FM91 and Montreal's Jazz 91.9 FM.

"I wasn't expecting this much so soon. It's taken wings of its own."

Zarie is rehearsing now for a series of dates she's lining up in Manhattan in March and in Italy, where she has a following. But she'd really like to perform in Toronto someday soon, perhaps at the jazz festival.

"Toronto is a priority for me," she says. "It's my home, and it's on the top of my list of places to perform."

Zarie's compositions have been featured on TV shows, including *The O.C.*, and *The Real World*, and some have also been recorded by British pop/opera artist Russell Watson in English and Italian.

You can sample her music on her website www.brigittezarie.com. Her music is available on iTunes Canada.

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Travel Talk

By BILL GLADSTONE

ISRAEL EXPERIENCING TOURISM BOOM, HAS SECOND-BEST YEAR EVER

Despite the global recession, 2009 was the second-best year for tourism to Israel, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism has announced. Some 2.7 million visitors vacationed in Israel in 2009, just 11 per cent less than the record set in 2008. The United States is the largest source of tourists, accounting for 21 per cent of arriving travellers. Russia is the second-largest source of tourists, followed by France, Britain and Germany. Here are some of the activities and attractions that continue to draw growing numbers of visitors to Israel.

* * *

The arts

• The Israeli Opera marks its 25th anniversary in June with two sunrise performances of Verdi's *Nabucco* and a gala concert with American soprano Jessye Norman at Masada. Israeli conductor Daniel Oren will direct the *Nabucco* performances, which will feature Georgian opera singer Paata Burchuladze. For the June 4 concert, Norman is to be accompanied by the Israeli Opera Orchestra.

A selection of concurrent tours and sunrise concerts atop Masada are also scheduled. Uri Hirschwitz of Eshet Incentives & Conferences in Tel Aviv is one of various Israeli travel professionals offering special rates. www.israelincentives.com

• Music lovers from around the world are expected at the 5th Eilat Chamber Music Festival in the southern Israeli resort town of Eilat, Feb. 18 to 27. The festival showcases a series of 20 chamber music concerts and classical music recitals, as well as poetry and theatre performances.

* * *

Galleries and museums

• The David J. Azrieli art collection is being showcased in a public exhibition for the first time ever this month at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. The collection features more than 350 works, including pieces by Arthur Markowicz, Anna Pasternak, Jankel Adler and Mordecai Ardon.

• "Landscapes and Milestones," a new exhibit of works by Israeli artist Joram Rozov, is also on view at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. The display consists of a combination of photographs and realism-based oil paintings extracted from the vast panorama of Rozov's life, including themes of childhood, military service, education and world travels.

* * *

Athletics

• In the tradition of the Tour de France, Israel will host its own country-wide cycling race, the first of its kind in the Holy Land. Tour d'Israel is a 768-km cycling challenge that takes riders from north to south through Israel's ever-changing scenery. It takes place March 7 to 11.

• The 27th International Ein Gedi Race will be held Feb. 20. Runners may choose either a half-marathon or a 6.2-mile run beginning near Kibbutz Ein Gedi and following the road along the shores of the Dead Sea through to Masada. A 1.2-mile race for children is also included.

* * *

During excavations in Acre, a hoard of 350 marble items was discovered, dating to the Crusader period.

Archeological discoveries

• A 2,000-year-old synagogue from the Second Temple period was discovered last fall during excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in Migdal near the Sea of Galilee. The 390-square-foot synagogue has mosaic floors and walls covered with frescos.

A square stone adorned with reliefs and engraved with a seven-branched menorah was discovered atop a pedestal with a triangular base. "This is the first time a menorah decoration was discovered from the Second Temple period," said Dina Avshalom-Gorni, excavation director, Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). Mentioned in ancient texts, Migdal played a major role in the Great Revolt and was the main base of Josephus Flavius, commander of the rebellion in the Galilee.

• In an excavation 100 metres north of the Old City wall of Acre, the IAA some months ago discovered a unique find from the Crusader period. A hoard of 350 marble items was uncovered, beneath some buildings evidently destroyed in 1291 CE, when Crusader Acre was conquered and devastated by the Mamluks. The marble hoard was removed from the field and transferred to the IAA for further study. Acre was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2001.

• The remains of a prehistoric building were discovered recently on the banks of the Hayarkon River in Tel Aviv. The building, believed to be approximately 8,000 years old, consists of three rooms covered with Neolithic-era pottery shards and tools believed to be as much as 100,000 years old. The discovery provides evidence that permanent habitation existed in the Tel Aviv region more than 8,000 years ago.

* * *

Cruises

• Harriet Morton of New Wave Travel is offering Gems of the Danube, "an unforgettable journey through history and diverse cultures" on a seven-night cruise that includes Budapest, Vienna, Durstein-Melk, Linz-Passau, Regensburg, Nuremberg and Prague. The theme is "A Treasury of Eastern Europe Culture and Jewish History." Travel dates are May 23 to June 3, including three nights in Prague. Prices begin at $4,222. Contact Harriet or Joe, 416-928-3313, ext. 274 or 265. www.newwavetravel.net

• UniWorld Travel & Tours of Toronto announces it is again offering two glatt kosher cruises with Crystal Cruises in 2010 aboard the luxurious six-star Crystal Serenity. The first of two sailings departs Aug. 12 from Barcelona for 12 days on the Mediterranean, with calls at Monte Carlo, Florence, Rome, Sorrento, Tragir and Venice. The second departs Nov. 22 from Lisbon for nine days, with stops at Cadiz, Casablanca, Agadir, Las Palmas, Tenerife, Funchal and Lisbon. The kosher meals are freshly prepared by chef Malcolm Green and served in a dedicated dining room with kashrut supervision by Rabbi Stewart Weiss. Prices begin at US $7,272 (Aug. 12) and $5,013 (Nov. 22) plus tax. Each guest receives a $1,000 on-board credit. Contact David Freudmann, 416-493-3322, ext. 356, or david @uniworldtravel.com.

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The CJN will not enter into any correspondence with contestants.

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Montreal teen records Olympic song

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Teenage jazz sensation Nikki Yanofsky recently recorded the vocals for the official Olympic song of the Vancouver Winter Games.

I Believe was recorded in English by Yanofsky, a jazz singer from Montreal who also worked on *High School Musical 2*.

Yanofsky, 15, said she's excited to be part of the Olympics, which begin Feb. 12.

"I'm proud, because my voice is representing the Olympics. You really feel like you're doing something important. Something that will inspire, because that's the kind of song it is," she said.

"I feel extremely lucky. I can't say how much this means to me and everyone involved."

The same song was recorded in French by Quebec recording artist Annie Villeneuve. An instrumental version was recorded by Stephan Moccio, a composer who also produced Yanofsky's single.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MIFGASH HEBREW LANGUAGE THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS *WAS IT A DREAM* WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Mifgash Theatre, Toronto's only Hebrew-language theatre company, presents the Canadian première of *Was It A Dream*, by Israeli playwright **Edna Mazya**. Performed with English subtitles, the play follows the tempestuous love between actress **Hannah Rovina** and poet **Alexander Penn** in Tel Aviv of the 1930s. The play is set against the backdrop of a literary war between the national poet, Bialik, and the pretender to the throne, Shlonsky, and an equally turbulent struggle between the leaders of Labor and the Revisionists.

Mifgash is an initiative of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre. $25. City Playhouse, 1000 New Westminster Drive, Vaughan. Sunday, Feb. 7, 1 and 7:30 p.m. 416-635-2883, ext. 5280; e-mail sshor@ujafed.org

* * *

Amber Mills as Moira and Michael Rode as Alan in the new production of Adam Pettle's *Therac 25*.

Cancer Ward Drama: Direct Flight Theatre presents *Therac 25*, a play by **Adam Pettle**. Two young people meet and embark on a relationship in the cancer ward of Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto. Pettle wrote the script as a survival mechanism during radiation therapy after a stay in the hospital in 1995. Named best new play of 2001 by the Toronto Theatre Awards. Bread and Circus, 299 Augusta Ave. Feb. 12 to 21. Suggested donation $20. www.breadandcircus.ca

* * *

Tumbling Into Light: The WinterCity Festival returns to Nathan Phillips Square and various downtown venues, Jan. 29 to Feb. 11. As part of the festival, the **Flying Bulgars** with producer-composer **David Buchbinder** present *Tumbling Into Light*, a multimedia performance of sound, movement and light that "invites the audience to enter a magical sound and light world of dreams, doubt and hope, conflict and unity." $20, $30; ages 12+. Young Centre for the Performing Arts, Jan. 31, 3 and 7:30 p.m. 416-866-8666, www.youngcentre.ca

* * *

Names in the News: Christoph Waltz, the Austrian actor who portrays a suave and sadistic Jew-hunting Nazi colonel in *Inglourious Basterds*, won a Golden Globe Award last week for best supporting actor. In the film, an "alt-history" revenge fantasy directed by **Quentin Tarantino**, an elite squad of American Jewish GIs wipe out the entire Nazi leadership. Canadian **Jason Reitman**, who co-wrote *Up in the Air* with **Sheldon Turner** and directed the film, also won a Golden Globe for best screenplay.

* * *

Theatre Notes

• Encore Entertainment's production of *The Diary of Anne Frank* opens Jan. 28 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts. Upon the death earlier this month of **Miep Gies**, the last surviving protector of the Frank family and guardian of the now-famous diary, artistic director **Merle Garbe** has arranged to honour Gies' heroism with a lobby display prepared by the cast members of the production. The show runs until Feb. 7. $28.50, $27. 416-872-1111, www.encoreshows.com

• Theatre Passe Muraille and Convergence Theatre present *Yichud (Seclusion)*, by **Julie Tepperman**, directed by **Aaron Willis**. An exploration of what goes on between a bride with a secret and a groom with asthma in the *yichud*, or seclusion room, following an Orthodox Jewish wedding. TPM Mainspace, 16 Ryerson Ave. Previews Feb. 6 to 10, runs to Feb. 27. $20 (previews), $30, $35. 416-504-7529, artsboxoffice.ca

* * *

Music Notes

• Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre presents *I'll Never Smile Again: The Musical Legacy of Ruth Lowe Sandler*, with **Tommy Sandler.** $9 includes light refreshments. Sunday Jan. 31, 2 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 133, www.mnjcc.org.

• Pianist-singer **Fern Lindzon** and trio perform at Chalkers Pub, 247 Marlee Ave. Feb. 6, 6 to 9 p.m. $10 cover, reservations 416-789-2531. They are also at the Rex Jazz Bar on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. $8 cover. 194 Queen St. W. 416-598-2475, http://therex.ca

• Soprano **Miriam Eskin** and mezzo-soprano **Stella Walker** perform a cabaret evening of folk and jazz music in English, French, Russian and Yiddish, accompanied by pianist **Nina Shapilsky**, as a benefit for the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Saturday, Feb. 6, 8 p.m. Doors open 7:30 p.m. $25, $15 children under 16; includes desserts plus cash bar. 416-789-5502

* * *

Film & Television

• Lecturer **Shlomo Schwartzberg** continues his Media Mondays series on Hollywood and Society with the topic "How Hollywood looks at Crime and Criminals From Public Enemy to Analyze This." Featuring "amazing" film clips. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday Feb. 1, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. $12 at the door. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

• Academy Award-winning director **Steven Spielberg** has announced plans for a new reality television show based around Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Hospital to premiere in 2011. The planned focus is on a group of American doctors placed to work at the renowned multicultural hospital.

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Books & Authors

Go west, young woman

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

How many American novels could there be that mention Calgary? In John Dos Passos' major 1925 work, *Manhattan Transfer*, it is a place to better oneself: "Well, how about making tracks for Calgary?" one character asks. "I know a fellow there who'll give me a job I think."

In Amy Bloom's breakthrough novel, *Away* (Random House), Calgary is merely part of the mysterious west, where life breaks up into new possibilities for Lillian Leyb, Bloom's unstoppable heroine. Lillian encapsulates pre-World War II Jewish life: a victim of a gruesome pogrom that sends her into an immigrant's exile on New York's Lower East Side, she remakes herself as the mistress of a Second Avenue Yiddish theatre impresario. But Lillian's American success is transformed by the news that her daughter, saved but lost at the time of the pogrom, is in fact alive in Siberia.

Norman Ravvin

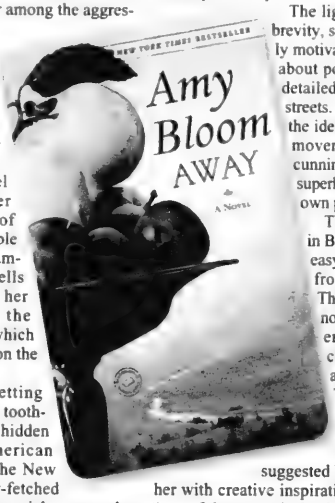
It is at this point where *Away*'s light-hearted satire of 1920s Jewish New York transforms into a more challenging kind of book – a travelogue based on what Bloom has called the "bits and fragments of a story" about a woman named Lillian Alling, who is said to have come "up the Telegraph Road, determined to walk to Russia." (The Vancouver Opera is presently developing a work based on Alling's travels, minus the pogrom.)

Away is fast-paced and lightly funny, despite the dark side of its storyline. While Dos Passos' documentary fiction aimed to capture how the tenement dwellers of New York talked, Bloom applies a scriptwriter's ear to her effort to recover 1920s slang, both Yiddish and English. She has a knack for capturing voice, for placing characters amid the bustle of a New York street or among the aggressive clientele of a chop house.

The early sections of *Away* have a cinematic power that is memorable and unsettling, as the action moves from the squalor of a massacre in the Russian Empire to a quirkily upbeat portrait of immigrant struggle on the Lower East Side.

Lillian's mode of travel in search of her daughter turns on a curious piece of nonsense: when she is unable to afford the cost of a steamship to Europe, a friend tells her that she should make her way overland, then up the Pacific West Coast, after which she can make the crossing on the Bering Strait to Siberia.

Like Mickey Mouse setting out for the moon with little more than a toothbrush, Lillian has her coat rigged with hidden pockets, she tucks away a few American dollars and maps cut from books in the New York Public Library. Her goal is so far-fetched that it can be portrayed in an almost slapstick way as she stows away in the bathrooms and broom closets of cross-country trains, winters in a women's prison rather than brave the route north before spring, and sets out alone on the Yukon River in a "wide and deep and misshapen" boat, only to find herself ashore, her boat sunk, five miles from her departure point.



The light tone of *Away*, along with its brevity, set it apart from typical historically motivated fiction. It is not truly a novel about pogrom-ridden Russia, nor is it a detailed portrait of Essex and Rivington streets. Bloom's main interest in *Away* is the idea of a woman like Lillian, whose movement, resourcefulness and quiet cunning remind us of a self-deprecating superhero, or a magician unaware of her own powers of escape.

The Canadian North is sheer myth in Bloom's version, a place of beauty, easy death and crusty loners in flight from bad deeds done down south. Though Lillian's travels reach as far north as Dawson City, Yukon, they end in Skagway on the Alaskan coast, and her years spent there are told in less than two pages. The ground beneath Lillian's feet – whether European or American – is not where Bloom's real interest lies. Rather, it is the act suggested by the novel's title that provides her with creative inspiration. "*Away*," Bloom has said, is "one of those words that has in it both coming and going. I go away, I come away; I leave here, to go away and must go away again, in order to come home."

From such coming and going, Bloom creates a novel with the tone of a comic book romance, leavened by Yiddish jokes and the surprise offered up by the newly settled West.

Norman Ravvin's fiction includes the novel, Lola by Night, *and the story collection* Sex, Skyscrapers and Standard Yiddish. *He is chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.*

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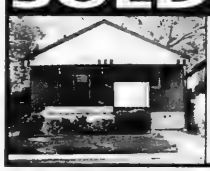

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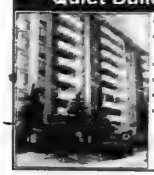

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Arts & Travel

Israeli trio's first single topped the charts

By RIVA GOLD
Special to The CJN

The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre in Toronto was abuzz recently, and this time, it wasn't coming from the Second Cup.

Habanot Nechama, an Israeli musical trio from Tel Aviv, performed at Miles Nadal on Jan. 13, in Hebrew and English, as part of a 15-concert tour.

Habanot Nechama, which translates as the Comfort Girls, consists of three female vocalists: Karolina, Dana Adini and Yael Deckelbaum. With a sound often described as "folk acoustic," the group has developed a large fan base in Israel, Europe and the United States.

Although they prefer not to define their music, the group says it most closely resembles a mix of acoustic, folk, soul and vocal music.

So far, the group has seen tremendous success. The trio's first single, *So Far*, quickly topped the charts, reaching No. 1 on Israeli radio stations.

"The song was inspired by life – living and feeling alive," the group said in an e-mail interview. "It's about that moment when you're inspired by the universe, and you find yourself asking questions about your life."

In 2007, Habanot Nechama released their self-titled debut album, which sold more than 50,000 records in Israel.

Since then, the group has played to sold-out audiences across Israel, Europe and North America.

Karolina, Deckelbaum and Adini were all born in Israel, and grew up in Eilat, Jerusalem and Kiryat Ono (a small town near Tel Aviv) respectively. Though they enjoy performing together, the three vocalists also pursue solo projects at the same time.

From left, Karolina, Yael Deckelbaum and Dana Adini, members of Habanot Nechama, have sold more than 50,000 records in Israel.

All three women express a connection to folk music, but Deckelbaum feels particularly close to it. Her father played banjo in a country folk band called the Taverners, and as a child, she would sing with them.

Deckelbaum and Adini met when they were 17 years old, while auditioning for a military band. The two later saw Karolina performing with her first band, Funset. After a few encounters in the Tel Aviv music scene, the three came together to form Habanot Nechama.

The trio says they greatly enjoy performing in Canada, where the audience has been extremely welcoming. "People in Canada are very polite, and they smile a lot," they said. "It's a beautiful country."

Although many of their Canadian audience members were listening to their music for the first time, the group said that it almost felt as if the audience knew the lyrics.

Currently on tour across North America, the trio say they love performing live and particularly enjoy interacting with their audiences.

"Once we were singing on a stage, and all of a sudden, we heard the sound of a flute coming from the crowd. It was a beautiful fairy, who joined in on our song," the group recalled. "It made the experience 10 times more magical."

Habanot Nechama was named act of the year in *DJ Ha'ir* magazine and earned a nomination for best new act at the annual Israeli Music Channel awards.

The group is currently collecting material for their second album, and look forward to performing together and creating more music in the coming years.

For information about upcoming tours or to listen to their music online, visit http://habanot.com.

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Israel makes Quebec peewee hockey tournament debut

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

For the first time, a peewee hockey team from Israel will compete in an international tournament in Quebec City next month.

The 10- to 12-year-olds from Bat Yam, south of Tel Aviv, are joining teams from across Canada, the United States, Finland, France, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Switzerland at the 35th edition of the BSR International Peewee Tournament taking place Feb. 11 to 21 in suburban Lévis.

Twenty-two players, including two girls, and three coaches will make up the delegation. Bat Yam will play a minimum of two games, in the B division.

The Israeli youngsters' participation is due in large part to Jonathan Hawey, the Lévis resident who has for the past five years been a key figure in the development of ice hockey in Israel.

Hawey, a past president of Quebec City's only synagogue, has been involved in hockey all his life, from his playing days with the Ottawa Gee-Gees to a brief professional stint in Japan, through to his current role as a scout for the Val d'Or Foreurs of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL).

Peewee is the youngest level of organized hockey in Israel and still in its infancy there, but Hawey is confident the Israeli team will not be humiliated in Quebec.

Bat Yam, which is on the Mediterranean coast, has a large number of residents from the former Soviet Union. The peewee team's president is Eugeny Fusin, a former goalie on the Soviet national junior hockey team who played in the early 1990s for Thunder Bay in the old Colonial Hockey League.

Last summer, at Hawey's invitation, the Bat Yam club's head coach Dima Gromkov spent two months in Quebec upgrading his skills, spending much of that time with Lévis' Midget AAA team, Les Commandeurs.

Montrealer Alan Maislin, chair of the Israel Ice Hockey Federation, is honorary president of the team, and former Montreal Canadiens coach Jean Perron, who has coached Israel's national team, is honorary captain.

Bat Yam, however, does not have its own arena; to play on ice, players must make the two-hour drive to and from Metullah in the north, Hawey said. That will soon change with the beginning of construction in March on Bat Yam's own rink, a project Hawey also has a hand in.

The Quebec tournament is a big attraction: there'll be 128 teams this year, and all games will sell out at the 2,000-seat arena. The BSR is the little cousin of the Quebec International Peewee Hockey Tournament, now in its 51st year, which will take place concurrently and includes 16 countries and over 2,000 players.

Coach Dima Gromkov is bringing his peewee hockey team from Bat Yam, Israel, to the BSR international tournament in Quebec City.

"Bat Yam's participation is important for the future of hockey in Israel," Hawey said. "It will give the kids a goal. If they are good enough, they will get to go to Canada each year," he said.

Hockey has a following among Israeli adults with roots in hockey-playing countries, but it's a little harder to interest children of the Middle East in the sport.

Currently, there are about 40 or 50 peewee players, but Hawey predicts that will double next year because of Bat Yam's being in the Quebec tournament.

He also thinks it's good public relations for Israel when Quebecers see that the Jewish state is so keen on their national obsession.

There's a lot of curiosity about the Israeli team, he said. Bat Yam has been asked to play three exhibition games, and Hawey expects more requests. The local Chambre de Commerce wants to host them for meals.

Hawey is helping to organize the team's visit, including raising funds. He has budgeted for $20,000, excluding the airfare, which the Israelis are responsible for. Bus travel and extra security will account for a large part of the costs.

The players will be billeted with local families. Five on the team keep kosher and their needs will be met through www.kosherquebec.com, a local kosher catering service. The synagogue, Congrégation Beth Israel Ohev Sholem, which has about 125 families, including four Hebrew-speaking Israeli families, will host the Israelis at a Shabbaton Feb. 12.

To offer help, e-mail Rabbi Dovid Lewin at rabbi@jquebec.com.

The team's uniforms have been donated by a local non-Jewish businessman, owner of the sports store Jersey City. The colours are light blue, grey, black and white, with Bat Yam on the front and the menorah, the symbol of Israel, on the shoulders. The players will come with their own skates and equipment.

Hawey is also procuring winter clothing for the Israelis. Avalanche Skiwear has offered a deep discount on jackets and pants, and he's still looking for hats, gloves and boots to help the Israelis withstand Quebec City's temperatures, usually several degrees colder than Montreal.

The kids will also be treated to outings in the area during their stay, including outdoor activities like snow-tubing and dog-sledding, and they will be around for the last few days of the Winter Carnival. They will attend a QMJHL Quebec Remparts game.

The team will spend one day in Montreal before going home, hosted for brunch by Farrell Miller, owner of the Montreal Juniors of the same league, who is also taking them to a Juniors game.

Hawey, who was raised a not very observant Catholic in a typically Québécois milieu, converted to Judaism in 1983 when he was in his 20s. His father told him that they were descended from Isaac Hawey, a Scottish Jew, who, according to family lore, settled in Lower Canada in the 18th century before Aaron Hart, whom historians generally cite as the first Jewish resident.

Hawey, whose story is told in the travelling exhibition "Same Cloth/Different Threads: The Jews of Quebec," created for Quebec City's 400th anniversary, confirmed the link through genealogical research.

In the past five years, he has been closely associated with Israel's hockey program and spent a total of four months in the country last year, mainly helping organize an international tournament of professional Jewish players. Officially, he is vice-president of international relations and special events. He has become close to fluent in Hebrew.

Fortunately, his paying job at Université Laval as a recruiter of post-graduate students, allows him considerable time off.

Hawey is now working on organizing a trip to Israel in 2011 for young hockey players from Lévis.

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Raging against the dying light

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

It happened again. I was called by one of the palliative-care physicians I work with who told me about a patient who had been admitted for palliative care because of metastatic (spread) cancer, and suddenly "took a turn for the worse."

As a result, the family had unexpectedly asked that she be transferred to an acute-care hospital, where she received complex and intensive medical care for an intercurrent medical event.

I asked whether the family understood the implications of their loved one's admission to a palliative-care unit. The physician felt that the request for acute care showed that the family did understand what was going on, as the cancer had spread. His question was: "Why the change of heart and direction of care?"

As I and members of the staff looked back over the last year, we could identify a number of situations in which, at the "last minute" or so, it seemed a family – acting as surrogate decision-makers – changed their minds about the previously agreed-to principles of palliative care and had their loved one sent to an acute-care hospital.

Most of the patients died in the hospital after a period of attempted treatment. Some had a condition, such as an infection, treated, and they returned to the palliative unit where they died, sometimes shortly after the episode and sometimes a period after. No one can discount any period of time alive, depending on the values and goals of the patient and family, when faced with a disease from which death is expected to occur in the near future.

The philosophy that underpins the concept of palliative care, sometimes referred to as "terminal care" or "hospice care," is an amalgamation of different concepts, the place and type of care (palliative-care unit and hospice) and the stage of a disease.

Patients and families often want a prognosis from their physicians, to give them some idea about what to expect in the future and what kind of planning to undertake. This is very important when people have to consider when family members should perhaps travel, especially if long distances are involved. Many family members want to be present in the "final" days, especially when they may want to combine a long-distance visit to say goodbye and to be at the funeral.

The problem with prognostication is that physicians, no matter how experienced, can be off by a great deal in predictions of the course of even the terminal phases of a disease. Part of the palliative care discussions should not just include a prognosticative estimate but should always contain the provision that many unexpected things can happen, often with little warning. Sudden "turns for the worse" and death occur often enough that families should be prepared for such events.

Maybe for some families, as Dylan Thomas expressed in his well-known poem, elders should "not go gentle into that good night/ Old age should burn and rave at close of day/ Rage, rage against the dying of the light." What this might mean in medical practice is that rather than dying in comfort as the goal at the end of life, the family chooses a course that might result in intubation and respirator care, intravenous treatments and a whole range of medical interventions.

These might provide some benefit for some undefined period of time. Maybe that is the modern way of "raging again the dying of the light."

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey, can be researched from his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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1 medium Gala apple, cored, thinly sliced
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1 large head Boston or red leaf lettuce torn into bite-size pieces

Dressing:
3 tblsp olive oil
2 tblsp apple cider vinegar
2 tblsp minced shallot
1 tblsp honey

Whisk dressing ingredients in small bowl to blend. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in dried cherries. Toss lettuce and apple slices in large bowl. Add cherry dressing and toss to coat. Divide among 4 plates; sprinkle with walnuts and freshly ground black pepper and serve.

Kitchen tip:

How do you know if you've added added enough salt and pepper? Dip a small piece of lettuce into dressing and try it.

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Maybe you can eat what you like after all

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Imagine eating all the foods you love and still losing weight, simply by reducing the portions.

I often meet with resistance from patients who just don't want to give up the foods they love but know they need to lose weight to improve their health. Some of these people can achieve successful weight loss when they are allowed to continue eating many of those foods, but less often or in smaller portions.

How many times have you eaten half your meal, only to realize that you are really full and could walk away? Well what if you planned to do that from the start?

For example, "I'll still have the pasta, but I'll order the appetizer size or serve myself a smaller portion." Or you may be satisfied with a bite or two of a dessert rather than a whole piece of cake, or a piece of chocolate rather than a whole bar, or you could share fries, or have a few rather than a whole order.

Sound doable? This may be the solution you have been looking for.

You do, of course, have to consider the fat and sugar content of the foods you are eating, even if you're having less. Trans fat, saturated fat, high salt and sugar all still cause health problems and potential disease, so while half a portion is healthier than a full portion, these foods still need to be consumed judiciously.

And obviously, you should remember that if you are cutting back the portion of some of these foods, you need to eat other foods to be full – fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains.

But with this plan, you can have your cake and eat it too, and this may be a concept that will work to help you enjoy your favourite foods and still control your weight.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Orphans and eggplant

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

It was a foggy night on Trafalgar Road coming back from my friend's place. I needed to concentrate a lot to make sure the cargo in my back seat – my little boy, Noah River – was safe. All the while, I considered that it was somewhat dangerous to be on these roads, but I realized, too, that at any time, we could pull to the side if necessary or stop at a doughnut shop. We didn't do either, though. Rather, we followed the rear lights in front of us and stayed close to the white line.

It's Sunday night in Gressier, Haiti, and 200 orphaned children are alive, virtually untouched by one of the worst earthquakes ever. Many people are working around the clock to determine how best to help the House of Hope orphanage. We are receiving e-mails that their food supply has dwindled dramatically and little drinking water is left on the roof for the kids.

Noah had fallen asleep in the car. It's tough to shlep up my bag and his while he is asleep in my arms. The Little Man is getting heavier, and my biceps aren't what they used to be. I saw a woman I know in the elevator, but we didn't speak much, mostly because I was too tired and a little bit annoyed that the straps from the bags were pulling taut around my hands.

I just got word that the House of Hope is rationing food and taking in people from the surrounding village. Of the 2,500 people who lived in Gressier, 800 – or one-third of all its citizens –were killed by this act of God. Imagine: one moment you have a neighbour, the next you don't. Imagine: one second there's a clinic down the road, the next there isn't. That's Gressier. The thugs are coming out, and what was a dangerous place before is now perilous. And the children are young. They are without parents.

I piled through the door. Noah is asleep and seems satiated. He ate a wonderful dinner tonight at our friend's home, including fresh vegetables and fruits, rolled rice and cheese, and eggplant prepared with the finest ingredients. His tummy is full. He's satisfied.

I only had to open one lock.

Security for the orphans is a big issue at the House of Hope. There's a three-metre-high stone wall around the complex and a big iron gate in the front. We've heard that the air is contaminated. Alice Barthole, the founder of the House of Hope, says she's housing people inside the orphanage who escaped the deadly hand of the earthquake. Alice doesn't turn anyone away.

One of the most physically demanding things about raising children is undressing them while they sleep. You don't want to wake them on the one hand, and on the other hand, it's hell to get a T-shirt over their head. So I struggled and fought to ensure that my boy stayed asleep. He did, but somehow in his slumber he obliged me by putting his arms through his pyjama tops. It was warm in his room and his bed looked comfy. The black mollies swam around the aquarium waiting to be fed. It had been two days since they'd eaten.

By the time this is published, things will have changed at the House of Hope. How? I'm not sure. The kids may have been evacuated or the food and water may have arrived and all could be good. I don't know. We just have no clue.

Noah slept all night and awoke singing.

Comment at http://avrum.net.

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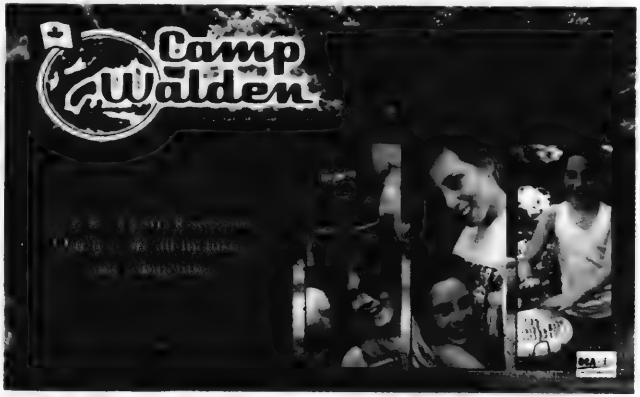

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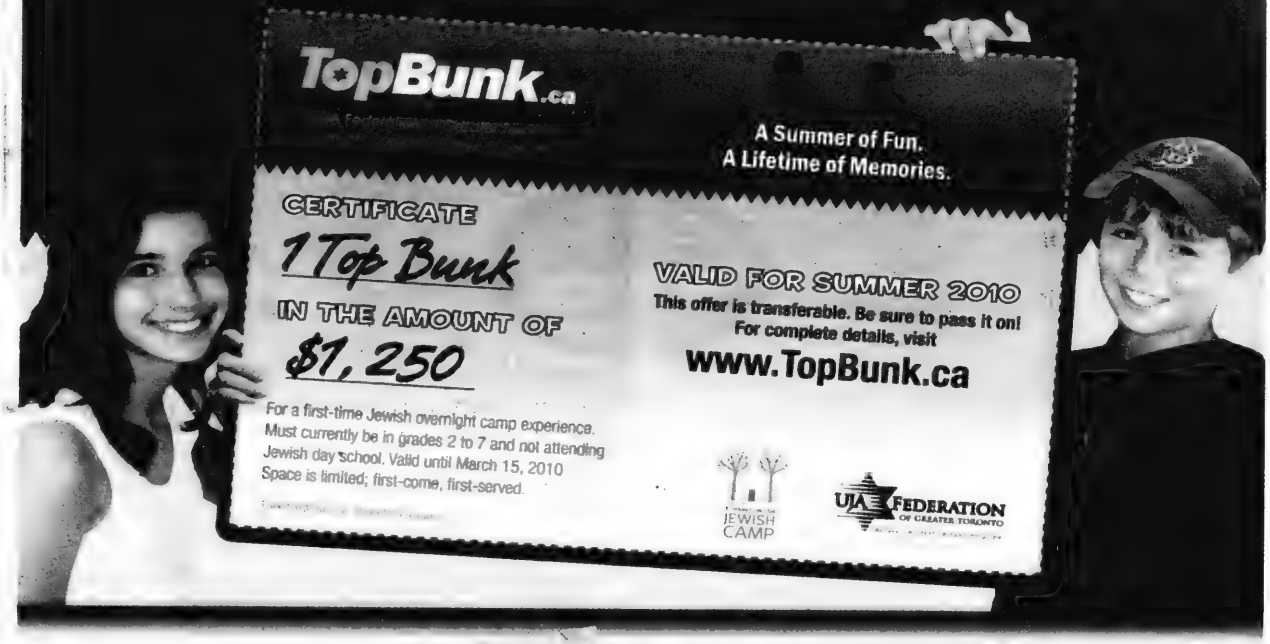
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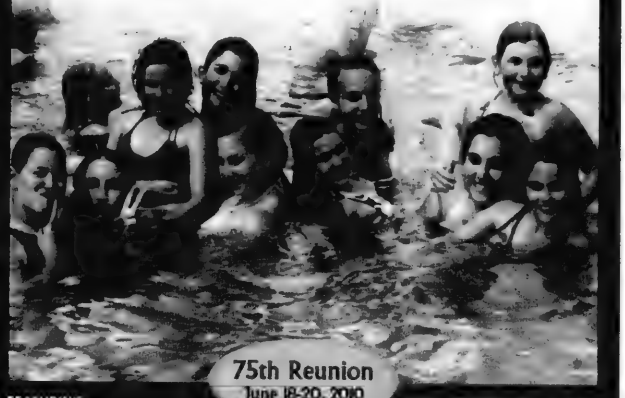

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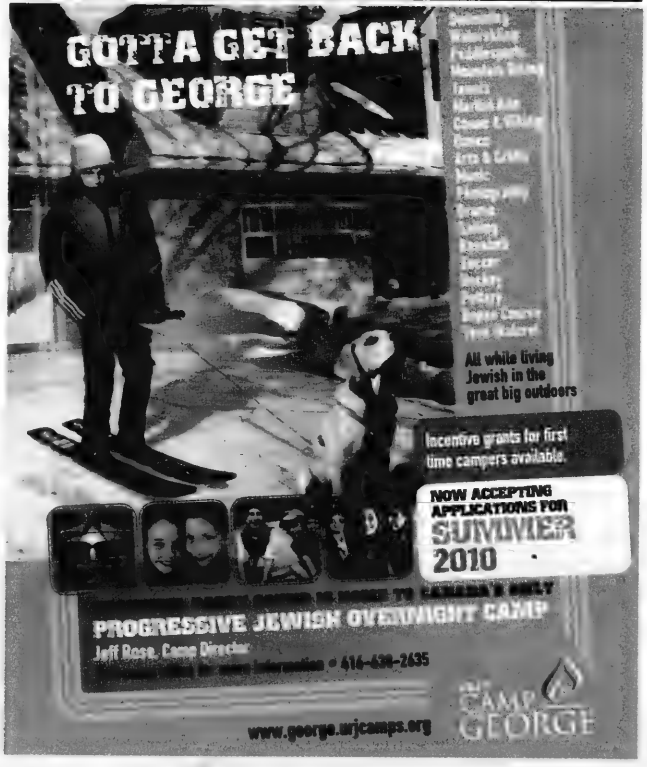
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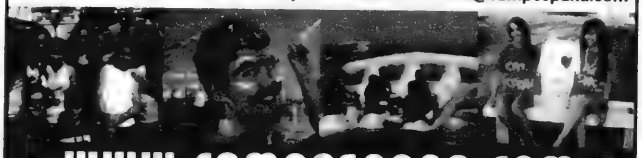

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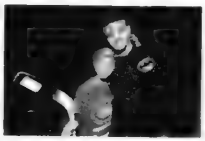

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At Kadimah, we take a holistic approach to programming, exposing campers to a full range of programming, including a four day camp wide Maccabia colour war, camping trips to National and Provincial parks, and local sites, theme days, a hockey marathon, and softball, basketball and volleyball house leagues. Optional sport teams, art projects, camping trips, boating races, nature programs with ecologists from nearby universities are some of the ways that campers can involve themselves further in camp life.

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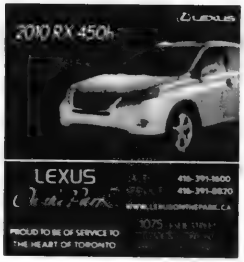

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National

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To Your Health

Special 12-page supplement inside. *Section B*

Arts & Travel

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Good old-fashioned evening of entertainment with Mandy Patinkin. *Page 39*

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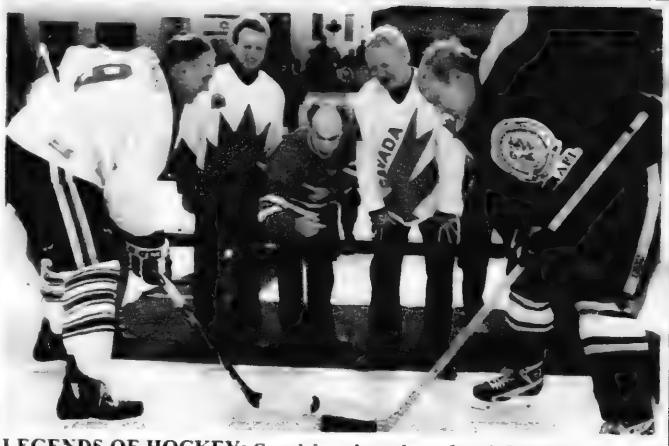

LEGENDS OF HOCKEY: Canada's ambassador to Israel, Jon Allen, centre, is flanked by hockey legends Paul Henderson, second from left, and Darryl Sittler, second from right, as he drops the puck at the ceremonial faceoff for the Roger Neilson Recreational Hockey Tournament at the Canada Centre in Metulla. Also pictured are Bob Wener, left, captain of Team Ottawa, and Joe Bazes, captain of one of three Israeli teams in the tourney. Ottawa won the championship game 6-3 over Team Israel. *Please see related story on page 46.* **[Nim Gluckman photo]**

Goldstone report refuted

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel refuted allegations of war crimes in a paper detailing its process of investigating its military's actions during the Gaza war.

Last Friday, the Foreign Ministry released the 46-page document describing Israel's procedures for probing allegations of violations of the Law of Armed Conflict.

The paper refuted four of the 36 allegations against Israel of war crimes enumerated in the United Nations' Goldstone Commission report, which accused Israel and the Palestinians of committing war crimes and possible crimes against humanity during the war.

The document focuses on investigations, legal proceedings and lessons learned in relation to Israeli army actions during Operation Cast Lead from Dec. 27, 2008, through Jan. 18, 2009.

The United Nations set a Feb. 5 deadline for the Israel and the Palestinians to carry out independent investigations into the report's findings.

According to a statement from the Foreign Ministry, "Israel's investigative system, like that of many states, includes a range of checks and balances and multiple layers of review to ensure impartiality and independence."

The document reports that "the IDF has launched investigations into 150 separate incidents arising from the Gaza Operation. Of the 150 incidents, 36 have been referred for criminal investigation so far. Criminal investigators have taken statements from almost 100 Palestinian complainants and witnesses, along with approximately 500 IDF soldiers and commanders. In locating Palestinian witnesses and making arrangements for them to give evidence, the IDF works together with local NGOs."

The Israel Defence Forces reportedly will submit a 1,000-page point-by-point rebuttal of the Goldstone report to the United Nations by the deadline.

Rabbi warns of conversion 'catastrophe'

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Michael Melchior has had his finger on the pulse of the Jewish nation for some time, as Israel's one-time minister responsible for Diaspora affairs, and currently as head of the Meimad party.

A man who values moderation and accommodation and chooses his words carefully, he nevertheless believes the increasing clout of the haredim over conversions is leading the Jewish world to "catastrophe."

Haredi Jews are slamming the door on conversions that don't comply with "their own narrow, unwelcoming approach," Rabbi Melchior said in a telephone interview from Israel.

Rabbi Michael Melchior

The result has been to leave tens of thousands of potential Jews – mostly Russian olim – in conversion limbo, and diminish the authority of non-haredi Orthodox rabbis around the world.

Despite his harsh words for the haredim, who he says are violating a long-standing halachic principle in rejecting conversions by other Orthodox rabbis, he puts primary responsibility for this development on the wider Orthodox movement.

The haredim, he explained, are simply being haredim. Pushing for an ever-more restrictive interpretation of conversion is an approach that's been developing within haredi circles for 30 to 40 years, beginning in their European centre, Antwerp.

Continued page 34

Yitro
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Can George Mitchell succeed? – please see page 11

The News in Brief

Canada

Church, CJC Meet

TORONTO — The United Church of Canada and Canadian Jewish Congress were scheduled to meet this week to try to mend fences after Congress objected to the church's ties to a Jewish anti-Zionist group, and after the church considered Israel boycott motions at its General Council last summer. Congress CEO Bernie Farber told the *National Post* he'd like the national church to repudiate Independent Jewish Voices, which received a small startup grant from the church, and to provide guidance to regional church bodies to end joint projects with the group.

Rapist Faces Jail

TORONTO — A York University graduate who pleaded guilty this month to sexually assaulting two women in a York dormitory during 2007 frosh week will be sentenced March 26. Daniel Katsnelson, 27, and friend Justin Connort, 28, a fellow York grad who is serving jail time for one of the assaults, asked one of the victims, then 17, if she wanted "to get lucky with a couple of Jewish guys," then assaulted her, court heard. After turning himself in and being placed under house arrest, Katsnelson changed his last name to Kaye and started a firm that partnered with the City of Toronto on a card that offered savings at environmentally and socially responsible businesses. A photo of Mayor David Miller and Katsnelson, who faces up to 14 years in jail, was recently removed from Miller's Twitter account.

Gibson Boycott Urged

TORONTO — The Jewish Defence League of Canada is urging Jews to boycott Mel Gibson's new movie, *Edge of Darkness*, because of what it calls his "past, countless anti-Semitic statements against the Jewish people." During a 2006 drunk-driving arrest, Gibson reportedly said, "F---ng Jews. Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world." He also reportedly asked the arresting officer if he was Jewish. He later apologized.

Jews Named To Order

TORONTO — Three Jewish Torontonians received the Order of Ontario Jan. 28. Businessman Lawrence Bloomberg was honoured for his philanthropy; Dr. Philip Berger was honoured as a leader in urban medicine, and businessman and ex-politician Paul Godfrey was honoured for leadership in municipal governance and creating the Herbie Fund, which funds life-saving surgery for children.

World

'Rabbah' Like Rabbi

NEW YORK — An Orthodox clergywoman will now be known as "rabbah" rather than by a Hebrew acronym created for her. Last year, Sara Hurwitz, who has been performing rabbinical duties at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in New York, was given the title *maharat*, an acronym that means a leader in legal, spiritual and Torah matters. But Rabbi Avi Weiss, the shul's spiritual leader and Hurwitz's mentor, said the word failed to catch on and she should now be called "rabbah," a feminine version of "rabbi." Hurwitz, who has served at the shul for seven years, has completed the same training as male Orthodox rabbinical students at the liberal Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, which Rabbi Weiss founded and leads.

Liberal MP Backpedals On 'Jaunt' Remark

OTTAWA — Liberal MP Borys Wrzesnewskyj backed away last week from a remark in which he called a trip to Poland by Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney a "jaunt," saying he was unaware Kenney was there for the 65th anniversary of Auschwitz's liberation.

The Toronto-area Liberal MP told the *Globe and Mail* that Canada would have been better served if Kenney had visited Haiti, which continues to face a humanitarian crisis after a devastating earthquake there last month.

In a statement, Wrzesnewskyj "clarified" his initial remarks. "My comments were solely in reference to the timing of Minister Kenney's trip to Poland during the current crisis in Haiti," he said.

"When I spoke to the media, I was not previously aware that a visit to Auschwitz was on the minister's itinerary, and was only made aware of this fact during the interview. In light of this fact, I sincerely regret these comments. I would never trivialize a minister's visit to Auschwitz and especially on the 65th anniversary of its liberation."

B'nai Brith urged Wrzesnewskyj to apologize for his original remark, calling it "despicable." The Prime Minister's Office did the same. In 2006, he resigned as deputy foreign affairs critic after saying Canada should deal directly with Hezbollah, a terrorist group under federal law.

Judge Orders Co-operation In Dispute

VANCOUVER — A Vancouver judge has ordered B'nai Brith Canada, Jack Chivo and five long-standing directors of a Jewish building society to try to settle their dispute over control of the society co-operatively.

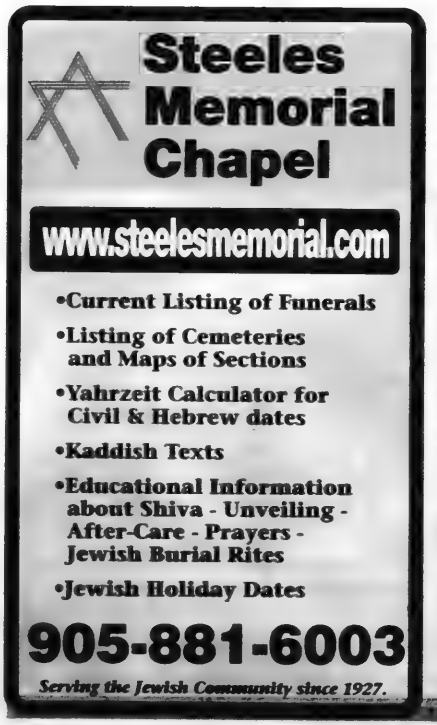
B.C. Supreme Court Judge J.S. Sigurdson urged "the parties to meet and resolve this issue by agreement. I expect that possibly with the use of a mediator the sides can resolve this issue internally."

He set aside a Dec. 3 annual general meeting of the Lions' Gate B'nai Brith Building Society, which operates two large seniors residences in downtown Vancouver. He found "irregularities" in the way the meeting was called, and said if left to stand, it would resolve the dispute to the benefit of the Society's "long-standing" members.

At the heart of the conflict, Sigurdson found, was the question of who are legitimate members of the Society.

The Society's bylaws say members must be drawn from Lions Gate Lodge, which has been dormant for years. B'nai Brith appointed an agent in Vancouver to revitalize it, but at the same time, historic members were also attempting to do so. The historic members argued that B'nai Brith has no connection to the Society or the lodge.

The judge declined to rule on who are legitimate members, but added: "In the meantime, I think that a caretaker board should be appointed. The sides will each have three members on the board and will agree on a seventh member…[or] apply for directions if they cannot agree."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Rabbis protest treatment of women at the Kotel

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Twenty-nine mostly Reform and Conservative rabbis in the greater Toronto area have signed an open letter to senior Israeli diplomats in Canada expressing deep concern about recent events involving two women who were wearing tallitot at the Kotel.

The letter to Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, and Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, appears as an advertisement in this week's *CJN*. It refers to the Nov. 18 arrest of Nofrat Frenkel for wearing a tallit and carrying a Torah, and to the Jan. 5 police questioning and fingerprinting of Anat Hoffman, chair of Women of the Wall, which has organized women's prayer services at the Kotel for the past two decades.

Frenkel and Hoffman were informed that they had violated an Israeli Supreme Court ruling that, citing concerns about public safety, denied women the right to read from the Torah in the regular women's section of the wall. The ruling resulted in the designation of a nearby site, Robinson's Arch, as the place for women to pray as a group with a Torah scroll.

"If this kind of police action had taken place in any other country, the world Jewish community would have accused the state of anti-Semitism and violation of basic human rights," the rabbis wrote.

They ask what steps the Israeli government will take so that "all Jews will be welcome to worship according to their own tradition" at the Kotel.

Rabbi Stephen Wise of Shaarei-Beth El in Oakville, Ont., said the letter was proposed at a meeting of the Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto. As well, he noted, many of the rabbis have contacted the diplomats directly.

The group contacted other non-Orthodox rabbinical groups, believing the issue would concern their members too, but the rabbis signed the letter individually, not under the auspices of any rabbinic umbrella.

"We thought this was such an important issue that we needed to put an ad out there," said Rabbi Wise. "People need to be aware of it, and become involved.

"A woman was *arrested*," he stressed. "For wearing a tallit. For us, in the context of pluralism and women's rights… that was like a punch in the stomach."

Gissin told *The CJN* that when the consulate receives requests about "internal issues," as opposed to foreign policy, "our main role is to pass on the message to the foreign ministry and through it to the Israeli government, and we have done that."

He noted the Reform movement is not a significant segment of the population "at least in terms of numbers" in Israel, but that issues of religious pluralism are always of public interest there.

Ziv couldn't be reached for comment before *The CJN*'s deadline.

Rabbi Wise said that Hoffman has a Canadian connection as a resource person at Camp George, the Reform movement's summer camp in Parry Sound, Ont., for the past few years.

Rabbi Michael Dolgin of Temple Sinai Congregation, added that Hoffman has spoken at a number of synagogues here and has met with Toronto-area synagogue groups when they were visiting Israel.

"There seems to be freedom of religion for everyone but Jews [in Israel]," said Rabbi Dolgin. "As a supporter of Israel, I hope to see that changed… Israel is stronger when all the kinds of Jewish identity and practice can take root."

In addition to the letter, ARZA Canada: The Zionist Voice of the Canadian Reform Movement has an online petition addressed to Ziv, to support Hoffman and the Israel Religious Action Center, the advocacy arm of the Reform movement in Israel.

Also, a public prayer service to support Women of the Wall: will take place Feb. 14 (Rosh Chodesh Adar), at 10 a.m., at the Prosserman JCC.

With files from JTA

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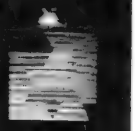

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Greater Toronto Area

Powerful pronouncements

The images in this column of Israel's President Shimon Peres addressing the Deutscher Bundestag (German Parliament) evoke strong feelings and emotions.

"If only," we ask ourselves rhetorically, but then quickly cast the cruel question aside.

Peres was in Berlin on Jan. 27, International Holocaust Memorial Day.

While Peres was in Berlin, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was in Poland, where he spoke at the remnant of the Auschwitz death camp.

It was deeply significant as well as profoundly symbolic that Israel's head of state, Peres, and its head of government, Netanyahu, were at the very places that were the co-epicentres, 65 years ago, of the vast vortex of the Nazi evil that swirled its genocidal path across most of Europe.

It was on Jan. 27, 1945, that the advancing Soviet army threw open the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau. We know what they saw. As Irwin Cotler has said, what they saw was too terrible to imagine, but not too terrible to have happened.

Jan. 27 has become the date in the international arena to consider the Holocaust and its universal implications.

Nissan 27 is the date in the Jewish calendar when the Jewish People commemorates Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah.

On April 12, 1951, the Knesset declared 27 Nissan as *Yom Hashoah U'Mered HaGetaot* (Holocaust and Ghetto Revolt Remembrance Day). The name of the commemoration soon evolved to the current Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah.

That particular date in Nissan was selected because of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. Typical of the Nazis' unique sadism, they began their assault on the ghetto on the first day of Pesach 1943. To ensure that the commemoration of the Nazis' destruction of European Jewry did not coincide with the celebration of the Exodus from ancient Egypt, Yom Hashoah was fixed for later in the month.

From that eerie podium in Poland, Netanyahu told the assembly of dignitaries and the world: "The most important lesson from the Shoah is that murderous evil must be stopped as soon as possible, before it can realize its schemes." This was clearly an unveiled reference to the possibility of nuclear menace from Iran.

The prime minister then made a statement that he knew would be heard by his countrymen and most Jews around the world. He intended it as well for the decision-makers in Tehran.

"I pledge as prime minister that we will never let the hand of evil harm our people and our state. Never again."

Speaking in Hebrew, Peres delivered a pointed, impassioned speech that depicted in both personal and collective references the nature of Jewish history during the last century and the nature of Jewish aspirations in this century.

He spoke both poetically and plainly, neither skirting nor dwelling upon the pain of the past, nor avoiding essential truths that must have sounded uncomfortable to some of the members of the Bundestag.

"In the State of Israel, and across the world, survivors of the Holocaust are gradually departing from the world of the living. Their numbers are daily diminishing.

"And at the same time, men and women who took part in the most odious activity on earth – that of genocide – still live on German and European soil, and in other parts of the world.

"My request of you is: please do everything to bring them to justice.

"This is not revenge in our eyes. This is an educational lesson... for the young generation, wherever they may be. That they may remember and never forget, that they should know what took place..."

Peres' words cut to the heart of a great many issues pressing against the Jewish heart today. He concluded with the words of *Hatikvah*.

On the same day, not too far away from Berlin and Auschwitz, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel delivered a major address to the Italian parliament.

He too chose not to allow the moment to pass without saying what needed to be said.

He criticized Pope Pius XII, albeit without pronouncing his name.

"Whether at the lowest level of politics *or the highest level of spirituality*, silence never helps the victims. Silence always helps the aggressor."

When asked subsequently to clarify the reference, a spokesperson for Wiesel confirmed that "highest level of spirituality" was indeed an allusion to Pius XII who was pope during World War II. The criticism by Wiesel was therefore also criticism of Pope Benedict's current efforts to beatify Pope Pius.

By any estimation, the cumulative impact of the three presentations by these three very special and very significant men of Jewish life was a powerful pronouncement of Jewish survival, presence and permanence 65 years after the Shoah.

* * *

Next week's column will be written in Israel.

–MBD

SeeJN

WHAT A WARSAW GHETTO BUNKER LOOKED LIKE

As part of the commemoration of International Holocaust Memorial Day last week on January 27, the Holocaust History Museum at Kibbutz Yad Mordechai assembled a display of a restored ground bunker in the Warsaw ghetto from 1943. The kibbutz is named after Mordechai Anielewicz, one of the leaders of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising against the Nazis.

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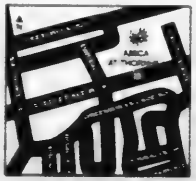

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Greater Toronto Area

Israel the focus of modern anti-Semitism, scholar says

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Contemporary anti-Semitism largely turns on delegitimizing Israel, says the author of an encyclopedic work on the history of this ageless phenomenon.

"Anti-Semitism in 2010 is focused primarily around the delegitimization of the state of Israel, blaming it for all the turmoil in the Middle East and beyond," Hebrew University historian Robert Wistrich said in an interview last week.

Widely known as the dean of historians of anti-Semitism, he was on a tour of the United States to publicize his latest book, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, published by Random House earlier this month.

Wistrich, the director of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism, said that anti-Semites prey on Israel.

"Israel's existence and the desire to annihilate it is the main trigger, pretext and rationalization for anti-Semites today – whether from the right or the left, or from religious or secular."

Robert Wistrich

Asked if Israeli policies fan anti-Semitism, he replied, "Obviously any action by Israel in its own self-defence or self-interest will provoke more hostility. This is a deadly trap, a harsh cycle that must be broken."

Describing anti-Semitism as a "deadly cocktail" of racist conspiracy themes, hostility to the West, demonization of Israel and "a spineless appeasement of Islamic extremism," Wistrich claimed it is wrapped in "a truly mendacious facade of caring about human rights."

He expressed concern regarding the growing respectability of "anti-Semitic discourse" on university campuses .

"I am particularly concerned by the hostility to Israel – and to Jews who defend Israel – on some Canadian college campuses. It comes mainly from the pro-Palestinian left and Muslim students – what I call the Red-Green axis."

In his book, he writes: "There is a return to the advocacy of economic and academic boycotts, as well as to the more subtle forms of social ostracism directed against Jews who support Israel."

Asked at what point anti-Zionism morphs into anti-Semitism, he said, "Most anti-Zionism no longer needs to become anti-Semitic – it crossed that line some time ago."

Criticism of Israel's policies is one thing, he noted. "It is a normal part of democratic life. The most severe critics of Israel live in Israel, but except for some pathological cases in academia, they are ready to defend their country."

But demonization is totally different, Wistrich added. "It seeks the death of the individual Jew, the demise of Israeli society and the end of Jewish national existence."

Charging that anti-Semitism is "deeply ingrained" in the body politics of Islam and the culture of the Arab world and Iran, he said that Holocaust denial is "a kind of state doctrine" in Iran's Islamic republic today and is very popular in Arab countries.

Calling Holocaust denial an integral component of modern anti-Semitism, Wistrich warned it is "a highly toxic phenomenon with genocidal implications."

Compared to the anti-Semitism of the Muslim world, anti-Semitism in such European countries as Germany and Poland is much weaker than it was before World War II. "But the far right there is still viciously anti-Jewish," he said.

Wistrich pointed out that "a strong guilt complex" about the Holocaust in Germany and eastern Europe sometimes produces "defensive anti-Semitic reactions."

In his opinion, anti-Semitism seems to be on the upswing in most western nations, including Canada.

"The United States is probably the least anti-Jewish of the leading western democracies, but it is by no means immune to infection."

Wistrich is critical of the Vatican's current effort to beatify Pope Pius XII, whom critics say was virtually silent during the Holocaust.

"He was certainly no hero, nor a great friend of the Jews. We should, however, wait till the Vatican archives are open before passing a more conclusive judgment."

The author of such works as *Socialism and the Jews* (1982), *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (1992) and *Islamic Judeophobia* (2004), Wistrich said his current book, *A Lethal Obsession*, is "the most comprehensive study yet made by any scholar on global anti-Semitism, especially as it has existed since 1945."

He said he wrote it as "a guide for the perplexed in our generation, not as a definitive solution to the eternal riddle of anti-Semitism."

Wistrich, who will turn 65 in April, was born in Kazakhstan, the son of Polish Jews who fled Poland after Germany's invasion in 1939.

Upon earning a PhD from the University of London, he was chosen director of research at the Institute of Contemporary Research and the Weiner Library in London. After joining the staff at Hebrew U, he was appointed director of the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism.

The centre publishes *Antisemitism International*, an annual research journal, and oversees the activities of the Felix Posen Bibliographic Project, the world's most comprehensive bibliography of materials on anti-Semitism.

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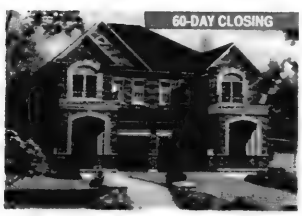

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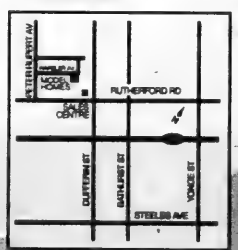

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Abbas goes down the up staircase

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas was in Moscow last week for talks with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. One should be able to assume he was there to explain the subtle nuances of his Mideast policies to his Russian counterpart in an earnest endeavour to advance the peace process with the Jewish state.

That may not be a valid assumption.

Abbas' policies are hardly nuanced, let alone subtly so.

He repeated his peace-strangling mantra that he will not return to the negotiations table until Israel stops all construction in east Jerusalem. "If I engage in negotiations while construction goes on, they will say that it is theirs, since I was willing to resume talks while construction continued," he told an Arabic -language Russian TV news program.

Abbas avoided telling his interviewer, however, that he had no apparent difficulty at all in negotiating with previous governments of Israel while the Jews were building in east Jerusalem.

But the PA president last week added a new, surrealistic level to his solipsistic syllogisms regarding his refusal to sit at a table with Israel. As reported in the *Jerusalem Post*, when asked if would acknowledge Israel to be the homeland of the Jewish people, "Abbas said that this demand appeared only in the 1947 UN partition plan, hinting that Israel would have to implement that plan in order to gain recognition as a Jewish state."

Abbas' silly musings slight Palestinian sensibilities even as they mock anyone genuinely striving to move the process forward.

The Jews in Mandatory Palestine (or Palestinians, as they were then called) did accept the partition plan. It was the Arab League and the local leaders of the disparate Arab groupings in Mandatory Palestine who did not. The Arabs inside and outside Mandatory Palestine launched a war to exterminate the Jews. But the Jews refused to be exterminated.

Is Abbas coyly suggesting the Arabs should have accepted partition in 1947? Hardly. He is, rather, suggesting that he can no more recognize Israel as a Jewish state than the leaders of Israel today can revert to the 1947 Partition Plan.

Instead of moving up, even if tentatively and slowly, on the staircase toward a platform of discussions and negotiations, the PA president is actually clomping his clumsy way down.

He offers his people no hope. And equally problematic for the future, he offers the Israeli people no hope.

Abbas is entrenching diplomatic stalemate and political atrophy.

One of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's key security advisors, Uzi Arad, warned on the weekend that "the Palestinian policy of refusal to negotiate will become a problem for the Palestinians." It already has.

Abbas should sit down with Netanyahu and start talking.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli defence minister Yitzhak Rabin wrapped up three days of talks in Washington, D.C., with U.S. president Ronald Reagan and other administration officials by thanking Reagan for increasing U.S. military assistance to Israel in the fiscal year by $400 million (US). Rabin had asked for a $300-million increase as Israel faced an economic crisis that forced the government to institute austerity measures.

Dry Bones
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Anti-Semitism at Concordia U

As a former Concordia University student, I like to return to that infamous campus that rioted on the occasion of the current prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu's visit, in September 2002, just to see what's going on. From reading the current student newspapers and listening to the students, I feel that the campus is as anti-Israel and anti-Semitic as ever.

I can't see how Jewish students can feel comfortable on that campus currently, though I commend them for trying, as I did, to get an education there. I think resources from the Jewish community should be allocated to help the students of Concordia stave off the nastiness emanating from the hallways of Concordia.

This is also important as Concordia serves as a breeding ground for anti-Israel and anti-Jewish feeling in the wider island of Montreal and, by extension, the rest of Quebec.

Jonathan Wexler
Montreal

* * *

A midrash about trees

Rachel Turkienicz's column "Not a Jewish Arbor Day at all" (Jan. 14) completely overlooks and somewhat disparages what Zionists, from atheist secular to modern Orthodox, have made of Tu b'Shvat. It is a holiday not about "*orlah*," "counting" or the haredi cutting of a young boy's hair to give him that Ashkenazi minhag called "payes" (which these days is celebrated on Lag b'Omer), but rather it has become a midrash about trees, fruit, reforestation and the redemption of the Land of Israel and concern for its future through a concern for its ecology. It has been a Zionist holiday for more than 100 years, and the omission of that insight is a serious oversight.

Eric Mendelsohn
Toronto

* * *

Tzedakah is an obligation

Daniel Held's column "Can we match the Mormons?" (Jan. 7) raises a poignant concern for our community – one that is all too often swept under the rug because, paradoxically, Toronto is so generous here and in Israel.

I ask how many of us appreciate that tzedakah is not a choice, but an obligation – a responsibility! It may contribute to Jewish ethical living, but it is not why one ought to be giving. And it has little to do with our level of maturity or sophistication.

But how do we get the almost 80 per cent who don't give at all to "get" what the other 20 get at some level? And how do we get people to appreciate what, in fact, is an appropriate gift at all? I open up these questions, to add to those raised by Held in his column, and would love to see some thoughts published in future *CJN*s.

Susan Steinberg
Toronto

* * *

Holocaust commemoration

On this International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust (Jan. 27), I want to join in today's remembrance of the countless victims who lost their lives and those who have forever lived with the scars of this human tragedy.

In paying my respects at Yad Vashem in Israel, I learned the stories of countless victims. Today, 65 years after the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp, we remember the inherent evil that is possible when civil liberties are suspended, freedom is denied, and the barbarity of hate emerges in their place.

On behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, I want to restate our condemnation of all attempts to deny and minimize the Holocaust and all crimes against humanity. Together, we join with the Jewish community and bear witness to the Shoah and the determination to live up to the survivors' creed: "Never again."

Tim Hudak, Leader
Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario

* * *

Machal Archives

Thank you for publishing Ralph Lowenstein's article on North American Machal, "North American volunteers for Israel: 'no one knows about us'" (Chanukah supplement, Dec. 10). For 30 years, Lowenstein, a University of Florida professor, has been gathering information for the Machal Archives that he established there.

Upon Lowenstein's retirement, and with the co-operation of the board of the American and Canadian Veterans of Israel, we have formed a relationship with the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS). The AJHS will move the archives from Florida to their New York City museum and make them available to researchers, at the society and on the Internet, by the fall of 2010.

Joseph Warner, President
American and Canadian Veterans of Israel

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Some observations on the conversion crisis

By RABBI REUVEN P. BULKA

The *Canadian Jewish News* was right, and right on, in calling for unity (Jan. 14) in the face of the latest conversion crisis. Two articles on this matter also appeared, one by Rabbi Marc D. Angel in that same issue, and a followup rebuttal by Rabbi Reuven Tradburks on Jan. 21. In their disagreement, there was an obvious agreement that unity is vital. The question at hand is how best to achieve it.

I know both these distinguished rabbis and am singularly aware of their passionate commitment to the long-range welfare of our community – here, in Israel and everywhere else. So what I share with you herein is in no way to be construed as criticism of these rabbis. It's more a personal reflection on the issue as it has developed and on the background of what once was.

Usually, I try to keep away from these matters in a public forum, but the issue at hand is so serious, and the comments from a variety of sources – blogs, shmogs and other places where people can throw garbage with impunity, so misleading and damaging, that I have broken with my past policy. I have no illusions that what I write will make a difference. But I also know that being silent will certainly not make a difference.

In response to Rabbi Angel's plea for a return to a decentralized conversion system, Rabbi Tradburks argues that there is a "wide range of conversion standards among Orthodox rabbis." He is correct on the fact. There is a good reason for this wide range. It is because there is an at least equally wide range of standards within Jewish law (Halachah) on the matter of conversion.

There are three ingredients in conversion. They are 1. Acceptance of the Judaism "package;" 2. Covenantal circumcision (males only), and 3. Immersion in the mikvah waters.

Items 2 and 3 are clear. Item 1, which falls under the well-known umbrella of *kabbalat hamitzvot*, acceptance of the host of Jewish obligations, is not so clear. Without getting into how *kabbalat hamitzvot* in its present form became such an integral component of conversion, it's vital to appreciate that the range of understanding of this concept is quite staggering. On the one end of the spectrum is a view, from a respected Jewish luminary, that just to remove a person from idolatry, even absent acceptance of basic Jewish affirmations (i.e., Shabbat, kashrut, etc.), is adequate justification for proceeding with a conversion.

On the other end is a view that only the promise and "guarantee" of total compliance with every detail of Jewish law is justification for proceeding with a conversion.

It's fair to say that most conversions until recently operated somewhere within this broad spectrum insofar as addressing the matter of *kabbalat hamitzvot*.

And there were many leading rabbis of great stature as rabbinic scholars who were "lenient" by any standard. Some would ask only that the conversion prospect read a book detailing all the major Jewish observances and then come back within a month. I was admittedly a bit leery about the validity of such conversions, and approached a great talmudic luminary to ask whether such conversions are acceptable.

The response was remarkable. This great sage admitted that the conversion standards of that rabbi were "different" than that of others, but at the same time this was a man of integrity and scholarship, and there is no way his conversions can be rejected. That was the climate of the times 20 or 30 years ago. The lament is that this climate no longer exists. It's easy to be united when everyone is the same, but it's much more challenging when we have differences.

In my own personal experience, I was astounded to encounter at least five different situations wherein a couple went to another city to a different but at least equally respected rabbi, whose wife taught the prospective convert for an hour in the morning, then took her to the rabbinic court for her to affirm her embrace of Judaism, followed by immersion in the mikvah that same day, after which the (fervently Orthodox) rabbi married the couple in the afternoon. I do not recommend such a practice, but it was done, and accepted by the community.

It's true that we will have disunity if rabbis reject the conversions of others. But there would be no disunity if there was mutual respect and acceptance. Unfortunately, what once was no longer is. Once, rabbis accepted the conversions of others, even if the conversions operated with different standards. There was no delegitimizing. Just the opposite.

I do not dismiss out of hand the issue of differing standards. But it should be clear that conversion parameters are hardly likely to be the same in smaller cities with less Jewish resources than in larger cities. In Canada, there are some cities with no Jewish schools. We could not, in the past, insist that the converting person assure that his or her children would go to a Jewish school. But there is nothing wrong and everything right with pushing for this in a city that has Jewish schools, or a Jewish school.

In this regard, it has been related to me (second hand, so I cannot vouch for it) that a leading Jewish sage of the previous generation, when asked by his ordained students in rabbinic positions what to push for in regard to *kabbalat hamitzvot* for conversion, told them to do the best they can. This further reinforces the idea that there is a wide range of understanding regarding this component of conversion, as it should be.

What is further lamentable in this situation is that we are now seeing the ugly spectacle of already in-place conversions being questioned. That is beyond lamentable. It is objectionable. It is one thing to set standards for going forward, even if these standards are open to debate. It is quite another to retroactively call into question pre-existing conversions, thereby throwing an entire community of sincere, well-meaning convert families into turmoil. That has to stop. There is simply no excuse for this delegitimizing. I am confident that the Rabbinical Council of America will stand up to this unacceptable invasion of yesterday's rabbinate.

I would love to see a return to the trusting ways of the past, or at least a move in that direction, even if it be with more defined parameters. The train may have already left the station on this, but maybe the opportunity still remains. I certainly hope so.

In the interests of full disclosure, I share with you, the readers, that I was involved in conversion for many years. I entered into this arena very reluctantly, as no other rabbi in my area was willing to do this. I could not accept that congregational rabbis who are entrusted with Jewish posterity refuse to address a most pressing issue, and in many instances even boast that they never did a conversion. Because I am closer to retirement, I have opted not to continue with conversions and instead have referred them to a rabbinic court in Montreal of a most trustworthy group of rabbis, whose bona fides are ironically being unfairly challenged by Israel's rabbinic authorities.

A woman appears before a rabbinic court in Jerusalem as part of her conversion process. ***[Flash90 file photo]***

My conversions, at first finalized outside Ottawa and eventually finalized in my Rabbinical Council of America-approved bet din in Ottawa, probably would be classified as being more in the centre regarding the understanding of *kabbalat hamitzvot*. Given a choice between having strict conversion standards and more welcoming ones, I would always err on the side of "welcome." After the proverbial 120 years, I would much rather answer why I welcomed more Jews than why I prevented more people from becoming Jewish.

Like most other rabbis who have done conversions, not all have been resounding successes. No rabbinic court, however strict, has a perfect record. But we should not stop conversions for that reason any more than we should stop marrying couples because a large percentage of marriages collapse in divorce. And the vast majority – the converts who remain fully Jewish – have been a great source of pride and joy, both personally and communally. God bless them.

Rabbi Bulka is spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas in Ottawa and rabbinic emissary for Canadian Jewish Congress.

Opinions

From the centre to the middle

After a spirited exploration of Reform Judaism two years earlier, last December, the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem held a similar two-day conference on Conservative Judaism. The event took place in the shadow of the movement's difficulties, not the least of which can be seen in Canada, where several former constituent synagogues have formed a union of their own.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

Conservative Judaism has always seen itself as being in the centre, the authentic exponent of normative Judaism that affirms Halachah while, with historic precedent, advocating change in the spirit of the time. It distanced itself from ultra-halachic Orthodoxy and from anti-halachic "informed choice" classical Reform. But this had been easier than to find a place in our post-halachic New Age, which attracts so many today.

The normative Conservative motto of yesteryear, "tradition and change," doesn't seem to work well anymore. What set out to be magisterially centrist has ended up uncomfortably in the middle, often accused of being brittle and wishy-washy.

A word used by several speakers at the conference was "branding," with its implied marketing connotations. It seems that the market in which Conservative Judaism is now competing is less interested in the centre, yet doesn't want to go to the middle. Those who want tradition turn to modern Orthodoxy, which they consider to be more authentic. Those who want change turn to versatile Reform. To paraphrase the terminology of the Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby, Jews hungry for a conventional religious diet turn to Orthodox Judaism. Those who want what he calls "religion a la carte" often choose Reform.

Conservative Judaism is now seeking an ideology that's sufficiently different from Orthodoxy yet distinct, especially in matters of Jewish status, from Reform. It's not easy, because those on its "right" tend to flirt with modern Orthodoxy, whereas those on the "left" may end up in Reform or similar congregations.

Conservative leaders are particularly disappointed that they haven't done better in Israel. Though they have twice as many congregations and many more members than Reform, they're no less shunned by the Orthodox establishment. They also seem to be ignored in most "post-secular spirituality" circles.

I surmise that, given the choice, many exponents of Conservative Judaism would be prepared to be adopted by modern Israeli Orthodoxy, but they're not welcome there. Reform, on the other hand, would be happy to make common cause with them, yet those overtures are being consistently rejected.

Conservative Jews, therefore, may have to get used to sharing the fate of today's religious liberals and learn to live as a minority, even when they wear kippot and keep kosher.

Teachers as priests and prophets

Last month in this space, I wrote about leadership, and I'd like to extend the qualities of a good leader to the role of an effective teacher. If you remember, I used as my example the film *Invictus*. The notion was that just as Nelson Mandela provided a vision of a new South Africa in the prophetic sense, that vision required something tangible that the common folk, white and black, could identify with. In the case of South Africa, that was the Rugby World Cup, and its "priest" was Pienaar of the Springboks.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

If teachers are indeed leaders, they, too, must practice a dialectic between two modes of operation. I turn from Mandela to Apple CEO Steve Jobs. Recently, Rick Spence of the *Financial Post* reviewed a book about Jobs' leadership at Apple that details the success of his presentation skills, or how he teaches. What hit me the hardest was that Jobs is referred to as the "master of disruption."

Jobs carefully designs his presentations and uses a variety of techniques to transmit his message and convince his audience. His cool attire of turtleneck, jeans, and sneakers puts him in a comfort zone for both himself and his "students."

Lesson number 1: be yourself and feel right in your own skin (as the French say). Teachers who act out some persona of what they think a teacher should be only aggravate the artificial (even phony) nature of a classroom. Real life does not consist of 40 minutes of geography followed by 40 minutes of Chumash. School is already a fake environment. Teachers need not contribute more artifice.

Lesson number 2: in an ideal situation, the authentic self of the teacher is someone the students can identify with, be comfortable around and, hopefully, emulate as a model. Teachers who represent a planet other than the one the students inhabit are doomed. In my Moroccan years, I was impressed by teachers who had not completed high school and had no pedagogic training, but came from the same streets as their pupils, ate the same food and prayed in the same synagogues. The mutual respect was a major factor in their pedagogy.

So, if comfort on both sides is so important, why is disruption a quality of teaching that I favour? It is precisely the teacher who is at ease with his/her students and with whom the learners identify who can best use disruption as a teaching tool. Disruption – changing paradigms, upsetting the norm, confusing the convinced – is the function of a pedagogue who is trusted by students. It's in the shift from comfort to confusion that true learning begins. You have nothing to learn if your complacency convinces you that you know it all. But if the one who knows more (the original meaning of "rav" or rabbi), whom you respect, lets you in on new and surprising information, your field of knowledge is disrupted and must change.

This is as true of the next equation in algebra as it is of the wild and wonderful midrash you never dreamed existed in the rabbinic corpus. It's just as true of yet another moral imperative of our value system. In order for children to grow from dependence to autonomy, they must be as disrupted intellectually and emotionally, as were the Israelite slaves in Egypt on their path to freedom. I have often felt that the reason we are commanded to teach our children the Exodus story every year is because they, like our slave ancestors, must traverse a similar process of learning autonomy and responsibility after a childhood of carefree dependence.

And so, while leaders must balance the prophetic vision with priestly service, teachers must constantly maintain a dialogue between the comfort zone they represent and the shift or disruption they teach. As expected from me, this is not about continuity, a term which does no credit to education. This process is about creativity and growth.

If you're a parent and not a classroom teacher, just substitute parent for all the references to teachers above. We are all of us teachers and leaders.

Remembering Abraham Sutzkever

His words strove to retrieve and lament a lost world and a wounded language. Now we mark the passing of the Yiddish poet Abraham (Avrom) Sutzkever, in late January in Tel Aviv. Arguably the finest Yiddish poet of the 20th century, Sutzkever saw two world wars, the decimation of European Jewry and the renewal of Jewish life in Israel. Through everything, he continued to write stunning poems, developing a corpus of work that reflects his intense commitment to Jewish life, culture and the Yiddish language.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

Born in Lithuania in 1913, Sutzkever was raised in Vilna, after a brief sojourn in Siberia. Between the two world wars, he was part of a group of Yiddish Vilna writers called Yung Vilne, or young Vilna, which included the novelist Chaim Grade and the poet Shmerke Kaczerginski. The group rejected the notion that Yiddish literature was obligated to have a social or political purpose. The lyric poems he wrote reflected the world of nature and his sense of self in the world.

But like other Yiddish poets of his generation, both in Europe and in America, with the rise of Nazism and dire persecution of Jews, Sutzkever's writing took on a more pointed sense of purpose. Sutzkever and his family were taken to the Vilna Ghetto in 1941. His mother and his young son were murdered there. During his time there, until the ghetto's destruction in 1943, he composed more than eighty poems that reflected both his personal losses as well as the collective losses and suffering of the ghetto Jews, capturing the pervasive death that was their everyday life.

In his 1942 poem, *Burnt Pearls*, the image of the title serves as a metaphor for the ghetto dead. The poem meditates on the impossible task of Yiddish poetry amid the devastation of the European Jewish, where "you, written word, substitute for my world." At the same time, his continued output reflected a stubborn commitment to the possibilities of language and literature. In many ways, this steady act of writing sustained him through unspeakably difficult times.

This prolific writing under impossible circumstances was an integral part of a web of activity that occupied Sutzkever in the Vilna Ghetto. He established literary groups to foster creative writing and culture in the ghetto. At the same time, he became active in the ghetto's underground. At great personal risk, he succeeded in rescuing important Jewish cultural artifacts, concealing YIVO documents, books and drawings in the ghetto. He was able to retrieve these hidden treasures after war.

Sutzkever wrote of the intertwining of armed and spiritual resistance in his 1943 poem, *The Lead Plates at the Rom Press*. Located in Vilna, the Rom Press was an important publisher of Jewish books and most famous for publishing the definitive edition of the Talmud. The ghetto underground devised a plan to melt down its lead printing plates in order to manufacture ammunition. Sutzkever imagines the molten metal containing "the spirit" of its melted letters, embodying Jewish culture, experience, creativity: "Liquefied bullets, gleamed with thoughts:/A verse from Babylon, a verse from Poland."

Upon the liquidation of the Vilna Ghetto in 1943, Sutzkever succeeded in escaping with his wife, Freydke, to the nearby Naroch forest, where they joined up with the partisans. Eventually, he was flown to Moscow, rescued because one of his wartime poems had been published there, and its power made it useful for Stalin's efforts to win international support for the war against Germany. In 1946, he testified in the Nuremberg trials, and the following year he and Freydke moved to Tel Aviv.

There, amid the flowering of modern Hebrew, Sutzkever continued to write Yiddish poems, and to nurture Yiddish culture. His work embraces the Israeli landscape while retrieving the European past. He founded an important Yiddish literary quarterly called *Di Goldene keyt*, or the golden chain, which he edited for half a century.

When he died at age 96, he left behind a brilliant body of writing and a striking legacy.

Yehi zichro boruch – may his memory be a blessing.

The Kirshner File

Is George Mitchell on an impossible mission?

George Mitchell, the special U.S. envoy to the Middle East, has learned once more that it takes two to tango. A year after President Barack Obama tasked him with the mission of reviving Israel's on-again, off-again peace process with the Palestinian Authority, which collapsed at the end of 2008, Mitchell appears to have reached a dead end, like virtually all his predecessors since the 1967 Six Day War.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Obama has reason to be concerned. Two weeks ago, he told *Time* magazine he might have raised expectations too high and "overestimated" his administration's ability to forge meaningful diplomatic progress. "I'll be honest with you," he said. "This is just really hard. Even for a guy like George Mitchell."

Obama attributed the impasse to three interrelated factors: the Palestinian Authority's fear that concessions to Israel may deepen its increasingly bitter struggle with its rival, Hamas, which calls for the destruction of Israel; Israel's difficulty in making "bold gestures" to the Palestinians, and the Arab world's impatience with the stagnation and its refusal to normalize relations with Israel unless it ends its "illegal occupation" of the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

If Mitchell fails, it will be a case of deja vu all over again.

A decade ago, following the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising, the outgoing president of the United States, Bill Clinton, asked Mitchell to study the upsurge of violence and make recommendations for tamping it down. Mitchell, delivering a report to Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, called for a truce and confidence-building measures so that talks between Israel and the Palestinians could be restarted. As well, he urged the Palestinian Authority to crack down on terrorism and Israel to cease all settlement activity in the territories.

Though Mitchell's recommendations were endorsed by Israel and the Palestinian Authority, they were not implemented. In fact, they were folded into the 2003 "road map" peace plan, which eventually withered on the vine. The then-president of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, would not or could not rein in Palestinian attacks, while Israel's prime minister, Ariel Sharon, rejected the very concept of a settlement freeze.

Despite his failure to reconcile the clashing visions of Israelis and Palestinians, Mitchell accepted Obama's appointment as special representative to the Mideast. Obama had high hopes that Mitchell – a skilled negotiator of Irish and Lebanese Maronite descent who brokered the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement in Northern Ireland and who served as U.S. Senate majority leader– might succeed in untangling Israel's century-long, intractable conflict with the Palestinians.

Last January, in what was described as a "listening tour," Mitchell set out for the Middle East, saying his objective was to achieve a two-state solution within the framework of stability and security. On April 15, two weeks after Benjamin Netanyahu's right-of-centre government was sworn in, Mitchell embarked on his inaugural working trip to Israel and the Palestinian territories, repeating the mantra that the best way to resolve the conflict was through the creation of an independent Palestinian state coexisting with Israel.

Since then, Mitchell has become a regular visitor to Jerusalem and Ramallah, the de facto capital of the Palestinian Authority.

On his last visit to the region late last month, he conferred with, among others, Netanyahu and President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, his main interlocutors.

Mitchell failed to lure Abbas back to the negotiating table, with Abbas saying he would not resume talks until Israel agreed to a full settlement freeze in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem. Israel announced a partial 10-month freeze last November, infuriating Jewish settlers. The United States praised it as a positive step forward, but the Palestinians dismissed it as a disingenuous and half-baked ploy designed to appease Obama.

Nor did Mitchell make any substantial headway with Netanyahu, notwithstanding his support for an immediate resumption of negotiations without conditions. Within hours of conferring with Mitchell, he reaffirmed that Israel would retain the Gush Etzion bloc and two of the largest settlements in the West Bank, Maale Adumim and Ariel.

In the face of Mitchell's latest setback, Israel's defence minister, Ehud Barak, warned last week that the unresolved Palestinian problem poses a greater threat to Israel than a nuclear-armed Iran, a view not shared by Netanyahu. Though Barak admitted that the peace process is frozen, he predicted that negotiations would resume by March.

Barak's optimism seems like an exercise in wishful thinking, given the atmosphere of mutual suspicion and mistrust. Yet Barak may be on to something. Before leaving Israel on Jan. 25, Mitchell submitted a proposal to Abbas suggesting that talks should focus on confidence-building measures to improve conditions in the West Bank for Palestinians rather than on volatile core issues such as the final borders of a future Palestinian state and the fate of Palestinian refugees.

If the Palestinians embrace Mitchell's plan, Israel could remove more roadblocks in the West Bank, release additional Palestinian prisoners, reopen Orient House in East Jerusalem and expand Area A in the West Bank, where the Palestinians possess both civil and security control.

U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell, left, meets Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem late last month *[Israel Sun]*

Even if his proposal is acceptable to Abbas, Mitchell will still be a long way off from achieving his goal of a two-state solution, since Israel and the Palestinian Authority are so far apart on both minor and major issues. For the past few months, Abbas has consistently said he will not renew talks unless Israel stops all construction in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, recognizes the 1967 borders of a Palestinian state and agrees to resume negotiations where they left off in December 2008.

Abbas and Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, met regularly to thrash out their differences. On the eve of his resignation, stemming from a widening corruption scandal, Olmert proposed a far-reaching territorial swap. In exchange for annexing 6.3 per cent of the West Bank – home to 75 per cent of Jewish settlers – Israel would transfer 5.8 per cent of its pre-1967 territory to the Palestinians. Although Olmert's offer was unprecedented in its generosity, Abbas did not respond, correctly assuming that Olmert's days as premier were numbered.

Netanyahu, given his track record and his reliance on coalition partners that staunchly oppose real territorial compromise, is not likely to be as forthcoming as Olmert.

Since the beginning of 2010, while repeatedly urging Abbas to negotiate with him and "stop wasting time," he has set down several markers that the Palestinians have roundly denounced. Fearing rocket attacks from the West Bank, like those emanating from the Gaza Strip and Lebanon, Netanyahu has said that Israel must maintain a permanent presence in the Jordan Valley, along the eastern border of a future Palestinian state.

In addition, he has declared that Israel will never cede control of east Jerusalem, where the Palestinians wish to establish their capital, or retreat to the 1967 armistice lines. Netanyahu, too, has warned that the settlement moratorium is a "one time, temporary" move, while his foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, has said that Israel has emptied its "arsenal of gestures," including the reduction of roadblocks, to the Palestinians.

In spite of the formidable obstacles that lie ominously ahead, the United States is determined to push ahead, warning that delay is in no one's interest and only makes things worse. Clearly, Mitchell has an immense job on his hands.

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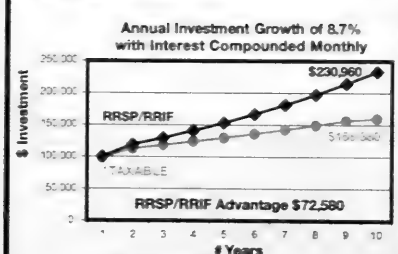

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New strain of Holocaust denial, lawyer says

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

There's standard Holocaust-denial and then there's the new version. Call it Holocaust denial 2.0.

In the "standard" variety, the argument is that Hitler did not want to kill the Jews or that Hitler did not, in fact, kill the Jews. For proponents of that view, think Ernst Zundel or David Irving.

The "new" strain of Holocaust denial "denies the specificity of the Holocaust" or attempts to use it as a weapon against the State of Israel, insisting that what the Israelis are doing to the Palestinians is pretty much what the Germans did to the Jews.

Think far left and radical Islamists for advocates of that view.

Anthony Julius is a British lawyer who witnessed first hand the excesses of Nazi apologists, having successfully defended historian Deborah Lipstadt in a notorious libel case brought by history writer David Irving. Julius will be in Toronto to deliver two lectures on Feb. 13 and 14 as part of a 10-day seminar of the Mark and Gail Appel Program for Holocaust and anti-Racism Education at York University.

The first lecture is titled "Holocaust Denial: What's the Point." The second is "How Can Good Literature Be Bad for the Jews?"

Anthony Julius

In a telephone interview from London, Julius said the two strains of new and old anti-Semitism can be seen converging in rhetoric that's common to both. In 1925, a notorious British Nazi referred to Jews as "scum" who were intent on driving Palestinians out of their land.

"That's close to the language of current anti-Israel activists," minus the reference to "scum," he said.

Back then, the extremists were "romanticizing the Arabs, the rural Bedouin, and deprecating the urban Jew."

Today, "they romanticize the radical Palestinian resister and disparage the Israeli army..." The one continuing theme is anti-Semitism and hostility to Israel, he said.

The Holocaust "put paid to the fantasy of Jewish power and conspiracy." But Israel's success in the Six Day War in 1967 "liberated anti-Semites from their caution about Jews," he said.

Today, "a red-green alliance" of leftists and Islamic radicals poses a threat to Jews in the West, he said.

As to his second topic, good literature being bad for Jews, Julius said it is based on his work on T.S. Eliot. (His first book was titled *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form*.) It poses the question of whether great literature can be compatible with ugly racist sentiments.

You can take "the view that a literary work has merit regardless of the views of the writer," Julius said.

York's Holocaust and anti-racism program was launched in 2001 and is directed by professors Michael Brown and Mark Webber. It consists of a month-long field study in Poland and Germany, which was held last summer, followed by the seminar at York.

The program is aimed at future educators from Canada, Poland and Germany who go on to teach and research issues connected to the Holocaust and racism, Brown said.

SHOES FOR HAITI

Students, parents and staff at United Synagogue Day School – including students Joshua Sud, left, and Matthew Shuckett – donated 1,721 pairs of shoes for survivors of last month's devastating earthquake in Haiti. All USDS students were involved in donating, sorting and packing the shoes.

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An open letter:

TO HER EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR MIRIAM ZIV AND CONSUL-GENERAL AMIR GISSIN

As full and enthusiastic supporters of our beloved Israel, we rabbis of the Greater Toronto Area, are deeply concerned about the threat to Israel that comes from within. The battlefront is the Kotel.

On November 18, 2009 Jerusalem police arrested an Israeli woman, *Nofrat Frenkel*, at the Kotel. Her crime? Wearing a Tallit and holding a Torah scroll. It is shocking that these two acts seem to be a crime under Israeli law. The battle continues. On January 5 of this year Israeli police called in for questioning another woman, *Anat Hoffman*, because she wore a Tallit at the Kotel. If this kind of police action had taken place in any other country, the world Jewish community would have accused the state of anti-Semitism and violating basic human rights.

So how can such a travesty be tolerated within the Jewish State itself?

We wish to know what the Government of Israel plans to do to redress the injustices done to Ms. Frankel and Ms. Hoffman. What steps the Government will take to ensure that the Kotel, the centre of Jewish hope and prayer throughout the centuries, will become a place where all Jews will be welcome to worship according to their own tradition? As rabbis and committed Zionists, we cherish the State of Israel as a bastion of democracy and an exemplar of the prophetic values of justice and peace. These values are too precious to lose to religious fanaticism and political manipulation.

On behalf of the undersigned rabbis of Greater Toronto

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Rabbi Arthur Bielfeld
Rabbi Michael Brown
Rabbi Jordan Cohen
Rabbi Lori Cohen
Rabbi Eli Courante
Rabbi Adam Cutler
Rabbi Michael Dolgin
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Rabbi Cory Weiss
Rabbi Stephen Wise

USCJ focuses on 'service delivery' to Cdn. shuls

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The transition that will incorporate the Canadian region of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), along with three of its nearby U.S. counterparts, into a new entity called the NorthEast district is officially underway, according to an update issued by the umbrella group.

The reorganization is expected to be complete by the end of 2010 and is part of a larger restructuring of the UCSJ that will consolidate 15 regions into six districts. The purpose is to save money and hopefully improve service delivery by sharing resources over a wider geographic area.

But the move comes amid concerns in Canada that the USCJ hasn't been sufficiently attuned to the needs of its Canadian shuls, and after a number of local synagogues broke away from the group in 2008 partly for that reason.

The Canadian region includes 16 congregations from Ontario to the east coast, and will be combined with the old Connecticut Valley, Empire (New York State, western Massachusetts, and southern Vermont) and New England regions. There are some two dozen USCJ-affiliated congregations in Canada in total.

As part of the transition, Albany, N.Y.-based Howard Goldberg, formerly assistant director of the USCJ's Canadian region, became assistant director of NorthEast district on Jan. 18. He's the main contact person for Canadian region congregations. Aaron Kischel, who is based in Boston and served as the New England region's executive director for many years, is the new district director.

As well, Rabbi Jennifer Gorman, who is based in Toronto's USCJ office, has been appointed "consultant," a newly created position to serve the needs of congregations here.

Rabbi Gorman will also continue as director of youth activities. Kadima and United Synagogue Youth will "remain as they are for the foreseeable future," the communique said, referring to the geographic boundaries for the two youth groups.

Paul Kochberg, president of the Canadian region, told *The CJN* last week that "more and more," the USCJ – the umbrella for some 700 North American congregations – is becoming sensitive to Canadian needs, aside from occasional use of American-focused terminology.

"They sometimes talk in terms of 'national,' as opposed to 'international,' " he said. "We just continue to correct them."

However, he described two recent glitches as being more serious.

On Jan. 13, USCJ members were informed about a Haiti relief fund. An online payment option was available only through a U.S. website – not through the Canadian office with tax receipts available for Canadians, until the omission was pointed out to them.

The previous day, a press release was sent from Goldberg's office urging congregations and congregants to write to Michael Oren, Israel's ambassador to the United States, to express concerns about the issue of women being allowed to pray and wear a tallit at the Kotel. Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, wasn't mentioned until a later e-mail, after Kochberg brought the faux pas to the USCJ's attention.

Joanne Palmer, USCJ's director of communications, said that Oren had spoken about the issue at the USCJ's biennial convention, and that was the reason people were asked to write to him, although that was not explicitly stated at the time.

Kochberg said that the organization's leaders, including executive vice-president and CEO Rabbi Steven Wernick, who started in those positions last summer, are "mindful of making sure that Canadian synagogues are recognized as being Canadian. They're mindful of the difference and they want to be sure that notwithstanding this merger, the Canadian nature of our Canadian synagogues will not be lost."

The most recent communique from Goldberg's office stated, "During a time when a number of regional offices across North America are being closed… the decision of the USCJ international leadership to retain a USCJ office in Canada, and specifically in Toronto, is a demonstration of the importance that USCJ places on the role of Canadian congregations within USCJ."

Kochberg said that "synagogues here and in the States essentially need the same services – help with fundraising, help with membership development and retention, and leadership development."

Wendy Schneider, co-president of Beth Jacob Synagogue in Hamilton, Ont., agrees.

"We have an ongoing and very positive relationship with USCJ," she said. "I've been very satisfied with the level of service I've gotten."

She cited help with the synagogue's website, which uses the organization's server; two USCJ listservs that she is on; and ongoing support from Goldberg when the synagogue was undergoing staffing changes. "I don't think we could have done it without him," she said.

Schneider is aware that other congregations have had issues over services received in relation to fees paid. Had her synagogue not obtained support from Goldberg, "maybe we would have felt that way, too," she said.

When Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue and Beth Tzedec Congregation left the USCJ in 2008, they cited mainly financial concerns, but also philosophical differences.

Mark Marmer, a board member at Shaar Shalom Synagogue in Thornhill, Ont., doesn't believe philosophical differences are important when it comes to the USCJ, which is primarily focused on delivering services, not mandating theology.

"Synagogues operate autonomously [with respect to implementing a particular religious philosophy], but I think that synagogues need these services," he said.

As co-chair of Shaar Shalom's membership committee, Marmer received assistance from Goldberg both through in-person visits and via Skype. He added that the USCJ has changed its approach: "Instead of just passively waiting for synagogues to call them and say, 'I need this,' they're trying to make one-on-one personal connections with the synagogues."

REENA GETS GRANT

Madeleine Meilleur, Ontario's minister of community and social services, announced last Thursday that the government will be giving $1.5 million to Reena, a Jewish non-profit social service agency that helps integrate adults with developmental disabilities into society. The money will go partly toward the construction of Reena's new building near Rutherford Road and Bathurst Street on the Lebovic Campus. Construction is expected to start this summer. The funding will also help Reena add 56 new spaces to its professional development training program and reduce waiting lists for day and evening youth programs.

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Author warns Jews against existential threats

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

As mid-life career changes go, David Solway's has been pretty successful.

An educator and award-winning poet, Solway was spurred to shift gears after 9/11, becoming an author of political books, commentator and public speaker. The terrorist attack on American landmarks affected many people, but for Solway it was like a flashbulb went off in his head, telling him that this momentous event was also a call to action.

Since then, he has been on the parapet, warning his fellow Jews and others who enjoy the benefits of western civilization that the enemy is at the gate; that the 9/11 attacks weren't isolated incidents but part of a broader clash of civilizations; that Jews in particular need to wake up and smell the coffee.

The enemy, whom he has no qualms identifying as militant Islamists, are coming after you, first in Israel and eventually here as well. He believes too many Jews are complacent, too stuck in their ways in supporting liberal political figures intent on appeasing their enemies instead of fighting back.

Needless to say, his attitude will rile many Jews, but his first book, *The Big Lie: On Terror, Antisemitism and Identity* has been a Canadian bestseller and he's a regular contributor to conservative American blogs and websites. His ideas have clearly struck a chord with many readers.

David Solway

His latest opus, *Hear, O Israel!* (Mantua Books) may well ruffle the feathers of "the good Jews, who Ezra Levant calls the 'official Jews.'" It is also directed to "righteous Gentiles" – those who recognize the danger and support Israel. "But I'm most concerned with the unrighteous Jews," he said.

Solway places the Jewish people into two broad camps. One consists of "the frightened, timid, cowering Jews who say don't rock the boat when the boat is already riddled with holes and in danger of sinking."

This group believes in working behind the scenes with political figures so as not to draw hostility to Jews.

Another group is the "bland, ineffable, scholarly high falutin' Jews on the model of Shimon Peres in Israel. They are people who express themselves in a global fashion, who see themselves as above the tenets of their own faith or even the need to survive. You have a class of highly intellectual Jews who are not too preoccupied with their own survival [as Jews]."

Nevertheless, Solway said, "being a Jew is like living with a sixth finger. Even if you amputate it, you have a tell-tale stump" and enemies will always recognize you as Jewish.

In titling his book *Hear, O Israel!* – the opening words of the daily prayer, the *Shema* – Solway said "I'm using the *Shema*, but not addressing it to the nation called Israel, but to the people called Israel."

What the Jewish people have to recognize, he continued, is that "to be a Jew is to be at risk."

Anti-Semitism, which many felt had receded, is making a comeback in Europe. "It goes hand in hand with the reigning idiocy, the nanny state, the new socialism," he said.

Leftists, socialists and liberals are placing themselves on the same side of many issues with "what should be Islamic enemies, who are taking over Europe, bit by bit."

"What's being exported to our shores, especially in the United States under [President] Barack Obama is a leftist, socialist almost communistic reform that has made common cause with violent Islam," Solway said.

Already there have been a number of serious attacks by Islamists during Obama's administration – the Fort Hood, Texas, shooting, the Little Rock, Ark., shootings, and the attempt to down a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit.

Even on Canadian campuses, "Jewish kids have to hide behind closed doors or not wear a kippah," he said.

Like his comments in a telephone interview, his arguments in *Hear, O Israel!* appear relentlessly pessimistic. But Solway believes he's simply describing reality, ugly that it is, and that to meet the challenges ahead, Jews "have to revive the Maccabean strain in our nature, to realize that as safe as we think we are, it is a mirage, an illusion.

"Jews must be vigilant, be aware. You have to be careful and be knowledgeable about what it means to be a Jew.

"There comes a time when you have to be willing to fight. You cannot capitulate or surrender. You have to be brave. You have to be aware."

That means becoming politically astute, lobbying government, supporting Israeli causes, and even making aliyah if it suits you.

If there's a threat against Jews out there, Solway is a virtual lightning rod, drawing it to his own backyard. Since he left his teaching job at John Abbott College in Montreal, his writings have generated plenty of anger. "I made a lot enemies. You should see the hate mail, the death threats."

"I live on the edge. I'm not a comfortable Jew. There's danger," he said.

His wife was so concerned, she suggested they leave their home in western Quebec and move to a Greek island. Instead, he bought a big dog, part wolf, for protection.

Solway said he's not an observant Jew and he's certainly "not a flaccid, insipid half-dead American Jew. I draw my ancestry from the biblical prophets. They are the sages that live inside me.

"I know I am infallibly Jewish even though I seem non-Jewish to some. I don't practise, but I remember," he said.

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UJA Toronto's Hope for Haiti Relief Fund surpasses $700,000

IsraAID treating up to 150 patients a day

By Daniel Horowitz

Thanks to the generosity and compassion of Toronto's Jewish community, UJA's Hope for Haiti Disaster Relief Fund has so far raised over $700,000.

The funds are supporting IsraAID: The Forum for International Humanitarian Aid, in its search and rescue efforts on the ground. IsraAID currently has two teams in Haiti.

Funds raised are allocated to United Israel Appeal Canada, for which IsraAID delivers relief services in Haiti. Donations to UJA's Hope for Haiti Disaster Relief Fund are being matched by the Canadian government.

The IsraAID teams currently on the ground have extended their medical and post trauma relief to one of the dire refugee camps that have sprung up in Port-au-Prince since the devastating magnitude 7.0 earthquake pounded the Caribbean nation on January 12th.

The secured camp is located just outside the grounds of the US Ambassador's residence and is now home to 45,000 refugees. The entire area is closed and is secured by the American Navy, and the US Embassy has adopted the camp and is providing humanitarian relief in coordination with a selected number of NGOs. IsraAID has been asked to provide the medical and post-trauma aid to the refugee population in the compound.

IsraAID currently has two teams of search and rescue, and medical professionals on the ground in Haiti.

The IsraAID teams have been working along side the US Ambassador and Israeli actress Moran Atias treating, feeding and offering post-trauma counseling to thousands of people.

The Israeli teams are extremely busy working in the camp as well as running two mobile clinics in satellite camps around Leogone, one of the most devastated areas. IsraAID treats between 100 to 150 patients a day, most of who were severely injured during the earthquake. The teams are also providing community medicine and specifically targeting women. "Medicine is meaningful on any level, community or other," said Dr. Tamar Elram, an IsraAID obstetrics/gynecologist. "It is extremely meaningful to help a pregnant woman by giving her even the most basic support and love."

Since the December, 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, UJA has supported IsraAID's search and rescue efforts around the world, wherever human lives are in jeopardy, including the Peru Earthquake, in Darfur, an earthquake in Pakistan, relief aid to Katrina evacuees in New Orleans, aid to Somali camps in Kenya, and to the victims of the recent hurricane in the Philippines.

To donate to UJA's Hope for Haiti Disaster Relief Fund, visit ujadonations.com/haiti, or by calling 416-631-5705. One-hundred percent of the funds raised will be used for the relief effort. Matched dollars will go to Canada's relief fund on behalf of Haiti.

IsraAID medical professionals are treating between 100 to 150 patients a day.

An IsraAID team member helps unpack urgent supplies in Haiti.

Members of IsraAID check on medical supplies.

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Coast to Coast

Has Hamas really changed? Can it?

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

From time to time, reports appear in the media indicating that Hamas is in the midst of moderating its rejectionist stand against Israel.

For instance, in the Jan. 4 issue of *Maclean's*, former Mossad chief Efraim Halevy was interviewed by Yoni Goldstein, who asked whether Israel should negotiate with that organization. Halevy answered: "What we need to do is to bring Hamas to a point where it will understand that it is in its interest to reach an accommodation with Israel. And I believe they are on the way."

When Goldstein asked for the evidence to back up his judgment, Halevy replied: "First of all, Hamas' leader, Khaled Meshal, is on the record as saying that he is willing to accept the borders of 1967 as the provisional borders of a Palestinian state. He is not relinquishing the ultimate dream that he will control all of Palestine. But he says that, for the moment, he will accept the 1967 borders. That brings him toward the position where he is accepting the reality of Israel."

In "The Transformation of Hamas" (the *Nation*, Jan. 25), Fawaz Gerges, a professor of Middle Eastern politics at the London School of Economics, argued the same position at length and in fact commended Halevy for acknowledging Hamas' pragmatic turn.

"Although on the whole, Hamas' public rhetoric calls for the liberation of all of historic Palestine, not only the territories occupied in 1967, a healthy debate has grown both within and without," wrote Gerges, insisting that Hamas is not monolithic and is searching for a path to accommodation with Israel. Indeed, Gerges writes boldly of "Hamas' shift toward the peace process."

If all this lofty rhetoric sounds too good to be true, could that be because it isn't true?

Even Gerges had to raise the obvious skeptical query: "Observers might ask, if Hamas is so eager to accept a two-state solution, why doesn't it simply accept the three conditions for engagement required by the so-called diplomatic Quartet (the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations): recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and acceptance of all previous agreements (primarily, the Oslo Accords)?"

Gerges' answer is revealing: "In my interviews with Hamas officials, they stress that while they have made significant concessions to the Quartet, it has not lifted the punishing sanctions against Hamas, nor has it pressed Israel to end its siege, which has caused a dire humanitarian crisis. In addition, Hamas leaders believe that recognition of Israel is the last card in their hand and are reluctant to play it before talks even begin. Their diplomatic starting point will be to demand that Israel recognize the national rights of the Palestinians and withdraw from the occupied territories – but it will not be their final position."

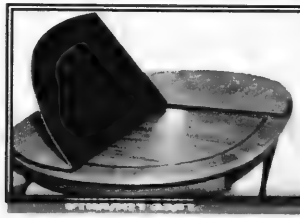
Hamas made "significant concessions" to the Quartet? Gerges mentions not one. Israel's "siege" has caused a "dire humanitarian crisis"? In fact, despite Hamas' belligerence and refusal to amend its charter, which calls for the destruction of Israel and the murder of Jews, Israel ships in hundreds of trucks of food and medicine per week to ensure that there is no humanitarian crisis (Israel also accepts thousands of Gazans each year for medical treatment in its hospitals).

But the real key to Hamas' duplicity is Gerges' reference to the organization's insistence that Israel must recognize "the national rights" of the Palestinians – which is code for Israel's accepting the "right of return" of Palestinians to present-day Israel. That is one of the main preconditions for Hamas' (previous) talk of "accepting," however temporarily, Israel within the 1967 borders. In short, Israel would first have to accept its demise as the Jewish state. Halevy doesn't mention this. Gerges leaves it in code. And consumers of news are left in the dark.

Then there's the "moderate" Meshal, who, in fact, is anything but, refusing now even to mention the name "Israel." As reported by Reuters late last month, Meshal told a rally in Damascus, where he's based, that Hamas "will keep rejecting the occupation and refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the Zionist entity. Priority will remain building and developing the resistance."

In short, Hamas remains committed to "liberating" all of Palestine.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.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Coast to Coast

Arab nationalists incorporate anti-Semitism, prof says

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Arab nationalist discourse on Israel is suffused with anti-Semitism, according to a Canadian Muslim author of a new book on Islam.

"The language of anti-Semitism has been incorporated into the language of Arab nationalism when it comes to Israel," said Salim Mansur, whose book, *Islam's Predicament: Perspectives of a Dissident Muslim*, was published recently by Mosaic Press.

In an interview, he added, "There is a fusion between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism."

A Sunni Muslim born and raised in India but a resident of Canada since 1973, Mansur is a professor of political science at the University of Western Ontario and a director of the Center for Islamic Pluralism in Washington, D.C.

Featured in the documentary *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West*, Mansur was in Toronto last week to promote his book at a forum sponsored by the Speakers Action Group and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association.

Salim Mansur

Mansur, who has been accused by the Canadian Islamic Congress of disseminating "an anti-Arab and anti-Muslim agenda," said the anti-Israel attitude of Arab nationalists is "saturated" with anti-Semitic rhetoric borrowed from Europe and Islamic history.

As he puts it in his book, "Instead of purging themselves of this bigotry and reconciling with Jews and Israel, they have perverted Islam into an anti-Jewish faith."

Describing himself as an observant Muslim from the more liberal Hanafi school of Sunni Islam, he believes that Jewish-Muslim relations have been ruptured by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"At the heart of Muslim-Jewish animosity is the question of Palestine, and the competing claims of Arabs and Jews to Jerusalem."

By denying Jewish rights to a homeland in Palestine, he says, Arabs have departed from "the path of righteousness" and have gotten mired in "anti-Jewish bigotry."

Asked whether Muslims and Jews can be reconciled, he replied, "Absolutely yes. We have to be persistent. We have to find a way for Muslims and Jews to engage."

Reconciliation, Mansur said, is an imperative for global peace and an end to Muslim terrorism.

He cited two contemporary Muslim leaders who have been open to reconciliation and coexistence – Anwar Sadat, president of Egypt from 1970 to 1981, and Abdurraham Wahid, president of Indonesia, the most populous Muslim state, from 1999 to 2001.

Sadat, in the face of fierce opposition in the Arab world, made peace with Israel after visiting Jerusalem in 1977. Wahid, who had a reputation for religious tolerance and political moderation, headed Nahdlatul Ulama, a Muslim organization with 40 million members, and promoted conciliation with Israel.

Mansur, distinguishing between "official" and "non-official" Islam, suggested that official Islam is represented by Muslim leaders such as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who spews hatred and division, while non-official Islam, typified by Sadat, Wahid and leading Islamic figures in India, is in favour of openness and tolerance.

Claiming that Islam has been politicized, Mansur argues that Muslims can only be politically liberated by subjecting Islam to "unfettered critical inquiry."

Unless this happens, Muslims won't make progress as a people, said Mansur, who calls himself an adversary of "Muslim extremism and fanaticism."

Calling for the reformation of Islam, a process that may take centuries, he said Islam should be personal faith rather than a "politicized ideology."

Taking his argument one step further, he declared, "Islam has been corrupted by politics. There should be a separation of mosque and state in Islam."

Mansur, whose enemies in the Muslim community have branded him an apostate and a non-believer, claims that the principal conflict within Islam today is between tyranny and freedom.

Muslim terrorism, he says is "the ill-begotten offspring of tyranny."

In his view, Muslims should confront and repudiate those who have perverted and hijacked Islam.

"Moderate Muslims are out there, but they have been chased out of the scene," Mansur said.

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Grafstein retires from Senate after 25 years

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

If as Shakespeare said through one of his characters, "all the world's a stage," Senator Jerry Grafstein recently completed his "second act," but he's not yet ready to close down the show.

On the contrary, he says, he's actively engaged in his "third act," organizing a bid to take over three flagship Canwest newspapers, the *National Post*, *Ottawa Citizen* and *Montreal Gazette*, with a consortium of bidders. It marks something of a return to his "first act," as a lawyer and entrepreneur involved in the media business.

Few will remember that Grafstein was a co-founder of Citytv or that he joined with Allan Waters in 1954 to buy a struggling radio station that eventually grew into the CHUM empire.

Still, it's his "second act" that he is best known for – almost 26 years representing Toronto in the Red Chamber.

Grafstein, who was appointed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, left the Senate accompanied by the accolades of fellow legislators and with the sense that he accomplished much of what he set out to do.

Government leader Marjory LeBreton said "It is difficult to imagine this place or the Liberal party without him," while Opposition leader James Cowan referred to Grafstein as "a force of nature disguised as a person" and like the movie character Zelig, "who just happened to be everywhere anything important was happening, anywhere in the world."

The accolades will keep coming in the spring when Grafstein will be honoured at a tribute dinner by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University. Half the money raised at the event will go to the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, which Grafstein supported by establishing a chair "to expand Jewish studies."

Jerry Grafstein
[Jean-Marc Carisse photo]

In his farewell address tothe Senate, Grafstein, 75, recalled highlights from his career, among them championing a government apology to Japanese Canadians for their treatment during World War II. His maiden speech touched on that topic and, "contrarian" that he was back then, his position was in direct conflict with that of Trudeau, who never did issue an apology. That fell to Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Grafstein recalled he was part of a group of senators who held up an extradition bill the Trudeau government pushed that would have permitted transfers to countries that practise capital punishment. Although it passed, the Supreme Court later "upheld our major arguments," he said.

As chair of the committee on banking trade and commerce, he and other legislators spearheaded a number of important studies on consumer protection, the charitable sector and stemming the flow of illicit money into Canada.

As co-chair of the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group, he advanced Canada's interest on a number of files. And he used his position in the Senate to launch an international career with the 56-member Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a body that includes parliamentarians who share concerns over human rights and democratic freedoms.

In his capacity as an officer of the OSCE's parliamentary group, he supported a resolution combating anti-Semitism, which called for member states to draw up strategies and educate the public about the issue. Although the Senate didn't adopt a similar resolution, one of the highlights of his career was "a chilling experience" he had addressing the German Reichstag, where he spoke on anti-Semitism from the same podium Hitler used to announce the Nuremberg laws.

Another of his pet projects, which the OSCE is still discussing, was a Middle East peace plan that focused on creating a free trade zone to bring together countries of the Mediterranean basin, including Israel and its Arab neighbours.

Back in the Senate, he co-sponsored a bill that established Holocaust Memorial Day, and he introduced a bill to add suicide bombing to the Criminal Code, which has passed second reading in the House of Commons.

One of his biggest disappointments was that a bill he proposed to establish a national portrait gallery in Ottawa has failed to advance.

Describing his political philosophy, Grafstein styled himself "a democratic realist. That means you look at issues in a democratic, liberal way, but with realistic glasses. Principles and pragmatism march best when they march together."

Expanding on his philosophy, he said "a liberal democratic realist sees an active role for government and believes government should promote the issues."

"Liberals," he continued, "help those who can't help themselves."

That's also a Jewish approach to public life, he said, pointing to the talmudic principle to treat strangers as you would yourself.

"Jews are born questioners," he said. "I'm a contrarian, you know."

That includes a healthy skepticism of government, he continued. The British tradition of placing checks and balances on the unbridled power of government is one that is manifested in the Canadian Senate, which checks the House of Commons and the cabinet, he said.

Even if the Senate is unelected?

Grafstein's response to that question is that he doesn't oppose an elected Senate per se, but reforming the Senate alone is a "simplistic" step that shouldn't be taken in isolation and must be part of a broader set of constitutional changes.

As for his "third act," getting back into the media game, Grafstein is coy about future developments. But, he said, "I don't accept the conventional wisdom" that the newspaper business is in decline. "I believe there is a future in newspapers."

His contrarian streak stood him in good stead in a couple of projects he's happy to tout.

When Toronto was faced with the SARS crisis in 2003 that crippled the city's hospitality industry, he and Dennis Mills defied conventional wisdom and organized in a short period a Rolling Stones concert that attracted 500,000 fans and demonstrated to the world that Toronto was still open for business.

He was also a big part of the Canada Loves New York campaign, held in the aftermath of 9/11, in which a small group of volunteers organized a trek south of the border of some 30,000 people to show support.

Capping his career was a dinner at which he was "roasted" by former prime ministers Jean Chrétien and John Turner, as well as Liberal leaders Michael Ignatieff and Stéphane Dion.

At the dinner, the speaker of the Senate presented Grafstein with the Canadian flag that flew over Parliament the day he retired. A little while later, he was presented with a second flag, the one that flew over the U.S. Capitol building in recognition of his efforts to draw the two nations closer together.

Both will be prominently displayed at his law offices at Minden Gross.

"I think that's a pretty emotional send-off," he said.

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Spice of Life

Chef loves 'playing' with her food

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Robyn Goorevitch's cooking career started when she was tall enough to reach her mother's stove.

"I actually learned to cook at the hands of my mom," said Goorevitch, owner of Dining In Chez Vous, a personal chef service. "I didn't know there were such things as store-bought cookies and candies until I started elementary school."

Goorevitch, who trained at Le Cordon Bleu Ottawa Culinary Arts School, was recently named the personal chef of the year by the United States Personal Chefs Association. She is the first Canadian and second woman to win the title.

For Goorevitch, cooking is about creating. As a personal chef, she's often making new recipes from scratch or personalizing recipes to fit her customers' needs.

"It's a fun process," she said. "Generally, what you do is you start creating the dish, you taste it and say, 'I think it's missing this, what can I put in?'... It's like playing with your food."

Goorevitch first started creating recipes at a seafood restaurant in Edmonton, Alta.

"The desserts were terrible," she said of the restaurant. "I said, 'Even I could do better.'"

And after awhile, the owners took her up on her offer.

"By that time I was working 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. as a legal assistant, three times a week in the restaurant and making desserts," she said, adding that she was in her 20s.

"I said, 'This is crazy. What do I want to do with the rest of my life?'"

Goorevitch's answer lay in the Caribbean. She packed up her life, got on a plane and landed in the Cayman Islands, where she began creating desserts for the only five-star restaurant in Grand Cayman.

"I sold everything that I owned, moved to Grand Cayman, worked at a restaurant and dove during the day. Life was grand," she said.

After spending about eight years in the Caribbean, Goorevitch decided it was time to move on and left the tropics for Canada. Unable to find a job in Toronto, she enrolled in George Brown College and then switched to Cordon Bleu in Ottawa.

Robyn Goorevitch is the first Canadian to win the personal chef of the year award from the United States Personal Chefs Association.

Instead of working at another restaurant after school, Goorevitch decided she was ready to go into business for herself. In 1999, she joined the first Canadian branch of the United States Personal Chefs Association, which has some 130 active Canadian members, and started Dining In Chez Vous.

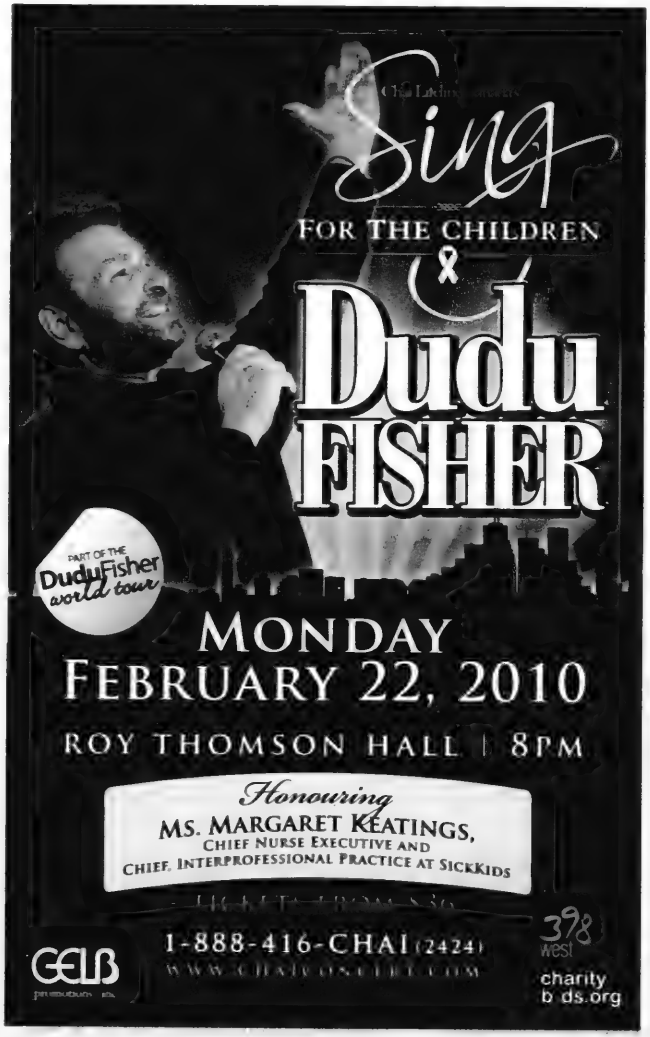
As a personal chef, Goorevitch shops, cooks, serves and cleans up for clients.

"People first said, 'Nobody's going to want a stranger in their home,'" she said.

It took the chef three years to break even, but then business began to boom.

"It's fun to create your own menus. [Customers] say, 'I'm lactose intolerant,' you could create a dairy-free risotto," she said.

Goorevitch has worked in kosher households, where the clients will do the shopping and provide utensils.



Do you have old home movies of family simchas, vacations or community events?

The Ontario Jewish Archives, a department of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, is launching a home movie event this spring and is looking for contributions from community members in the form of historic amateur 8 mm and 16 mm films.

We will be showcasing some of our own treasures, but would like to locate and include additional film clips that compliment the OJA's holdings, in order to try to document the full spectrum of Jewish family and community activities within Toronto.

If accepted, the films will be digitized and incorporated into a professional video presentation that highlights scenes from the Jewish community from the 1920s until the 1960s.

The deadline for suggestions and contributions is **19 February 2010.**

Before any donations are made please phone the OJA first, since unsolicited materials will be returned to the sender.

Questions and suggestions should be directed to the OJA at 416-635-2883 ext. 5170 or oja1@ujafed.org.

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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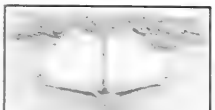
Jewish Life

Discrimination seems alive and well

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

Not long ago, I wrote about the difficulties and discrimination encountered by Sephardim who wish to enrol their children in Israel's religious private Torah school system.

The premise was as difficult to both comprehend and believe as it was painful. Reminiscent of segregation in the American South, enrolment of Sephardi students in Torah schools was governed by quota, and sometimes it was banned altogether, solely on the basis of their non-Ashkenazi ethnicity.



Rabbinic Reflections

One institution, the girls' Bais Yaakov School of Emanuel, was so blatant in this practice that a complaint was brought before the Ministry of Education. Although a private school and hence fully autonomous, it was receiving its share of government funding. The ministry deferred the question of alleged discrimination to the Israeli Supreme Court of Justice.

This past August, the court ruled. "Bais Yaakov," it said, "impinged upon the Sephardi students' right to equality" by segregating them from their Ashkenazi peers. It also said that the education ministry "deviated from its authority by not using all the means available to prevent discrimination."

Furthermore, the court demanded that the school "remove every formal and material sign of the rampant discrimination."

The school had indeed removed every sign of segregation, including its practice of different uniforms for Sephardi and Ashkenazi girls, different recess times for Sephardi and Ashkenazi girls (which effectively kept the two groups apart) and indeed different school rules, some of which only applied to Sephardi girls, not Ashkenazim, and vice versa.

However, two weeks ago, a motion was again brought before the Supreme Court claiming the school did not in fact heed the court's ruling and hence should be held in contempt of it. The Education Ministry's statement of claim was that inasmuch as the above had been changed, the school nevertheless reserved its right to divide its students into two tracks – chassidic and general.

Since the chassidic tract is made up exclusively of Ashkenazi girls, and the general program is made up mostly of Sephardi girls, the ministry rejected the school's interpretation of the verdict, maintaining that the segregation has simply changed names, from Ashkenazi versus Sephardi to chassidic versus general.

The school was given notice to comply with the court order by Dec. 10.

When a ministerial inspector was dispatched to verify compliance, it was found that 70 of the chassidic girls were absent, making it impossible to determine if the student body in fact had been merged into one.

On a subsequent and unscheduled return visit, the inspector found the 70 girls still missing. Outside the school, the inspector saw groups of girls who would not divulge where they were heading.

It was found that in a nearby hall, owned and administered by the local council, there was a group of students who were studying under what appeared to be a teacher. The Bais Yaakov School denied any connection to the impromptu school.

The ministry is again considering further steps to enforce integration at the school, including withholding funds and cancelling the school's licence. It may further prosecute the parents of the absent students under the law of mandatory education.

Jewish lessons in a Mayan village

If I had lingered in the Cancun airport I'm sure I would have run into at least a dozen students and friends. It was the last day of winter vacation, and an Air Canada flight was departing in a couple of hours. Freshly bronzed vacationers were lined up at security clutching the winter coats they had ignored while sitting on the pristine beaches and sipping mojitos in the opulent hotels of the Mayan Rivera.

Class Act
By Daniel Held

My group, a delegation of rabbinical and education students under the aegis of America Jewish World Service, wasn't heading to the beach, but rather on a journey uncovering the backstage of the Cancun tourist industry, global poverty and international development.

We spent the better part of two weeks embedded in Muchucuxcah, a Mayan village of 400 people located four hours west of Cancun. The people of Muchucuxcah were once humble corn farmers living off the land. The village has a tight-knit social structure. Children play in the streets, smoke from cooking fires billows through the thatching of the huts they call home, and at seven each evening, the bells beckon the locals to church, which serves as a centre of both worship and social gathering. It was the doors of Muchucuxcah that left the greatest impression on me. Of the homes that had doors, none had locks.

Following a week learning about the challenges of life in Muchucuxcah – the absence of potable water, the inaccessibility of medical care, an abysmal education system, and severe malnutrition – our group of budding rabbis and educators travelled to Cancun with six men from the community who had worked in the hotel industry.

With the boom of tourism along the coastal plain beginning in the 70s and 80s, the men of the town began leaving the village to work in Cancun – leaving behind family, community and tradition for periods ranging from two to 20 years.

Seeing Cancun through the eyes of these men, we were exposed to a backstage carefully guarded from the view of foreign tourists. We walked through the slums where scores of workers share the smallest of rooms in crudely built shanties and heard stories of working conditions in which labourers are treated as a commodity rather than humans.

Life in Cancun has exposed the men of Muchucuxcah to violence, drugs, prostitution and disease not found at home. It's blamed for the breakdown of community, ripping apart traditional family structures and for the denigration of the town's deep religious conviction. But the money sent home by working sons and husbands has also brought TV to the village, allowed children to stay in school for longer before working the fields, and has even permitted a few to attend trade colleges.

The tension between economic development and cultural maintenance is best demonstrated by a debate in the local school. The primary language of instruction is Spanish and the school is currently debating if the second language should be Mayan – the language spoken at home, the language of tradition and prayer – or English – the language of economic growth and development. As is so often the case, the pull toward development seems to come at the expense of cultural tradition.

Sending a group of future rabbis and Jewish educators to a Mayan village in the Mexican jungle may seem tangential to the core of our studies. While we certainly accomplish the central aim of engaging young Jewish leaders in discussions about global poverty and debates about allocation of scarce resources, to me, hearing the passion and tenacity with which the villagers struggle with issues of cultural transmission in a globalized world struck a personal chord and reminded me how similar the challenges of our two, seemingly different, communities are.

Jewish Life

From campus friends to business partners

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

For university students, networking is an important tool, and Jewish networking helps many Jewish students across university campuses.

The case of Michael Buchbinder and Arthur Smelyansky is a perfect example of how Jewish networking can succeed.

Both Buchbinder and Smelyansky attended the University of Windsor. They knew each other as members of the Delta Chi Fraternity, but they were unaware that they were both Jewish.

It was at a Windsor Jewish Students Association event that the two met and bonded, and it was there they found out that not only were they both Jewish but that they also shared a similar past and had similar goals. "We found out we both went to Associated Hebrew Schools and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto together [they are two years apart] and that we lived on the same street pretty much while growing up," Buchbinder said.

"We were surprised to find out we had so much in common. It was our Jewish bond that strengthened our fraternity brotherhood bond. It is this strong connection that helps us work together."

Buchbinder graduated from U of W with a BCom and an MBA after studying finance and economics. Smelyansky graduated with a degree in business and finance. They both went on to work at respected companies, but it didn't take long for them to realize they wanted to start their own company and so SmartTradeFX was born. The company specializes in the foreign exchange market, a.k.a. Forex, the worldwide decentralized over-the-counter trading of currencies.

Both men had a fair amount of experience in the field: Smelyansky had been a forex trader, managing more than half a million dollars when he was just 23 years old, and Buchbinder had been working with Investors Group as a financial planner. But there were a few hurdles in the way of making SmartTradeFX a successful company.

Chabad Gate at Windsor played a part in helping set up the company. A rabbi there helped to put these two young men in touch with many contacts that helped them.

Even with all the contacts gained from Chabad, there was still much work to be done, including drawing up a business plan. Since Smelyansky had experience in the foreign exchange market and understood it, the type of trading the two would do was a simple choice.

"There are many advantages to trading in the forex market versus the traditional stocks, bonds, futures, options or mutual funds. The first is that it is the most affordable to participate in, with some of the lowest entry costs, as you can open an account with as little as $50 and trade micro lots rather than full lots," Buchbinder said.

"Another advantage is the liquidity of the market, with close to $4 trillion a day being traded in the spot retail FX market. This amount eclipses the combined world daily volume of all the stock and bond markets in the world."

Attending a Jewish student association event can become the foundation of a company, as demonstrated by Buchbinder and Smelyansky. It also shows what an important and useful resource Jewish student organizations can be. They are there for everyone to use to their advantage and should not be ignored.

Why Israel really went to Haiti

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

"In less than a week in Haiti, 250 Israeli doctors, nurses and rescue workers not only saved numerous lives of people trapped and wounded – they did more for their country's image than marketing experts have in years," Nathan Guttmann writes at Forward.com. "**[bit.ly/isrht01]** Selfless act or a public relations stunt? Today, the online debate over why Israel really went to Haiti.

Israeli efforts have been documented by network TV and links have been circulated via e-mail messages.

• CNN: "I've been here since Thursday. No one except the Israeli hospital has taken any of our patients." **[bit.ly/isrht02]**

• ABC: "Before we knew it, ultrasounds, IVs, medications. Soraya was now getting better care at the Israeli field hospital than she could ever have imagined." **[bit.ly/isrht03]**

• SKYNEWS: "It's taken eight hours of risky, arduous work for his [Israeli] rescuers and on their faces it shows. So does the gratitude of the Haitians for what they have done." **[bit.ly/isrht04]**

And the Israel Defence Forces haven't relied on the networks to get their message out. Their English website has more than a dozen Haiti-related articles **[bit.ly/isrht19]** as well as several videos on their YouTube channel. **[bit.ly/isrht06]** You can even get instant updates via the IDFinHaiti Twitter feed. ("827 patients treated, 24 hospitalized, 251 surgeries, 14 births at the IDF field hospital in Haiti") **[bit.ly/isrht07]**

Meanwhile critics abound in online discussion boards. "I guess giving Israel credit for good deeds in Haiti is like watching a serial killer or other sociopathic type mow an old woman's lawn." **[bit.ly/isrht09]** And it's not hard to find people spouting blood libels that Israelis may be in Haiti looking for a supply of body parts for organ transplants. **[bit.ly/isrht08]**

Some of the most pointed criticism has appeared in the Israeli press. Writing in *Ha'aretz*, Akiva Eldar lauds the work of the rescuers and the physicians. But his compliments stop there. "The disaster in Haiti is a natural one; the one in Gaza is the unproud handiwork of man. Our handiwork. The IDF does not send cargo planes stuffed with medicines and medical equipment to Gaza…" **[bit.ly/isrht10]**

Sever Plocker continues with a similar theme at Ynetnews.com: "The Gaza Strip is ruled by a murderous terror organization, yet dozens of innocent children were killed there during Operation Cast Lead. Without taking anything away from the wonderful dedication and volunteer spirit shown by Israeli teams in Haiti, they should not be surprised to be challenged by the provocative question: Have you been to Gaza already?" **[bit.ly/isrht11]**

Bradley Burston doesn't buy the criticism as he writes in *Ha'aretz*. "Israelis, like people in all countries where war is endemic, and like Palestinians, have demonstrated enormous reservoirs of humanity under inhuman stresses… True, it is wilful blindness to contend that Israel can do no wrong. But it is nothing short of racism to maintain, in Haiti and in general, that Israelis can do no right." **[bit.ly/isrht12]**

With her tongue firmly planted in her cheek, the *Telegraph*'s Stephanie Gutmann takes on critics of the Haiti mission with a column titled, "Israel builds a field hospital in Haiti. Anti-Zionists not fooled!" **[bit.ly/isrht13]** And Israeli cabinet minister Isaac Herzog explains the efforts but without the irony. "We see this as part of Israel's humanitarian outreach… Haiti was one of the countries that supported us on Nov. 29, 1947, [in the UN vote on the establishment of the state] and now it's our turn to support them." **[bit.ly/isrht14]**

It should be noted that there are many other Israeli and Jewish organizations helping Haiti, including IsraAid: The Forum for International Humanitarian Aid, the American Jewish World Service, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Chabad, Magen David Adom **[bit.ly/isrht15]** and the United Jewish Appeal. **[bit.ly/isrht16]**

Members of ZAKA are best known for their tireless efforts to retrieve body parts of the victims of terror attacks in Israel. **[bit.ly/isrht17]** ZAKA's Matti Goldstein explains why his team came to Haiti – and continued to work even on Shabbat. "People asked, 'Why are you here? There are no Jews here.' But we are here because the Torah orders us to save lives… We are desecrating Shabbat with pride." **[bit.ly/isrht18]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Spice of Life

You can have your cake and great health too!

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

If you follow a special diet for health reasons such as food sensitivities or allergies or are committed to a healthier diet and lifestyle, there's no need to sacrifice your favourite sweet indulgences. Holistic nutritionist Ricki Heller offers more than 100 original, foolproof, delicious recipes, including her most requested and popular treats, in her excellent book, *Sweet Freedom: Desserts You'll Love without Wheat, Eggs, Dairy or Refined Sugar* (172 pages, colour photos, metric and standard measurements). This cookbook is a wonderful resource for anyone who loves sweets but wants healthier options. Highly recommended!

Heller used to own a vegan organic bakery, Bake it Healthy. She decided to shift her focus and energy to write *Sweet Freedom*, which has sold close to 1,500 copies since she self-published it last June. Her recipes are creative and offer a wide variety of baked goods, including muffins, quick breads, scones, cookies, bars, cakes, pies and no-bake treats. About 25 per cent of the recipes are entirely gluten-free, and she uses whole, natural ingredients without any additives, chemicals, colourings, or other artificial ingredients.

When I spoke with Heller recently, she told me, "I just love to play in the kitchen! When I was forced to change my diet for health reasons, I wasn't willing to give up my favourite desserts just because I couldn't use traditional ingredients any longer. I was determined to reproduce all my favourites without sacrificing taste."

All the recipes are kosher and appropriate for those with food sensitivities or allergies (e.g., lactose intolerance, allergy to casein, sensitivity to refined sugar), vegans, or moms who want to make healthy, all-natural desserts for their families. Each recipe is accompanied by a symbol indicating for whom it is most appropriate – SF for soy-free, GF for gluten-free, CF for corn-free, etc. Heller uses whole grain flours (spelt, kamut, barley flour), healthy fats, natural sweeteners such as agave nectar or pure maple syrup, and fresh fruits and veggies. The book also includes an extensive chapter on alternative ingredients, substitutions and healthy replacements for common allergens like milk, eggs, wheat or sugar, which I found extremely well-presented and simple to understand.

For information about ordering *Sweet Freedom* or Heller's cooking classes, which are offered throughout the Greater Toronto Area, contact her at rheller@rogers.com or call 905-303-7589.

Here's an excerpt adapted from *Sweet Freedom* that explains how to use agave nectar: "Derived from the juice of the agave cactus, agave nectar has been used for centuries in South America and Mexico and is the basis for tequila. It's 50 per cent sweeter than sugar, yet has a very low glycemic index, so it doesn't cause the same spikes in blood glucose levels that sugar does. It's available in health food stores, some bulk stores and in the natural food section of some supermarkets.

"When substituting agave for sugar, start with 2/3 cup agave for each cup of sugar in the original recipe; if the result is too sweet for your taste, decrease to 1/2 cup next time. Because agave adds more liquid to the original recipe, also reduce any liquid ingredients by about 25 per cent. If the original recipe calls for 1 cup of sugar and 1 cup of milk, use 2/3 cup agave and 3/4 cup milk (the rest of the recipe can stay the same).

"If the original recipe doesn't contain any liquid at all, then add 25 per cent more dry ingredients to the original recipe. If the original recipe calls for 1 cup sugar and 1 cup flour but no other liquid, then use 2/3 cup agave and 1-1/4 cups flour (the rest of the recipe can remain the same)."

CHOCOLATE MYSTERY CUPCAKES

When Heller first started creating alternative baked goods, her zeal to include vegetables in every item led her to this recipe, originally a chocolate lava cake. To her delight, the cakes won a blog contest for favourite vegetable-based recipe! She prefers these as cupcakes with chocolate chips scattered throughout, as it's important to cool the cakes to eliminate any trace of spinach flavour (promise)!

2 oz. fresh or frozen spinach (you may include the stems)
3 1/2 oz. grated zucchini, fresh or frozen (about 1 cup, unpacked)
1/4 cup plain or vanilla soy or almond milk
1/3 cup agave nectar, light or dark
1/8 cup pure maple syrup
1/4 cup sunflower or other light-tasting oil, preferably organic
1 tbsp. finely ground flax seeds
1/2 tsp. apple cider vinegar
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2 tsp. instant coffee substitute (or 1 tsp. instant coffee)

Continued on page 25

Beth Tzedec presents

Professor Daniel Schwartz

Department of History, Hebrew University, Jerusalem
has lectured in Israel, USA and Switzerland

From Joseph of Jerusalem to Flavius Josephus of Rome: A Judaean Becomes a Jew

Wednesday
February 10, 2010
7:30 p.m.

The Shoshana Shier Memorial Lecture

The Shoshana Shier Memorial Lectures with Prof. Schwartz continue at U of T for 3 Mondays, March 1,8,15 at 5 pm
Call 416-978-1624 or www.cjs.utoronto.ca

1700 Bathurst St. Toronto בית צדק

The Mark and Gail Appel Program in Holocaust and Antiracism Education at York University is pleased to present:

two lectures by ANTHONY JULIUS

Anthony Julius is an eminent British lawyer, academic, and public intellectual, who successfully defended historian Deborah Lipstadt against Holocaust denier David Irving. Julius also acted for Princess Diana.

A visiting professor at Birkbeck College, University of London, Julius participated in the Metropolitan Police Race and Faith Inquiry and has actively opposed boycotts of Israel. His first book was T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form. *His newest book,* Trials of the Diaspora: A History of Anti-Semitism in England, *will be available for signing at the lectures.*

HOLOCAUST DENIAL, WHAT'S THE POINT?
Saturday, 13 February, 8:00 pm

HOW CAN GOOD LITERATURE BE BAD FOR THE JEWS?
Sunday, 14 February, 2:30 pm

Both sessions will take place in the Founders College Assembly Hall (152 Founders College), York University, Keele Campus. The sessions are open to the public free of charge. Parking is available nearby.

YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

The Mark and Gail Appel Program brings together future educators from Canada, Germany, and Poland to study the past and teach towards a better future. It is a joint initiative of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies at York University.

For information, contact Bridget Newson (tftl2@yorku.ca or 416 736-5695).
www.yorku.ca/tftl

Spice of Life

Decadent chocolate

Continued from page 24

1 cup light spelt flour
1/2 cup whole oat flour
1/3 cup dark cocoa powder (preferably not Dutch process)
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
3/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. fine sea salt
1/2 cup dairy free chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350. Line 12 muffin cups with paper liners, or spray with nonstick spray (or spray 24 mini-muffin cups)

In a food processor or blender, blend the spinach and zucchini to a paste. Add the soymilk, agave nectar, maple syrup, oil, flax seeds, vinegar, vanilla and coffee substitute and process again until smooth. (There may be a few small flecks of spinach visible; this is fine)

In a large bowl, sift together the spelt flour, oat flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Pour the wet mixture over the dry and top with the chips. Stir well to combine.

Using a large ice cream scoop or 1/3 cup measuring cup, fill the muffin cups about 3/4 full. Bake in preheated oven 35 to 40 minutes, rotating pan about halfway through, until a tester inserted in a centre cupcake comes out clean. Allow to cool 5 minutes before removing to a cooling rack.

Note: Cool completely before sampling – the flavour changes as they cool, and any trace of veggies disappears in the cold cupcakes. Frost if desired. May be frozen.

DARK AND DECADENT CHOCOLATE PÂTÉ

With heart-healthy flavonoids from the dark chocolate and monounsaturated fats from the avocado, this is a cholesterol-free indulgence that's actually good for you!

scant 1/2 cup packed avocado purée from a barely ripe avocado (about one small avocado)
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
pinch fine sea salt
9 oz. good-quality dark chocolate (70 per cent cocoa is best, but chocolate chips work, too), chopped (about 1 1/2 cups)
1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice (remove any large pieces of pulp)
1 tbsp. pure maple syrup

Line a miniature loaf pan about 6 x 3 inches with plastic wrap and set aside.

In the bowl of a food processor, whir the avocado purée, vanilla and salt. Set aside while you melt the chocolate.

In a heavy-bottomed pot set over the lowest heat possible, combine the chocolate, orange juice and maple syrup. Stir constantly until melted and smooth, about 5 minutes. Immediately scrape the chocolate mixture into the food processor with the avocado, and blend again until perfectly smooth and glossy. Turn the mixture into the loaf pan and smooth the top.

Refrigerate, uncovered, until the top is firm and dry; then cover the top with more plastic wrap and refrigerate until the entire loaf is firm, 4 to 6 hours or overnight.

To unmould, remove plastic from the top of the loaf. Invert over a serving dish and remove the loaf pan, then carefully peel away the plastic. Serve in thin slices with fresh berries. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

May be frozen; defrost, wrapped in plastic, in the refrigerator overnight.

Norene Gilletz is a cookbook author, cooking teacher and food consultant in Toronto. For updated information, call 416-226-2466 or visit her website at http www.gourmania.com.

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Soberman LLP is pleased to announce that Jim Muccilli and Adam Scherer have been admitted to the partnership effective January 1, 2010.

Please join us in welcoming Jim and Adam to the Soberman LLP partnership.

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy first birthday, Maria! Love and best wishes from Anahit, Bubbie Kara and Zadie Khatchik.

We are happy to announce the engagement of Gabor Koltai & Calli Citron. With love from your parents, brother and family. Mazel tov.

Jory is excited to welcome his new sister, Raya Mara. Thrilled parents, Adam & Jaime Larry, and grandparents, Hiala & Charles Balaban and Naomi & Lionel Larry.

Sulana Perelman & Ivan Suddman are delighted to announce their engagement on Dec. 31, 11:59 p.m. After meeting 28 years ago, their hearts are now one.

Mazel tov on the engagement of Sherri Matta and Art Binder. With love from their families.

Mazel tov on the recent marriage of Jeremy Shimkofsky & Lianne Salter.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments button!**

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @
for the :-) generation
YTI

What's New deadlines: Submissions for the Feb. 18 issue must be in by Feb. 8. Due to Family Day, deadline for the Feb. 25 issue is Feb 16. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, Feb. 4

SEPHARDI CHALLENGES

New Israel Fund of Canada and Adath Israel Congregation present Israeli legal activist **Prof. Yifat Bitton**: "The Challenges Facing the Sephardi Community in Israel," 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel Congregation, 416-781-4322.

IRAN

Kehillat Shaarei Torah continues its two-part series on Iran, The Threat to Security: Global and Local Perspectives with **Doron Horowitz**, director of community security, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. Tonight's topic is "The Local Impact." Refreshments 7:30, presentation, 8 p.m. 416-229-2600, ext. 3.

ORAYNU CONGREGATION

Adult education series, Texts and Traditions, led by **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**. Session 4, "New Halachah: Contemporary Pathways on Old Roads." 7 p.m. Non-members welcome. $15. 18 Wynford Dr.

Friday, Feb. 5

SABBATH IN SONG

Temple Kol Ami presents a Shabbat service done completely in song led by Rabbi Daniel Gottlieb and cantorial soloist Dawn Bernstein, and featuring the Temple Kol Ami choir, 7:45 p.m., 36 Atkinson Ave. 905-709-2620 or www.templekolami.ca.

Saturday, Feb. 6

CABARET EVENING

English, French, Russian and Yiddish songs featured in benefit for Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, with singers **Miriam Eskin** and **Stella Walker**, 8 p.m., Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave., $25, $15 for children under 16, 416-789-5502.

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (North) meets at Reena Centre, 927 Clark Ave. W. Shiur, 9 a.m., services at 9.30 a.m. Kiddush following. torontopartnershipminyan.com.

Sunday Feb. 7

MIFGASH THEATRE

The only Hebrew-speaking theatre in Toronto presents *Was It a Dream*, with English subtitles. City Playhouse, Thornhill. $25. **Sarit Shor**, 416-635-2883, ext. 5280 or sshor@ujafed.org.

FILM SCREENING

Screening of *Medicot* (*Jellyfish*), 7:30 p.m., Darchei Noam Congregation, 864 Sheppard Ave. W. Discussion and refreshments follow.

MARKETPLACE

Pride of Israel Synagogue is holding its second annual Ha Shouk vendor marketplace. Free admission, 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

SEPHARDI MUSIC

First Narayever Congregation presents "Music in the Lives of Crypto-Jews of Portugal," 7 p.m. at 187 Brunswick Ave., 416-927-0546, $5 or pay what you can.

BONE MARROW DRIVE

Shari's Mission bone marrow drive for 34-year-old **Shari Ichelson Silverman** who has acute myeloid leukemia and needs a bone marrow transplant, 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Beth Sholom Synagogue. For information, 416-783-6103, bethsholom.youth@gmail.com.

Monday, Feb. 8

OTTAWA LECTURE

Ottawa Torah Institute Yeshiva High School annual Jewish ethics lecture, 7:15 p.m., "The Morality of War" with co-lecturers Rosh Yeshiva **Rabbi Eliezer Ben-Porat** and OTI chair **Aaron J. Sarna**. Tickets are $25, $15 students and seniors. 613-244-3939 or secretary@ottawatorah.org.

Continued on page 27

PARENTS' SESSION
ISRAEL DOESN'T WANT PEACE
JUDAISM = RACISM
ISRAEL is an APARTHEID STATE
CHALLENGE THESE LIES!
Here's a fantastic opportunity to address these issues intelligently before you get to Campus!
Campus Ahead
Special session for parents of high school students preparing for university campuses.
Session to include an interactive panel discussion on antisemitism, anti-Israelism and the situation on campus, with Professor Eric Lawee, Director Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies, York University, Susan Davis EVP, Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy and Zac Kaye, ED Hillel of Greater Toronto.
This panel will give parents important information to support their children on campus.
Sunday, February 7, 1-3 at the Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord
www.campusahead.ca
UOC HC njcl

Israel & Sala Disenhouse Memorial Lecture
Jean Baumgarten
Director, Centre de la Recherches Scientifique
The Seyfer Minhogim:
The Tradition of the Jewish Books of Customs in Ashkenazi Society
Wednesday, February 10, 2010 at 4pm
Jackman Humanities Building
170 St. George Street
Room 318
Co-sponsored by the Al and Malka Green Yiddish Program and the Centre for Jewish Studies
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Continued from page 26

ISRAEL IN THE MEDIA

Paul Michaels, director of communications, Canada-Israel Committee, speaks on "Israel in the Eyes of the Canadian Media – Anything New?" Holy Blossom Temple, 7:30 pm. No charge.

Tuesday, Feb. 9

ROSH CHODESH ADAR

Beth David sisterhood meeting, 8 p.m., celebrates Rosh Chodesh Adar. Refreshments. Non-members $5.

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

A Tickle in the Heart, at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, is a film about the klezmer legends, the Epstein Brothers, on an international tour. 2 p.m. $5. No reservations required.

FORMER EXTREMIST

Tawfik Hamid, a former Muslim extremist, speaks at Beth Tzedec. Moderator, **Jonathan Kay**, editor, *National Post*. 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 10

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Feb. 10, "Dealing With the 'Bad' in the World." No charge, everyone welcome. 416-633-3838.

MEMORIAL LECTURE

Beth Tzedec Congregation's Shoshana Shier memorial lecture features **Prof. Daniel Schwartz**, Hebrew University, who speaks on "From Joseph of Jerusalem to Flavius Josephus of Rome: A Judean Becomes a Jew." 7:30 p.m. 416-781-3511.

BOOKS OF CUSTOMS

Centre for Jewish Studies, U of T, presents **Prof. Jean Baumgarten**, Directeur de recherche, au Centre de Recherches Historiques, Paris, on "The *Seyfer Minhogim* by Shimon ben Yehuda Halevi Guenzburg and the Tradition of the Jewish Books of Customs in Ashkenazi Society." Jackman Humanities Building, Room 318, 170 St. George St. Free. 4 p.m.

OTHER NEWS

JF&CS GROUPS

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A 6-session marriage preparation group. Offered in partnership with the Rabbinical Assembly, Ontario region. Begins Feb. 4, 7:30 -9 p.m., Beth Tikvah.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: A 6-session group. Feb. 4, 7:30-9 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor.

One Family Two Homes: A 3-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate age-appropriate groups. Feb. 23, 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext 215, or www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides hand-knitted hats and mittens to schoolchildren. Call 416-630-9313.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse in the Jewish community is often considered a taboo subject, but it does exist and we all have a responsibility to learn more about it. Trained speakers are available for your group. No charge. Call JWIC at 416-630-9313

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are reliable, friendly, and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors. **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for winter/spring courses at the Prosserman JCC, including: King David: Traitorous Serial Killer or National Religious Hero? on Wednesdays, Feb. 17-March 17 at 8 p.m. with **Prof. James Diamond** of the University of Waterloo; and the Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn, Thursdays, April 15- May 6 at 9:30 a.m. with **Prof. Paul Franks**. Courses at Shaarei Shomayim: Trei Asar: The 12 Prophets with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner**, Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., "Amos," Jan. 12-March 16; "Yoel," Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., April 13-June 8. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca.

HEBREW READING COURSE

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda is running a free Hebrew reading course for those who can read Hebrew slowly and want practise reading, singing and understanding prayers used during daily and Shabbat services. Course runs for six 90-minute sessions beginning Feb. 14. 416-633-3838 to register.

CLIMATE AND RISK

Panel on "Climate change: Managing Risks and Leveraging Business Opportunities." PricewaterhouseCoopers, Royal Trust Tower, 77 King St. W. $20 includes kosher breakfast. Feb. 11, 7:30 to 9 a.m. Contact sfernandes@ujafed.org or call 416-631-5707. Pre-registration required.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Casino Rama, March 3; Line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 to 11:30 a.m. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

Association of Jewish Seniors, presents **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, education director of Jews for Judaism, who will discuss "Is Religion Killing Judaism." At a general meeting on Feb. 18. 1 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Light refreshments. Members free; guests $2. **Tammy** 416-635-2860.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Wellness lecture, "Love Your Heart," with **Melissa Coleman**, cardiac rehab kinesiologist, Feb. 4, 1:30-2:30 p.m., free.

Lecture, "Hollywood and Society: Hollywood Looks at Religion," **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, educator and film critic, 10-11:30 a.m., Feb. 9. $3 members, $6 non-members.

Lunch and concert, "Love Is in the Air," 12-2 p.m., Feb. 10. $13 members, $15 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Prosserman Jewish Community Centre, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

New programs at the culinary arts studio featuring **Chef Ellen Grossman**: You Are My Sunshine, Winter Citrus Fruits, Feb. 4, 7:00-9:30 p.m.; and Sushi 101 For Teens (12-18) featuring umami chefs, Feb. 7, 4-6 p.m., ext. 235.

Let's Talk bulletin is available. Programs include Ryerson/Chang courses and memoir writing. Tickets available for *Little House on the Prairie*, *Young Frankenstein* and Stage West, ext. 4235.

Seniors Lunch & Learn, Friday Feb. 5, 12-1:00 p.m., Room 107. Free.

MILES NADAL JCC

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Feb. 7, 11 a.m., "Lost Tribes: A link with Afghanistan and Kashmir," with **Diana Mingail**. Drop in: $9. Refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 154; jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Feb. 8, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. The Art of Television with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. Topic is "God and Death Come to the Small Screen: From *Saving Grace* to *Six Feet Under*." Drop in: $12 film@mnjcc.org; 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

What's New is now online; for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

CANCER FUNDRAISER: Shaarei Shomayim Congregation raised more than $100,000 in support of PYNK, a support group for young women diagnosed with breast cancer. In the picture, the group presents oncologist Dr. Ellen Warner with the cheque at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Strasfeld, Ida	Jan. 4/2010	24 Almore Ave
Razmov, Ella	Jan. 4/2010	115 Antibes Dr
Nirenberg, Leslie	Jan. 4/2010	110 The Esplanade
Drabkin, Olga	Jan. 6/2010	Private
Kaufman, Sheldon	Jan. 6/2010	62 Stacey Cres
Klein, Marta	Jan. 5/2010	
Farberman, Shirley	Jan. 7/2010	25 Greenwin Village Rd
Singer, Mirjam	Jan. 7/2010	119 Betty Ann Dr
Sanders, Adam (Karl)	Jan. 7/2010	60 Sparrow Ave
Eliahou, Berco	Jan. 8/2010	541 Finch Ave. W
Krausman, Lily	Jan. 8/2010	7 Townsgate Dr
Naiberg, Irving	Jan. 9/2010	606 Avenue Rd
Tobe, Edith Molly	Jan. 9/2010	541 Finch Ave. W.

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Jason Cash	Jan 16/10	30 Greenfield Ave. #402
Jean Lichman	Jan 14/10	12 Samuel Oster Ave.
Sophie Jacobs	Jan 16/10	650 Finch Ave. W., # 1727
David Korn	Jan 17/10	80 Bowring Walk
Lily Melamed	Jan 17/10	1 Bayhampton Crt.
Sam Pack	Jan 17/10	1 Benvenuto Place, # 505
Paul Gerstl	Jan 18/10	3560 Bathurst Str.
Elizabeth Nacson	Jan 19/10	62 Tanjoe Cresc.
Florence Fisher	Jan 19/10	205 Cummer Ave.
Mary Engel Caplan	Jan 20/10	2100 Bovaird Dr. E.
Sydney Moses	Jan 22/10	297 Betty Ann Dr.
Desideriu Dave Waldman	Jan 22/10	39 Rockland Dr.

WALDMAN, Desideriu (Dave) - Passed away peacefully in hospital, on Friday, January 22, 2010. Beloved husband of Lucy Helen Waldman. Loving father and father-in-law of Shiry and Jason Keltz, and Dany Waldman and Gillian Lazanik. Dear brother of Heidi and Harry Suchar. Devoted grandfather of Brayden, and Amanda Keltz, and Jethro Waldman. He will be sadly missed by family and friends. Service was held at Benjamin's Park Memorial Chapel on Sunday, January 24th at 10:00 am. Interment in the Community Section of Pardes Shalom Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation at 1-888-473-4636.

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling.

(416) 391-1836

Shirley Farberman ז"ל

Beloved wife, mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to our family and friends for their support, heartfelt sympathies and generous donations during our time of bereavement.

To Have Known Shirley was to Love Her.
One Was Enriched by Being Her Friend.
We Will Never Forget Her.

Dave Farberman
Allan, Michael, Leslie, Sheldon & Shane

A Special Thanks to Dr. Michelle Litner

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Coast to Coast

New federation head focused on identity

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Ben Cohen, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's new president, says he'll be focusing on initiatives to strengthen Jewish identity within the community over the two years of his term.

"We have built the physical plant with our [Asper Jewish Community] Campus," he said. "Then we concentrated on increasing the size of our community through fostering immigration from South American countries, as well as encouraging former Winnipeggers to come back to the community. Now, we want to address some of the recommendations put forward last year by our strategic planning committee toward raising the temperature of Jewish life."

Cohen, a graduate of McGill University and the London School of Economics, is taking on his new role at a particularly busy time in his life. The married father of three elementary school-aged children – they attend the Gray Academy of Jewish Education – is also completing an executive MBA at Harvard University (in March) and is expanding his businesses.

For the past 16 years, Cohen has been the Oreck Vacuum distributor for Canada. About a year ago, he acquired the rights to distribute the product internationally.

"We are now operating in Australia and New Zealand, Turkey, Romania, Holland and Mexico," he said.

He is also in his fifth year as the Canadian distributor for Israeli-based Amcor Ltd.'s portable furnaces and air conditioners. "Amcor's air conditioners are the most powerful portable units on the market," Cohen said.

He said that in September, he became the Israeli company's distributor for the United States, as well as Canada.

Prior to joining the federation's board in 2005, Cohen had been active (and still is) in the Herzlia Adas-Yeshurun Synagogue, helping the Orthodox shul raise funds, and he had been involved in the annual Combined Jewish Appeal campaign.

On the federation board, he served as chair of financial resource development and as CJA campaign chair. He had been vice-president for the past two years.

Cohen said that this year's CJA campaign has turned out very well. "We are very close to our final target of $5.5 million," he said. "We have exceeded last year's totals, despite still being in an economic downturn when we started the campaign in September."

On the topic of Jewish immigration to Winnipeg, Cohen noted that there are still some South American and Israeli families coming to Winnipeg.

"Immigration ebbs and flows, depending on conditions in their home countries," he said of the South American immigrants who came in large numbers to Winnipeg at the beginning of the decade.

As a Winnipeg Jewish businessman, Cohen has done his share to give the new immigrants a helping hand over the past 10 years, noting that over the past decade, he has always had at least one Jewish South American newcomer working for him.

"I currently have four former South Americans working for me now, including my vice-president of sales," he said. "We are sponsoring him to attend a program at Harvard for key executives."

Artist donates leaders' portraits to Israel

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER —She's been an artist for 50 years, but it wasn't until the 1990s that Joy Caros began painting the portraits of Israeli presidents and prime ministers.

Last month she donated them to the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU), and the portraits, which arrived in Israel a couple of weeks ago, will soon be on permanent display in the Knesset.

Caros couldn't be happier.

"This is the ultimate honour for me," she said in an interview in Vancouver. "All the dignitaries that visit Israel will see the portraits of the men who made Israel, and that's important. Israel needs to have its prime ministers up there on the government walls, signifying that this is a valid country. That's what this collection stands for."

Although they're both Christians, Caros and her husband, James Rawlings, are strong supporters of Israel.

"We believe God gave that land to the Jewish people, and it should stay that way," Rawlings said.

Caros agreed. "I think [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is awesome, and I'm anxious to meet him," she said.

"I think he's the best thing that happened to Israel, and he'll fight for the land."

Caros may have an opportunity to meet Netanyahu when she travels to Israel in May and is honoured at an event to be held by CFHU.

To date, she has painted 18 portraits of Israeli leaders and still has another three to go. Each one takes approximately one month to complete and the portraits have been independently valued at $9,500 each by the Petley-Jones Gallery in Vancouver.

The portraits were created as a gift for Israel, and the majority of them were completed between 1998 and 2000, Caros said.

"I felt this was something I could do for Israel, because they didn't have portraits of their prime ministers and presidents like most countries do," she explained. "My husband and I are Zionists and we love Israel, so I thought, 'Let me do this as a gift to the country.'"

Jews have helped her throughout her career, Caros added.

Stanley Kramer commissioned her to paint the characters of the film *It's a Mad, Mad World* in the 1960s, and in Vancouver, she has worked closely with Joseph Cohen of Sony, as well as families such as the Segals, Wosks, Adlers and Malicks.

She's also done portraiture for Hollywood stars such as Spencer Tracy, Jonathan Winters and Sammy Davis Jr., and is presently doing a series on the chefs of Vancouver.

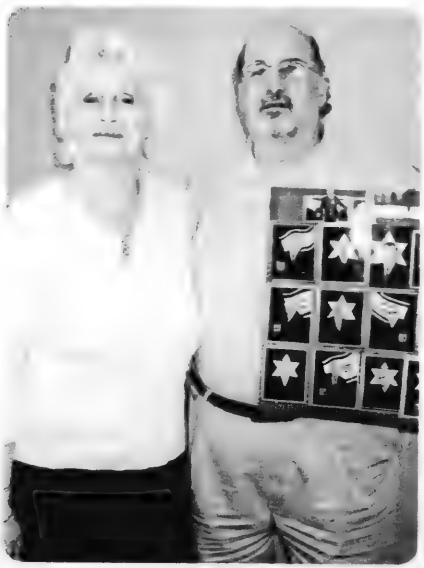
Born in Trail, B.C., and a mother to seven children, Caros started out sketching pastel portraits of Vancouver diners.

Her work has taken her all over the world, and she has lived in California, the Caribbean, Italy, Switzerland, Holland, France and Israel, but she returned to Vancouver to be closer to her 18 grandchildren.

Still, this octogenarian is eager to continue making her art and plans to paint and travel in the years to come.

"Nowadays, more and more people want portraits, because an artist can breathe life into a portrait and make the subject more alive than photography can," she said.

"I've met some wonderful people all over the world doing this," she added. "The Bible says your talent will put you before kings, and that is what's happened."



Joy Caros and her husband James Rawlings

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invites you to join us for a range of enlightening events this February

Meduzot (Jellyfish) *Film Screening* – INTRODUCED BY SHLOMO SCHWARTZBERG
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 7:30PM
Experience the stories of three very different women present at a wedding in Tel Aviv, as they weave an unlikely portrait of modern Israeli life. Directed by popular Israeli novelist Etgar Keret and his screenwriter wife Shira Gefen, the 2007 film won the Camera d'Or Award at Cannes. Discussion and refreshments follow the movie.

What Canada Can Do To End Poverty – WITH HUGH SEGAL
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 7:30PM
Darchei Noam's Social Justice Advocacy Committee hosts a presentation by Senator Hugh Segal, co-head of a recent widely-praised Canadian Senate Report on poverty. Senator Segal's talk explains why poverty concerns all Canadians, and what measures can be taken to end poverty in Canada. Join this pressing discussion.

THE ANNUAL ELKA KLEIN MEMORIAL LECTURE
Seeking Revenge and Seeking the Messiah –
Perspectives on the Jewish Conversos of Medieval Spain
WITH PROFESSOR MARK MEYERSON
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 7:30 PM
Professor Meyerson draws on the rare records of two trials involving "Conversos" in Valencia to explore the identities of these converted Jews, and to shed light on their relationships with their unbaptized coreligionists. Mark Meyerson is a professor of History and Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto.

Home Safe Toronto *Film Screening* – WITH PRODUCER-DIRECTOR LAURA SKY
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 7:15 PM
This moving film explores how Canadian families live with the threat and the experience of homelessness, and tells its stories from the perspectives of children and youth. Following the screening, Producer-Director Laura Sky is joined by one of the film's participants on-stage to answer questions and lead a discussion on how concerned viewers might respond to the issues raised.

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Students see results of fundraising for Israel first-hand

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Hillie Sturm visited Israel last month, he didn't have much time to relax.

In his week off from school, the Toronto native, along with 11 other Yeshiva University undergraduate students, painted an apartment building, worked on an elementary school's garden and helped start the process of resettling families from the Gaza Strip.

The YU students were part of the school's Quality Education Skills Training (QUEST) program, which helps build leadership skills through lectures and first-hand experiences.

For the first time, QUEST partnered with the Jewish National Fund (JNF) to raise money for a Jewish cause of the students' choice.

The students decided to support the Halutza project, which aims to resettle Jews who were evacuated from Gaza in 2005, when Israel withdrew from the area. Families will be resettled into the desert community of Halutza.

After a semester of fundraising, Sturm and his peers raised about $22,000, which will go toward building permanent homes, schools and community centres in the area.

For Sturm, the project hit a chord, since his cousins were affected by the evacuation.

"They lost everything, they had no one to help them out. When this opportunity came up, that's who I thought of," he said. "This money that was raised will help these people. That's what gave me this motivation."

QUEST participants raised funds through a comedy night, a website and a phone-a-thon.

"At the beginning, it seemed a little daunting. It seemed a lot to us," Sturm said, adding that the original goal was $20,000.

"Once we saw that maybe it was tangible, it inspired us to push harder."

When the students reached their goal, JNF, along with QUEST, sent them to Israel on the week of Jan. 4 to see where their money would go.

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of Yeshiva University's Centre for the Jewish Future, sees QUEST as an important experience.

"It's almost like a Habitat for Humanity-type program… These students realize how they can, in a challenging economy, raise $22,000 and use those funds to help build some infrastructure," he said. "And they, themselves, can be involved in the work effort."

Hillie Sturm, right, and fellow Yeshiva University student Sammy Steiner sample vegetables while working in a garden in Israel.

For Rabbi Brander, the fact that students were able to interact with community members was essential to the program.

"For these students to see how the funds were used and to be involved… it doesn't just inform them, it allows them to understand the process," he said.

For Reuven Turgel, a participant and Montreal native, the trip helped him feel closer to QUEST's cause.

"We wanted to take part in building something from new and really make something from nothing," he said, adding that his group visited the area where the community will be built.

"It's pretty empty. They're going to start building really soon, I'd love to come back and see how our money really helped," he said.

One of Turgel's most memorable moments in Israel was visiting a kindergarten class.

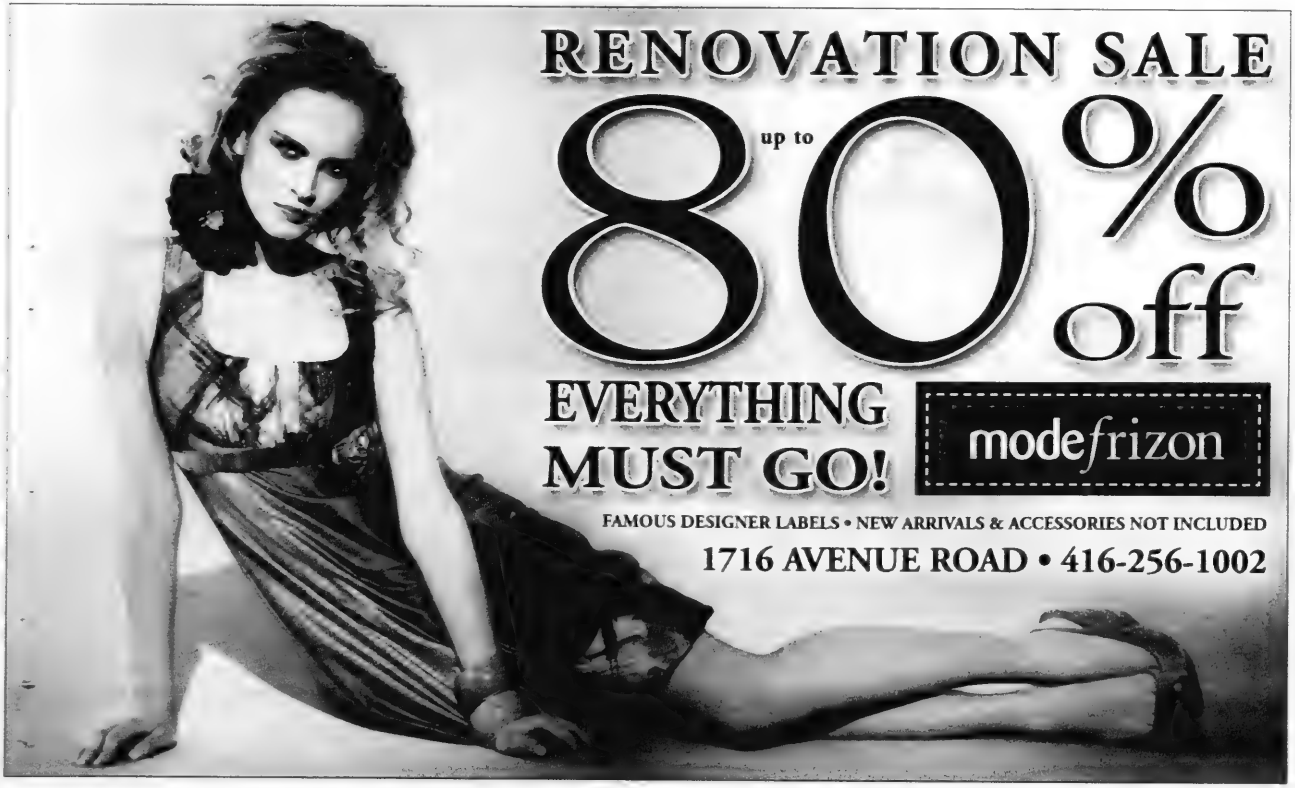
"We planted a garden with the kids… we saw green in the desert. You had to actually see it to believe it," he said. "You have sand and a big patch of green in the middle. We picked carrots from the middle of the desert."

Turgel was impressed by the garden, and not just because of its carrots.

"One of the things [their teachers] valued was to teach the children how to do agriculture from a really young age," he said. "They see the importance of building the land for the future of Israel."

Along with the QUEST program, Yeshiva University also ran two winter break programs in Israel. The first, called Operation Healthcare, which ran from Jan. 4 to 15, focused on Israel and America's health-care system. Pre-med students from YU worked in hospitals, visited soup kitchens and learned about social responsibility in the medical field.

The second Israel trip, from Jan. 6 to 17, was called Shabbat 2010 and taught students the significance and roots of Shabbat observance.



And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Pop rockers aim for music that gets 'stuck in your head'

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Joseph Shabason always thought he'd become a jazz musician. Then he formed a pop-rock band.

Shabason, 27, has played jazz since he was 10 years old. He graduated from the University of Toronto's jazz performance program, but after a year, he started to have doubts.

"I realized, maybe I didn't like jazz anymore. Instead of giving up at jazz altogether, I thought it would be a good idea to try my hand at writing rock music."

This is how Everything All The Time was born. The band, which was started by Shabason and his friend, Kieran Adams, about two years ago, plays mainly upbeat indie rock with a splash of pop. For Shabason, the switch from jazz to rock wasn't an easy one.

"It was tough. I think, at first, I was really kind of scared... to be out of my element," he said. "After a while, it sort of felt completely natural. It felt the most natural that any type of music ever had."

From playing in various punk and rock bands while in high school, he learned the power of catchy lyrics.

"Jazz is a sort of intellectual pursuit," he said. "[In rock] you can write songs that people can sing along to. Seeing people singing your songs is a pretty amazing thing."

Everything All The Time is a unique rock band.

When on stage, the members may be hammering on keyboards, but it's hard to find a guitar. The band mostly uses synthesizers– at least seven or eight per show.

Everything All The Time is made up of vocalist Alanna Stuart; Adams, who plays drums; Jeremy Little who plays bass and bass synthesizer; Dafydd Hughes; Robbie Grunwald; Mary Cobham and Shabason, who plays the keyboard and sings backup vocals.

Band members use laptops as well as synthesizers that date back to the 1970s and '80s. They find their synthesizers on Craigslist or in stores that sell used musical instruments.

"It's all synthesizers... They're quite a spectacle... We're doing that in lieu of having guitar and bass and stuff. It's sort of a different sound," Shabason said, adding that the band's use of synthesizers came more out of need than choice.

"It started because of my limitations as a musician. I played sax and was trying to write songs for a rock band. All I had were synthesizers and keyboards. From there, we all took it and ran," he said.

Most of the band's songs start from a piano chord.

"Because it's all synthesizers, we'll write songs based on a sound. Once we have a general progression, we'll put it into the computer," Shabason said, adding that he usually writes songs with Adams. After the initial chords are chosen, Shabason will write a demo and the band will discuss it.

"It really takes shape from there," he said.

While most of their songs start from a chord, their lyrics usually start from one line.

"What ends up happening is maybe a line will get stuck in your head, and from that one line, I'll build that song around that," Shabason said.

This is how *The Only One You Love Is You*, a song about a narcissistic friend, was born.

"Some of our best songs come from personal experiences," he said. "What we're trying to do is write pop music that people can sing along to and dance to and it gets stuck in your head."

Most of the band members also play in other groups. Shabason and Grunwald played in Bass Groove, a band that often performed in the Jewish community.

For Little, 32, who's involved in three bands, Everything All The Time is about having fun.

"A lot of the people in this band are a lot of side people for other bands... we just wanted to do... something that was our own," he said. "This is something we got interested in doing for fun, and it's just kind of gone from there."

Grunwald, 31, agrees. His favourite part of playing in the band is watching the audience's reactions.

"The reactions we get are just so strong... When you're on stage, you look up into the crowd and people are just dancing, they're really into the music. It's a great experience," he said.

While the group is gaining in popularity, being a Toronto band is an uphill battle, Grunwald said.

"It's really tough, especially in Toronto, because there are so many bands," he said. "It takes a lot of persistence, a lot of luck, a lot of strategy."

For Shabason, the main challenge is apathetic crowds.

"People don't necessarily go out to see music unless there's a seal of approval on it, and that's a tough thing," he said, adding that the band is about to tour Ontario and Quebec. "Ultimately, if you write good music and people are into it, they're going to like you."

From left are Everything All The Time members Joseph Shabason, Dafydd Hughes, Alanna Stuart, Kieran Adams, Mary Cobham and Jeremy Little. Robbie Grunwald is not pictured.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

On Campus

Free speech 'essential', educators say

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Universities should protect a student's right to free speech, even if their opinions are a veil for anti-Semitism, said Jack Lightstone, president and vice-chancellor of Brock University.

Lightstone was one of eight speakers to testify at a Jan. 25 hearing held by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism (CPCCA). The CPCCA hearings, which began on Nov. 2, are being held to discuss the issue of anti-Semitism in Canada.

Speakers at last week's session included Lightstone; Patrick Case, director of the human rights and equity office at the University of Guelph; Morton Mendelson, deputy provost of student life and learning at McGill University; Bonnie Patterson, president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities; Gerald Gerbrandt, president of the Canadian Mennonite University; Michel Lamontagne, special adviser for institutional relations at the Université de Montréal; Marilou McPhedran, principal of Global College at the University of Winnipeg, and Stephen Owen, vice-president of external, legal and community relations at the University of British Columbia.

According to Lightstone, some students on campus may be finding an outlet for their anti-Semitism by criticizing the Israeli government.

"There is one garment in which Jew-haters can cloak themselves, and that is criticism of Israeli politics," he said. "But outing anti-Semites by banning the cloak may be a cure that's worse than the disease."

Lightstone went on to say that free speech must be protected in Canadian universities, as long as students are not engaged in hate speech.

"It does not matter whether criticism makes those who support the contrary views uncomfortable. Even the expression of distasteful and stupid ideas must be tolerated so that they may be confronted by their critics," he said.

Mendelson of McGill agreed, and during his testimony, he read an opinion piece he wrote that ran in the *McGill Tribune*, a student newspaper.

"The freedom to express a wide range of ideas... is essential in a modern universi-ty," he read. "Our tolerance may be tested, but as long as the audience is present by choice and not by accidental requirement, even objectionable speech ought to have its place."

Owen of UBC stressed the importance of open dialogue between Muslim and Jewish campus groups. He used last March's Israeli Apartheid Week as an example, stating that, during this time, the university's administration met with both groups to encourage a conversation between Jewish and Muslim students.

Owen added that there must be a balance when dealing with freedom of speech.

"Unlimited free speech can be anarchic. If... it's so free that we bear no responsibility... then that's going too far," he said. "But as well, if we're so secure that nobody can say anything to insult us, to offend us, then we're just frozen, we're in prison. So finding that balance is a challenge."

The final CPCCA hearing will take place on Feb. 8.

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ש'שאר ג'נ'נט

גידי קורן וחברים

מה יהיה

באופן כללי אנחנו חשופים ליותר ויותר אלימות- אם דרך המדיה ואם דרך קשרים אישיים או עקיפים עם אנשים שנחשפו לאלימות. סיג האלימות שאי אפשר, יאסור לעבור עליה לסדר היום היא אלימות כלפי ילדים. וגם בתחום הזה- המקום הנמוך ביותר היא אלימות מינית כלפי ילדים. בהקשר זה, נדמה לי שנשבר לאחרונה בישראל שיא הזוועה:

ילד מישוש בדרום הורחק מביתו בעקבות תקיפה מינית על ידי אימו, שהודתה באשמת זימות יחסי מין עם בנה וניידונה לגאסר ממושך. מאחר ואביו לא היה מוכן לקחת אותו תחת חכותי- הוא נמסר לאימוץ למשפחה במרכז הארץ. כעת מסתבר שאבוי המאמץ של הילד, כמו גם מדריכו בפנימיה שבה הוא לומד, אנסו אותו במשך תקופה ארוכה.

שתי המלים המיידות שעלות בוודאי למשמע הזוועה הזאת הן "ענש מות". המחשבה השניה היא בת מילה אחת-"סירוס". יתכן שהחלטיות שלי מזעזעת מי מכם, אבל מי שרוצה את נשמתו של ילד בצורה כזאת-אין סיבה שיחיה.

מידי פעם משתחררים פדופילים מבית הסוהר ותקפים ילדים שוב- לא בהכרח מתוך היותם "אנשים רעים" אלא מתוך היותם אנשים מאוד חולים. הפתרון היחיד שעובד במאה אחוזים במקרים כאלה הוא סירוס. אלא מה-מתוקף כל הצלם רחמנים בני רחמנים הם- הרעיון שיכויתו למישהו את האשכים כואב להם באזור המפשעה--"זה לא אנושי " הם אומרים-- מדוע לא כואב להם כאבו של ילד שהרסו את חייו? אבל שישאר בינינו.

נשיא ישראל והחליפה

תודה לחותי על הסיפור הבא:

כשהיה הנשיא פרס בקזחסטן, הוא קנה בד יקר וביקש מחייט מקומי שיתפור לו חליפה. בדק החייט את הבד ואמר לו: "כבוד הנשיא, הבד הזה יספיק אולי למכנסיים". משם המריא פרס ללונדון והראה את הבד לחייט ברישי. עמה לו החייט "סחי, כבוד הנשיא, זה יספיק בקושי לשרוול".

חזר פרס ארצה והראה את הבד לחייט שלו ברחוב ליליובלום. "מה אתה יכול לעשות עם הבד הזה?" בדק החייט את הבד ואמר לו:" שתי חליפות ועוד זוג מכנסיים". התפלא פרס: "איך זה שבחו"ל זה לא הספיק לכולם וכאן אתה תופר לי חצי מלתחה?".

חייך החייט: "אדוני הנשיא, בחו"ל אתה ענק ופה...."

על מצב החילה

בישראל מן הידועות היא כמה קשה לקבל מידע על מצבך הרפואי בזמן אשפוז, בעקר אם אתה זקן ונטול קשרים

("פרונקציה"בעברית). אז הינה סיפור מאלף שהגיע לשולחני מפיו של חבר נוה שנמהל מחלקה במרכז הארץ: אשה מתקשרת לבית חולים מקומי ומבקשת מידע על בת משפחתה החולה. שואלים אותה"מה השם, המחלקה ומספר החדר?" ענה האשה:"שרה פינקל, חדר 302".

"אעביר אותך לעמדת האחיות ג'" ענה המרכזנית.

"עמדת אחיות ג', איך אני יכולה לעזור לך?"

" אני רוצה לדעת את מצבה של שרה פינקל מחדר 302".

" רק רגע, תני לי להסתכל בגליון שלה...אה, כן, מצבה טוב מאוד, כל הבדיקות תקינות והולכים להוריד לה את המנדינזור של הלב, רדוקטור כהן מתכוון לשלוח אותה הביתה מחר".

אומרת האשה: "תודה לאל, כל כך הוקל לי!"

ענה לה האחות: "אני מבינה שאת בת משפחה או חברה קרובה".

"לא בדיוק, אומרת האשה, אני שרה פינקל מחדר 302, משום אף אחד לא אומר לי כאן כלום!"

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Israel has made a good case against Goldstone

By AMOS HAREL
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

ANALYSIS

Israel's detailed response to the Goldstone report shows that the country can, in fact, respond to accusations with more than complaints of anti-Semitism and endless repetitions of the mantra that "the Israel Defence Forces is the most moral army in the world."

Drawn up by the Foreign Ministry, the Justice Ministry and the IDF prosecutor's office, the document gives a wide-ranging and well-argued reply to many of the claims raised by Goldstone.

It also contains some interesting details that were never, for some reason, disclosed to the Israeli media and public about Operation Cast Lead, which took place in Gaza from Dec. 27, 2008, through Jan. 18, 2009.

The most remarkable details concern the one-time disciplinary measures that were taken against senior Israeli commanders in the operation. Following what he saw as unjustified artillery fire at a Hamas compound in the Gaza City neighbourhood of Tel al-Hawa, Cmdr. Yoav Gallant decided to officially reprimand two officers: a brigadier-general and a colonel.

Their names and the details of the reprimand are not specifically mentioned in the report.

The Golani brigade was known to be operating in the area where the shooting took place.

Another revelation is the fact that in November, the chief of staff set up a new General Staff investigative team to investigate one incident in which a mosque was destroyed and another in which many civilians were killed, and also to look into a number of complaints about inappropriate treatment of Palestinian prisoners.

Israel's detailed and well-argued report shows that the country has a reasonably good case against the Goldstone accusations. This naturally begs the question of why Israeli leadership is so wary of a state commission of inquiry that could ostensibly clear up matters once and for all.

Any such obligation is missing from the report, as arguments in Israel continue on whether to set up an examination committee or a state commission of inquiry. As of now, it seems an examination committee will be set up, but its powers are yet to be defined. Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu preferred to postpone the decision – hoping that either a consensus will be reached, or that the international pressure on Israel will ease, making the committee unnecessary.

Israeli flags defaced in Vancouver

JTA

VANCOUVER — Two Israeli flags that were part of an Olympics display in Vancouver were removed after being defaced.

The Israeli flags were covered in paint with the words "Free Palestine" written on them, the *Vancouver Sun* reported. They were removed last month.

The display on the streets of the city features 450 international flags from 80 countries.

Israel is sending three athletes to the 2010 Winter Olympics, which begin Feb. 12.

The flags will be replaced before the start of the games, according to the *Sun*.

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Israel Briefs

Judge hit by shoe

An Israeli man threw his shoes at Israel's Supreme Court president, hitting her in the face. The force of the impact caused Dorit Beinish to fall from her chair during the attack last Wednesday. She was removed from the courtroom and received medical attention. Beinish returned to the courtroom shortly after the incident. The court had been in the middle of a hearing on medical marijuana. The attack was unrelated to the hearing. The attacker, who was arrested immediately following the incident, shouted "traitor" and "you destroyed my life," as well as "you're corrupt," during the attack, according to reports. President Shimon Peres took time away from his duties while on a state visit to Berlin to call Beinish to ask about her health.

Israel joins UN bloc

Israel was granted membership in a United Nations regional group in Geneva. Israel's membership in JUSCANZ – an acronym for Japan, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand – was approved last week by consensus. The group also includes Norway, Switzerland and several other democratic countries. The move was hailed by both the American Jewish Committee and its Geneva affiliate, UN Watch, which called it a "historic accomplishment." Israel has long been prevented from joining regional groups at the United Nations, a state of affairs that has inhibited its full participation in the world body and roused the ire of its Foreign Ministry and American Jewish groups, which considered the exclusion a blatant contravention of the UN charter's guarantee of state equality. In 2000, Israel was admitted to the western European and Others Group, or WEOG, at UN headquarters in New York.

Limits on illegal migrant workers

Israel's cabinet approved draft legislation that would limit the number of illegal migrant workers entering the country. The move would open up 30,000 to 50,000 jobs for Israelis within a year, Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz said. "The massive entry of migrant workers into Israel in recent years has created problems with security, drugs and, mainly, in the job market, decreased wages," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said during the cabinet meeting. "The migrant workers are a weight that push salaries lower. We are talking about damage to our society and an additional aspect of Israel as a Jewish state." The plan would impose heavy fines on those who employ illegal foreign workers and change taxation benefits for the employers. In December, there were about 255,000 foreign workers in Israel, 125,000 of them in the country illegally, comprising more than 10 per cent of the work force. – *JTA*

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

Passover Supplement,
The Canadian Jewish News
1500 Don Mills Rd. Suite 205
Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4

Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.

Submissions can not be returned.

CJN Purim Art Display

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The Canadian Jewish News,
1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M3B 3K4.

If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selctions based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

Problem will not go away

Continued from page 1

But it has been the modern Orthodox movement, the observant Zionist Jews, who have ceded ground to the haredim and have allowed themselves to be intimidated into accepting haredi demands, he said.

The haredim have assumed a virtual monopoly over conversions, "and it's been done, interestingly enough, because of the weakness of modern Orthodoxy or Zionist religious movement, which has been concentrating for years on the borders of the Land of Israel. The Zionist Orthodox concentrate on the borders, while the haredi Orthodox concentrate on what's going on inside the borders," he said.

"I think Israel has come out of this weakened considerably. It is a catastrophe for halachic Judaism and Zionism."

Traditionally, conversions have been performed by local rabbis, and under Jewish Law, these were recognized in the wider Orthodox world. However, with the growth in political clout of the haredi establishment, Israel's chief rabbinate announced in 2006 that it would not accept international Orthodox conversions unless they conformed to haredi standards. Israel does not recognize Reform or Conservative conversions. (Within the Jewish state, personal status issues such as marriage, divorce and burial are governed by each community's religious authorities.)

The influx of one million Soviet immigrants, including many who aren't halachically Jewish, caused further strains. Sensitive to the issue, former prime minister Ariel Sharon called on Rabbi Chaim Druckman, head of a hesder yeshiva, to operate the National Conversion Authority, Orthodox rabbinic courts that would be in charge of converting those who wished to join the Jewish fold. However, even these conversions have been rejected by haredi rabbis, while recent decisions by haredi rabbinic courts have called into question the validity of conversions by non-haredi Orthodox rabbis in a number of Israeli cities.

Conversions by Orthodox rabbinic courts (bet dins) in the Diaspora have also been rejected by Israeli religious authorities. In one notorious case involving Yossi Fackenheim, the son of renowned philosopher Emil Fackenheim, a childhood conversion by the Orthodox Toronto beit din was annulled when the judge decided he did not subsequently live an observant lifestyle.

About four years ago, the Rabbinic Council of American (RCA), which represents 1,000 Orthodox rabbis, agreed to tighten the criteria for conversions to limit them to Torah-observant Jews and restrict conversions to those performed by rabbis deemed acceptable to Israel's chief rabbinate.

In Canada, a number of prominent rabbis have announced they will no longer perform conversions.

The repercussions of these developments in Israel have been substantial, Rabbi Melchior said. "This is a big national issue. In this period, the people who came here were very much interested in coming to Israel and were interested in converting. If they had been received with open arms, they would have wanted it. Now, the majority don't even want it."

It's a problem that's not going to go away, he continued. In recent years, more than 90,000 children have been born who study in Israel and serve in the Israel Defence Forces, yet they are not accepted as legitimate Jews. For them, too, the current situation is a "catastrophe," Rabbi Melchior said.

Rabbi Melchior, who has launched Moe'tzet Yachad, a forum that promotes dialogue and understanding between different strands in Israeli society, sharply criticized haredi rabbinic judges, who have annulled conversions by non-haredi Orthodox rabbinic courts.

Haredim, he said, "have the right to make their own halachic interpretations, but I think in some interpretations, they go strongly against Halachah when it comes to annulling the conversions that happened in the past. There is no basis whatsoever in the tradition of Halachah. There is no precedent in Halachah," he said.

"The problem is that the main rabbinic institutions in the country and also abroad in North America, with the agreement of the Rabbinical Council of America and in Europe, everyone has given in to the haredi interpretation. But the haredi interpretation never takes into account klal Yisrael [the broader Jewish community]. They're not part of the Zionist movement.

"The main blame is on the mainstream Zionist parties in Israel."

Rabbi Melchior said all the major Israeli parties – Likud, Labor, Kadima – give in to the haredim to secure their political support. "They've sold out on Zionism," he said.

Asked why so many Orthodox rabbis and bet dins accept haredi dictates, Rabbi Melchior said, "They are afraid. They feel the Zionist rabbinate in Israel has not given them any backing."

Rabbi Melchior, who said he has personally felt the sting of haredi criticism, said, "I'm used to it. I do according to my conscience… I'm also in a difficult situation, being inside the Orthodox establishment and on several issues not following the party line."

He pointed to a recent case involving Rabbi Chaim Amsalem, a member of the haredi Shas party who advanced a plan to ease the conversion to Judaism of descendants of Jews who immigrated to Israel and served in the armed forces. Even though his proposal was based on the halachic principle of "*zera Yisrael* [seed of Israel]," he "experienced a smearing campaign," Rabbi Melchior said.

That sort of intimidation is silencing many Orthodox rabbis, he added.

But the issue is too important to ignore, he continued. "If we close down the door toward even halachic conversions, we're saying to a big part of the Jewish world, 'You're not wanted in the Jewish community, you're not part of the Jewish world.'"

Despite his personal commitment to liberalizing the conversion process, Rabbi Melchior isn't particularly optimistic about the future. "The haredi political influence is only growing, and it will grow until the day the Zionist parties will understand they are digging the grave of the future of the Jewish People by giving in to this kind of extortion.

"It will go on as long as the [political] leaders will not be leaders and give in on everything to achieve political power," he said.

Israel & the Jewish World

IDF team returns home from Haiti

JTA

JERUSALEM — The 200-member Israeli military medical and rescue team was honoured upon its return to Israel from Haiti last week.

The team had been among the first aid workers to arrive in the country following the devastating earthquake that hit there on Jan. 12.

"You raised peoples' spirits; you raised the name of the State of Israel and the name of the [Israel Defence Forces]. Precisely during these days, during which there are those who conspire against us and distort and degrade the name of the IDF and the name of the State of Israel, you showed the world the true spirit of the IDF," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday morning during an official military ceremony at Ben-Gurion Airport.

The ceremony was attended by senior officials of both the IDF and the government.

"You have merited praise from all over the world and have turned into a source of pride for every Jew and every Israeli," said Chief of the General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi. "Lately there have been those who complain about the IDF and have chosen to muddy its face and complain against its morals and ethics. In your work, you have proven the opposite to be true – our values guide us to cross continents in order to save lives. That is what guides us today and will continue to guide us in the future."

"As commander of this army, I was excited to represent you," Ashkenazi said.

The IDF made the decision to pull out after the arrival of more aid forces to Haiti, as well as U.S. military, and civilian aid organizations.

Young Wadley Elysee at his arrival at Ben-Gurion Airport. The five-year old was then driven to hospital to have heart surgery. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Several Haitian hospitals are also operating in some capacity, the army said.

The team left more than 30 tons of medical equipment and supplies in Haiti to help further earthquake relief efforts, according to the IDF, including bandaging gear, surgery equipment, two incubators and other medical accessories, as well as 1,150 blankets, 30 large-sized tents, 500 mattresses, 200 sleeping bags and kitchen equipment. The equipment will be distributed to tent cities throughout Haiti, co-ordinated by the Israeli ambassador in the country.

During its stay in Haiti, the delegation treated more than 1,100 patients, conducted 319 successful surgeries, delivered 16 babies, including three caesarean sections, and saved many from the ruins of the devastating earthquake.

The team also brought a five-year-old Haitian child to have heart surgery in Israel, according to the IDF.

Coalition holding Netanyahu back

By RON KAMPEAS

JTA

TAMPA, Fla. — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is being held back by his coalition in trying to make peace moves, U.S. President Barack Obama said at a town hall meeting.

Obama, speaking in Tampa Jan. 28, was asked why his administration continues to support Israel and Egypt despite their "human rights violations against the occupied Palestinian people."

Obama started his answer by describing Israel as "one of our strongest allies" and a "vibrant democracy," adding that "we will never waver from ensuring Israel's security and helping them secure themselves in what is a very hostile region."

However, he said attention must be paid to "the plight of the Palestinians" and "Israel has to acknowledge legitimate grievances and interests of the Palestinians." He said the politics are difficult for both Israel and the Palestinians.

"The Israel government came in based on the support of a lot of folks who don't want to make a lot of concessions," Obama said. "I think Prime Minister Netanyahu is actually making some effort to try to move a little bit further than his coalition wants him to go."

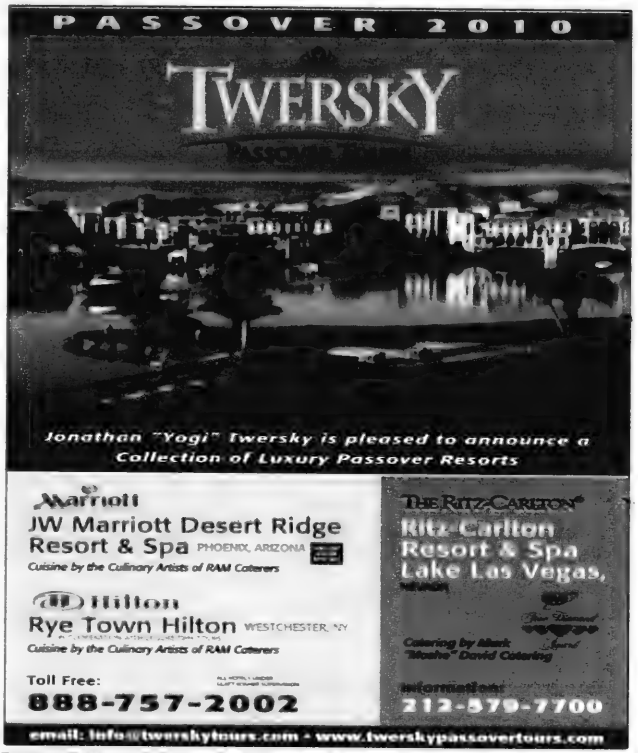
While Netanyahu's government has acceded to some internal pressure to add housing in parts of the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, he has frozen building in other areas.

The Palestinian Authority does not want to return to talks without a total freeze on building in the settlements.

Obama also said that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas "genuinely wants peace, has to deal with Hamas, an organization that has not recognized Israel and has not disavowed violence."

Correction

The phone number for information about the Gems of the Danube cruise in "Travel Talk" (Jan. 28) was incorrect. It should be 416-928-3113. *The CJN* regrets the error.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Canadian olim 'Stand Together' with Israel's soldiers

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — Standing Together hands out treats – pizza, popcorn, clothes, toiletries, you name it – to Israeli soldiers on active duty.

Canadian Howard Osterer found out about the organization shortly after immigrating to Israel in December 2008, and despite the busy life of the new immigrant, he decided there was no way he couldn't volunteer.

"These kids are putting their lives on the line so that we can sleep at night. These kids are my heroes," says Osterer, originally from Ottawa, where he volunteered and worked for Scouts Canada for 25 years.

"I believe you are here and you have to put something back into the country. To give these kids a smile, to make their lives just a little bit better, this is my way of putting a little bit back."

Osterer, 55, heard about the organization from fellow Canadian immigrant volunteer Barbara Sternberg, 54, who made aliyah in 1967 and found out about Standing Together last summer. With two of her four children having completed their Israel Defence Forces service, she had a personal reason to get involved.

"When you have kids in the army, you have a sensitive spot for soldiers. These soldiers give their lives for us, and this is one way to do something special for them," says Sternberg, who is heading a new campaign for Standing Together, recruiting women from Canada, United States and Australia to knit and crochet scarves for soldiers.

"Jews all over the world are so appreciative of the soldiers' service, and they want to do something to say thanks. It's a real labour of love to knit or crochet a scarf, and the women feel it's a real privilege to help out."

Osterer and Sternberg are among hundreds of Israelis who volunteer for Standing Together. The organization was founded in 2004 by David Landau, an immigrant to Israel from Queens, N.Y., who lives with his wife and eight children in Efrat.

Landau, 60, who owns a chicken, turkey, meat and fish delivery service called Landau's Super Clean Chickens, was walking around Rachel's Tomb one day, when he was suddenly experienced an epiphany. "I saw these soldiers in front of Rachel's Tomb. They were extremely scared, and there like sitting ducks. I thought, here are these kids, putting their lives on the line every single moment."

He went straight out and bought pizzas and drinks for them. "I told them, 'I want to thank you for what you are doing.' They said, 'What do you mean? We're just doing our jobs,' and I told them, 'No. You are doing much, much more than that,'" recalls Landau.

"Anyone serving anyplace, whether 18 years old or 35, in the regular army or on reserve duty, they deserve to be thanked," says Landau. "In fact, we have a tremendous obligation to thank them – the mitzvah of *korat hatov* – and we are there for them."

The pizza delivery at Rachel's Tomb was the first of many. Soon after, a pizza bag was donated to keep the pizzas warm, and financial support and volunteers began to roll in. Before long, Landau and his crew were making nearly nightly trips to bases and border crossings across the West Bank, and he was so busy building Standing Together that his son had to take over the chicken business.

In 2006, just before the war with Lebanon, the organization received a large donation and bought a small truck and trailer, to take their show on the road and bring treats to soldiers all over the country. "When the war broke out, we were ready to go down south to the border with Gaza and north to the border with Lebanon," says Landau.

That is just what they did. Unlike other, more bureaucratic organizations dedicated to supporting IDF soldiers such as Friends of the IDF and A Package from Home, Standing Together's flexible grassroots nature meant that that they were able to respond immediately to the war's pressing needs.

"While other organizations were putting together baskets and packages for each individual soldier, many of which didn't arrive until after the war, I just filled the truck with socks and underwear and toiletries, grabbed some volunteers, and went from stop to stop handing the stuff out," says Landau. "We gave to everyone – I don't even know who. But in times of war, you need things immediately. We work on that level, we do things on the spot. We help the soldiers with anything they need right when they need it."

After the war, Landau filled his truck with microwaves and personalized fridges, and drove from hospital to hospital delivering these items, along with personalized bathrobes, to injured soldiers.

Now, the organization does a mix of spontaneous and organized events, from late-night pizza, coffee, hot soup, ice cream and clothing deliveries to sponsored delivery nights (it costs $650 US to sponsor a night, and the truck can reach up to hundreds of soldiers) and hosting Independence Day barbecue parties at army bases, distributing Rosh Hashanah greeting cards from around the world and handing out challot baked by volunteers in Sderot.

"Whatever we are giving out is a secondary thing," says Landau. "The main thing is to show them that people care about them. It makes all the difference in the word for them to know that they are not alone and that people care about them."

His truck is now outfitted with an oven for heating pizza, a kettle popcorn machine, an espresso machine and a freezer with frozen treats, plus a laptop computer with satellite Internet access and an electrical box with 36 outlets, to enable soldiers in remote places to charge their cellphones.

Howard Osterer, left, volunteers with Standing Together, which hands out treats to Israeli soldiers. Osterer is with an Israeli soldier who was on patrol near the Gaza border.

"The soldiers are so taken aback by the outpouring of love from around the world," he says. "This is an easy way to boost their morale and make their lives a little bit easier."

This past Chanukah, Standing Together ran its fourth annual doughnut week, for which Landau brought his doughnut machine with him to bases in the Jordan Valley, Shechem, Nebe Musa and Kessufim, and made fresh doughnuts for the soldiers.

Osterer and Sternberg came along to volunteer. "One soldier told me, 'In the army, we don't even realize it's Chanukah. You showed up and made the holiday for us," Sternberg says. "When you see their smiles, it just warms the heart."

"Being there and seeing how appreciative our soldiers were was an experience that I will never forget," adds Osterer, who along with Sternberg intends to start a fundraising chapter for the organization in Canada. "Being there really made me feel the reason why I made aliyah, to really be part of something, part of a society that loves and cares for its soldiers."

Says Landau: "Standing Together tends to boost the morale not only of our soldiers, but of our volunteers, too."

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Bringing Israeli culture to North America

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

It's fitting that the name of Ravid Dahan's international entertainment agency is Motek Productions. Translated from Hebrew, "motek" means "sweetie," and that's exactly what the 29-year-old native Israeli is.

Her energy is contagious, and it's obvious when you are with her that Dahan is a passionate person. As the creator of a company dedicated to bringing the best of Israeli culture to North America, she is supporting her homeland while enriching her new surroundings. Since she moved to Toronto three years ago, Dahan says she has fallen in love with the city.

"There are many things I like about Toronto, but what strikes me most is the strong Jewish community. I truly believe that it is a model for the rest of the world," she says. "When I set out to start Motek Productions, my dream was to make our community even stronger by bringing together Canadian and Israeli Jews through a shared love of Israeli music and art."

Dahan was raised in Kiryat Shmonah, a city in northern Israel on the Lebanese border. A ballet dancer for 14 years, she was once a performer on stage, but she began working in the entertainment business behind the curtain during her high school years.

After serving in the Israeli army and putting on productions with the entertainment unit, Dahan travelled the world before settling in Canada. She admits she felt a sense of guilt for leaving her country, but being a volunteer for many Jewish organizations in Toronto and the owner of Motek Productions, Dahan has maintained her connection to Israel.

"I now feel proud," she says. "I did my part in Israel by serving two years in the army. What I'm doing here is helping from afar. I was struggling for Israel's existence every day of my life living on the border. I chose to take a break from focusing on survival, and I now put my energy towards promoting my country in a positive way."

Through Motek Productions, Dahan says she has the power to do more for Israel from abroad than if she was still living in Kiryat Shmonah. With Israel so often portrayed negatively in the news, Dahan says her company will help people gain a broader understanding and appreciation of her country.

"Motek Productions is about showing a different face of Israel to the rest of the world. Being here, I have the time and the freedom to give back to Israel by showing Canadians how incredible my homeland is. I can bring Israeli artists to Toronto and show the community a different side of the country – the cultural side. Israel has really great music and really great artists, and we need to spread their talent."

Dahan says Motek Productions is also geared toward uniting the Jewish community and the Israeli community in Toronto.

Ravid Dahan is seen here with Ivri Lider, an Israeli pop-rock artist.

"We are one family, one people, brothers and sisters, long-life friends, but there is a separation between the two groups," she says.

"With such a large Israeli and Jewish population in Canada, Motek Productions can strengthen the community through the events and concerts we organize. We have enough enemies and enough people that look at us differently, that we have to come together and be strong. There are thousands of Israelis who live in the city, and they have to be welcomed."

Dahan says one of the ways to bring Israelis and Jewish Canadians together is "to show the Jewish community that lives here and knows about Israel and donates tons of money to Israel our culture, our music and our art, so they can feel for it too and be part of it with us. We're all Jewish and we're all the same. Motek Productions is showing the Toronto community that they can benefit from our events."

Aside from her Canadian team, Dahan says Motek Productions has a base in Tel Aviv run by Laura Dobrovickiy, the Israeli program and marketing manager. In the past year alone, Dahan has arranged three major concerts in Toronto, successfully unifying fans from all walks of life.

Her March 15, 2009, show, which featured Jewish reggae superstar Aharit Hayamim, was Dahan's "first jump into the waters" – an effort put together by her company to raise awareness for a cause close to her heart. The event served as a fundraiser for the family of Gilad Schalit, an Israeli soldier captured by Palestinian militants in 2006 during a cross border raid. Shalit has been held as a prisoner by Hamas ever since.

On June 4, Motek Productions held a concert at The Guvernment, where a mix of Jews and non-Jews danced for hours to the live music of Ivri Lider, one of the largest selling Israeli pop-rock artists. The night also marked the celebration of Tel Aviv's 100th birthday.

Nov. 15 was Motek Productions' "main focus for 2009," Dahan says, as her team worked around the clock to put together their largest concert yet for that date. Dahan arranged for Idan Raichel, an Israeli singer-songwriter known for his band's fusion of electronics, Hebrew lyrics and Middle Eastern and Ethiopian music, to perform a show at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre at Exhibition Place. Along with the Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP), Motek Productions also organized a question and answer session, where part of the proceeds raised went towards funding JUMP's new centre.

While Motek Productions is a company primarily focused on events and concerts, Dahan says she strongly believes in giving back to the Jewish community. She has recently donated to many organizations, aside from JUMP, and is involved in promoting and selling tickets for the arrival of Omri Casspi, the NBA's first Israeli player.

In terms of what's to come, Dahan says Feb. 28 this year will be a night to remember, as Motek Productions is currently planning Toronto's biggest Purim party. Featuring Israeli hip-hop group Hadag Nahash, live in concert at the Mod Club, the celebration will take place at the beginning of Israeli Apartheid Week, with proceeds going towards the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism at Hebrew University.

The winner of best costume will be awarded a free trip to Israel, including a fully paid 2010 summer course at Hebrew University, flight and accommodations.

For more information on Motek Productions, visit www.motekproductions.com.

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Executive Vice President

Interactive play brings Orthodox wedding to life

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Yichud, Julie Tepperman's new play, is meant to simulate an actual Orthodox wedding, and audience members are treated like "guests," able to interact in a special pre-wedding ceremony.

Yichud follows the wedding of Rachel and Chaim. They are brought together through a shidduch, get engaged after a few chaperoned dates and marry shortly thereafter.

Julie Tepperman

"This play takes place on the day of their wedding. The theatre is going to be transformed into a synagogue," Tepperman says. Part of the play takes place in the *yichud* room, where the married couple goes to be alone together right after the ceremony.

The play begins with a pre-wedding ceremony. As the audience arrives in the lobby, "the men will be invited up to the the balcony to meet the groom, and the women remain in the sanctuary level," Tepperman says. "The women guests will be able to meet with the bride before the wedding and ask for a special blessing from her."

Mingling about with these "paying guests" will be a group of "volunteer wedding guests" doing pre-arranged things to give the whole thing a real feel. "A lot of stuff is co-ordinated to look spontaneous," Tepperman says.

Although male and female guests will be separated for the first half hour or so of the play, they will all be able to see everything that's going on. "Depending on where you're sitting, you'll get a different perspective."

During the unveiling of the bride, the men will be invited to go and meet the women. They can then watch the final third of the play together. "For the last part, the audience becomes flies on the wall, witnessing the wedding from their seats," Tepperman says.

This isn't the first of her plays to feature audience interaction, or what she describes as "organized chaos." Tepperman and her husband, Aaron Willis, *Yichud*'s director, are the founders of Convergence Theatre, and their previous plays have also featured such "organized chaos."

In 2006, they produced *AutoShow*, in which seven plays were performed simultaneously in seven cars in a parking lot, as the audience moved from car to car. A couple of years ago, Dora-nominated Tepperman wrote one of the four plays in *The Gladstone Variations*, in which the audience moved from room to room in the Gladstone Hotel in downtown Toronto, following the play's actions.

In *Yichud*, the audience is also treated to an interactive experience and, in addition to mingling with the actors, can also chose to dance to music performed by a live klezmer band.

"It was never intended this way," Tepperman says. An earlier, shorter Fringe Festival version stuck to a more traditional stage setting. But when Theatre Passe Muraille got involved, the whole thing got bigger, and they decided to treat the play like an actual wedding.

"We realized it would serve the play better if the stage was like a synagogue. Everything is very similar to what happens at a real Orthodox wedding."

Tepperman is aware that Jewish weddings differ according to culture, and went with what suits the characters of the play best.

Tepperman and Willis, who play the couple, Rachel and Chaim, didn't have a *yichud* room at their real wedding. In fact, they hadn't even heard about the ritual "Later, I was working in a synagogue, and I accidently walked in on a couple in a *yichud* room," Tepperman says. "I think it's a beautiful ritual. It's the first time the bride and groom spend some time together to reflect on what is happening to them."

The play also takes on the larger meaning of the word "*yichud*" (seclusion), which refers to the separation between men and women in daily Orthodox life. During the play, action splits between three "*yichuds*" in three separate rooms that the audience is privy to. The audience also gets to see Chaim's two brothers, who have drifted apart, engage in an emotional and passionate discussion, as well as an argument between the parents.

"All of these emotional conflicts are heightened by the atmosphere of the wedding itself," Tepperman says.

Richard Greenblatt and Diane Flacks, the co-writers and actors of *Sibs*, play Rachel's parents. Greenblatt also serves as consulting director. Veteran actor Jordan Pettle plays one of Chaim's two brothers, and SummerWorks Theatre Festival's artistic producer, Michael Rubenfeld, plays the other.

The entire cast, in fact, is Jewish.

"That started off accidently," Tepperman says, but in the end it was a deliberate decision, as everyone was sensitive to the subject matter and didn't need to have the finer points of a Jewish wedding spelled out.

"We all understand what this is all about, although none of us is Orthodox, and we all relate differently to Judaism and Orthodox Judaism."

The set designer, Beth Kates, is also Jewish, as is the musical director, singer Aviva Chernick.

Tepperman says the play is sensitive to the Orthodox community and hired Shira Schwartz, a theatre practitioner and Orthodox woman as a consultant. "We are trying to be as accurate as to what happens at an Orthodox wedding as we possibly can."

Yichud, Tepperman says, is a sensitive, powerful and balanced look at relationships. "We really hope this play resonates with people on an emotional level, whether they are Jewish or not."

When the play's run at Theatre Passe Muraille ends, Tepperman hopes to take this production to other cities. "After you work on something for 2-1/2 years, you want it to last longer than three weeks." They are inviting artistic directors and producers from across Canada and New York, and even Mandy Patinkin, who will be in town later this month, to watch it.

Yichud runs Feb. 10 to 27, with previews Feb. 6 to 10, at the Theatre Passe Muraille Mainspace, 16 Ryerson Ave., Toronto. Guests are invited to show up 15 minutes early for pre-show wedding celebrations. Tickets at artsboxoffice.ca, 416-504-7529. www.passemuraille.on.ca

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Shalom TV on Rogers on demand

For the past several weeks, subscribers to Rogers cable service have been able to watch Shalom TV, a free video-on-demand channel.

"We are thrilled to bring Shalom TV to Canada," said Mark Golub, president and executive producer of Shalom TV.

Running the gamut from Talmud commentary to programming for kids, Shalom TV's programming contains movies, documentaries, educational programs and reality shows.

Currently, viewers can watch highly rated movies such as *The Hebrew Hammer* or *Leon the Pig Farmer*.

Also airing are documentaries on Daniel Pearl, a three-part series on Orthodoxy in the United States and an intriguing interview with Israel's minister of minority affairs on the Arab situation in Jerusalem.

Esther Jungreis

The Judaism and Culture section has programming from the 92nd Y, a mock reality TV show called *From Date to Mate*, a series of Hebrew lessons called *From the Aleph-bet* and *Hineni*, Torah commentary by Rebbitzen Esther Jungreis.

Programming changes weekly. Shalom TV is free and on demand on Rogers Multicultural on Demand channel 800.

Go to www.shalomtv.com for more information.

— J.S.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

PREVIEWS BEGIN FOR *YICHUD* AT PASSE MURAILLE

Theatre Passe Muraille's Mainspace theatre is transformed into a synagogue for the arranged marriage of Rachel and Chaim in **Julie Tepperman**'s play *Yichud* (*Seclusion*). Set in Toronto's Orthodox Jewish community, it's "a tender and humorous exploration of our universal desire for intimacy and how we cope with the repression of that desire."

Directed by **Aaron Willis**, the play features **Diane Flacks**, **Richard Greenblatt**, **Jordan Pettle** and **Michael Rubenfeld** as well as Tepperman, Willis and a live klezmer band. 16 Ryerson Ave. Previews Feb. 6 to 10, runs to Feb. 27. Evenings start at 7:15 p.m. and matinées at 2:15 p.m., with pre-show wedding celebrations. $35 to $15. 416-504-7529.

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Rarely Seen Broadway Musical: The Civic Light-Opera Company presents the first-ever post-Broadway staging of **Richard Rodgers**' penultimate musical *Rex*, which first amazed Broadway audiences some 35 years ago. In the style of *Camelot* and *The King & I*, *Rex* is a collaboration between composer Rodgers (*The Sound of Music*), lyricist **Sheldon Harnick** (*Fiddler on the Roof*) and writer **Sherman Yellen** (*Phantom of the Opera*).

The show captures the romance and intrigue of the court of **King Henry VIII** and brings it vividly and melodically to life. It features a full cast and orchestra, lavish sets and costumes, and stars **Joe Cascone**, **Ashley Gibson**, **David Haines**, **Carol Kugler** and **Andrea Barker**. **Damien Gulde**. Harnick and Yellen have contributed new lyrics and other material specifically for the show. $25, $27.50. Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr. Feb. 17 to March 6. 416-755-1717, www.CivicLightOperaCompany.com

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Names in the News: Storytelling Toronto has announced that **Dan Yashinsky** is the first storyteller-in-residence at the Artscape Wychwood Barns. Yashinsky will be conducting storytelling activities with local arts groups, cultural associations, schools, religious organizations and in neighbourhood cafés. "I'd like to make the Barns a place where everyone who loves storytelling can feel at home," said Yashinsky, a longtime resident of the St. Clair West neighbourhood. The founder of the Toronto Festival of Storytelling, Yashinsky is also author of *Suddenly They Heard Footsteps* and recipient of the Jane Jacobs Prize. The residency is funded by a grant from the George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation.

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Arts in Brief

• The Canadian première of *Was It a Dream* by Israeli playwright **Edna Mazya** is performed by the Hebrew-language theatre company Mifgash Theatre, with subtitles. $25. City Playhouse, 1000 New Westminster Dr., Vaughan. Sunday, Feb. 7, 1 and 7:30 p.m. 416-635-2883, ext. 5280, sshor@ujafed.org.

• "Lost Tribes: A Link with Afghanistan and Kashmir," a lecture and discussion with **Diana Mingail**. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, $9 drop in with refreshments. Sunday Feb. 7, 11 a.m. jewishlife@mnjcc.org

• Celebrate Love 2010: An Evening of the World's Greatest Love Songs is a Valentine's concert with **Andrew Craig**, **Molly Johnson** and others. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina at Bloor. Adults $45, seniors $40, couples $80, senior couples $75. Sunday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m. www.algreentheatre.ca, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• Chai Lifeline Canada presents Sing for the Children, a fundraising concert with **Dudu Fisher**. $36 and up. Roy Thomson Hall, Feb. 22, 8 p.m. 1-888-416-2424, www.chai-concert.com

• Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation present ISH Theatre's Odysseus Chaoticus, from Israel. Clown theatre for adults & teens. $18, $12. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Thursday, March 4, and Saturday, March 6, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca

• The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company has extended its deadline for receiving submissions for its Jewish Playwrights Festival - In the Beginning. The new deadline is Feb. 19, 5 p.m. Four submitted scripts will be chosen for staged readings in May. www.hgjewishtheatre.com

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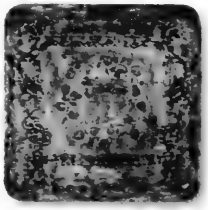

At the Galleries: "New and Recent Works" by Toronto artist **Myriam Nafte** is currently on view in the Jacobs Lounge of the Miles Nadal JCC. Featuring powerful Judaic imagery, rich textures and luminosity, the art was inspired from ancient Judaic writings and the illuminated manuscripts of medieval synagogues. Until March 7.

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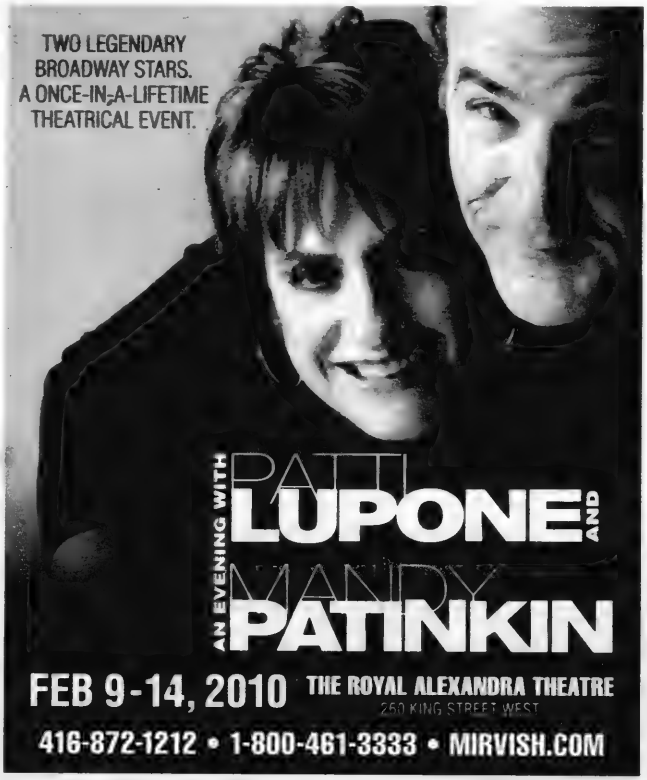
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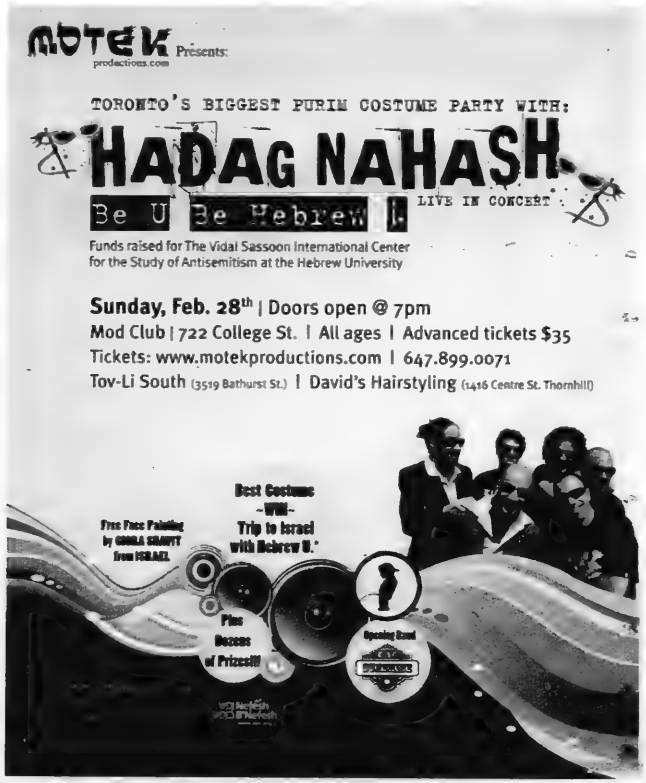
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Mandy Patinkin and Patti LuPone play Royal Alex

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Mandy Patinkin met Patti LuPone 30 years ago, when the two were cast in Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Evita* on Broadway, for which they both won Tony Awards.

The veteran stars of film, television, concert and stage are back together again in the critically acclaimed *An Evening with Patti LuPone and Mandy Patinkin*, at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre for six performances Feb. 9 to 14.

"About five years ago, there was a new arts centre outside Dallas, Texas, that was opening," Patinkin says. "They called Patti's people and said they had me, and they called my people and said they had Patti. They didn't have either one of us. It was one of those evenings that we would each do 30 minutes and then sing *Getting to Know You* and leave. I hate those evenings, so I was ready to blow it off.

"But, before I did that, I asked my piano player, Paul Ford, who has been my collaborator for 20 years, if he thought we could put together a show that would certainly be a concert and a high entertainment evening, but would also have a story and a structure.

"He said yes. I asked Patti if she was interested and she said, 'Go ahead, doll.' So I set about it with Paul, we gave birth to it, and we've been playing with it and tweaking it ever since. We're having just the time of our lives," Patinkin says.

When it came to the choreography, they called upon their good friend, Ann Reinking, a fellow Broadway veteran, who won a best choreography Tony Award for the revival of *Chicago*.

"Aside from the goal of the piece of being a good old-fashioned entertaining evening, I also say it is a figurative journey of two souls using familiar and unfamiliar material, both spoken and sung," Patinkin says.

"Each scene flows out of the next. There are many things we do together and several things we do on our own, but we are usually there supporting one another. Although, there are a couple moments that we are on are own."

[Brigitte LaCombe photo]

Patinkin says the show will include a mini-version of *South Pacific*, sections from Stephen Sondheim's *Merrily We Roll Along* and the entire bench scene from *Carousel*, which Patinkin says is "one of the most glorious pieces of writing that has ever been created."

Not to forget their shared Broadway roots, they will bring *Evita* into the mix when LuPone sings the crowd favourite *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*.

The two Broadway veterans have already taken this theatrical concert worldwide and plan to continue to do so for years to come, changing it as they go along.

"Patti and I are dear, old friends from that *Evita* experience, about 30 years ago. I look in her face and I feel like I'm 25 years old. When I'm with Patti, I'm back in time," Patinkin says.

"We want audiences coming out with a happy smile on their faces and to walk away from the world's troubles for one night in February. We have a great time doing it, and I believe you'll have a good time, too. That's our job to give you a good time."

Keeping busy, Patinkin is also performing in a new play called *Compulsion*, at the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, Conn. Having had the concerts at the Royal Alex booked before agreeing to do the play, the production of *Compulsion* will shut while Patinkin is in Toronto and start up on his return.

When not on stage, Patinkin enjoys hanging out, hiking and biking with friends and family. He is married to Kathryn Grody, an actress and writer, best known for her one-woman play, *The Mom's Life*. She is working on a new play called *Falling Apart Together*. The couple has two grown children, Isaac, 27, and Gideon, 23.

For tickets, online: www.mirvish.com, call 416-872-1212 or visit the box office at 260 King St.W.

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'One Love' fundraiser for Haiti

Rita Marley, wife of the late reggae icon Bob Marley, is one of more than 20 entertainers participating in the One Love For Haiti event, a fundraiser for relief in Haiti.

The event, organized by Joel Hock and Corey Mandell of Solutions with Impact, takes place at the Kool Haus, 132 Queens Quay E., Toronto, on Feb. 6. Funds raised will be donated to Haiti through UNICEF and the Haitian consulate.

Bob Marley would have been 65 on Feb. 6. His mega-hit *One Love* is the backdrop for the One Love For Haiti fundraiser. "It is fitting that One Love For Haiti is being staged in Toronto on Bob Marley's birthday," says Rita Marley. "The nation of Haiti is in need, and we should all show One Love for Haiti."

The lineup includes Luciano; Jully Black; two-time Juno Award winner Blessed; Liberty Silver; Carvin Winan, of the acclaimed Winan gospel family, and sax player Ned Gould, who spent 20 years with Harry Connick Jr.

Showtime is 9 p.m. and doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are $25.

Filmmaker starts chemical revolution

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Andrew Nisker thinks your toothpaste may be killing you. Sort of.

Nisker, a documentary filmmaker, recently premièred *Chemerical*, which explores how chemicals in household cleaners and hygiene products affect a person's quality of life.

While toothpaste may not lead to a slow, painful death, Nisker uses his film, which premièred at the Whistler Film Festival, to raise awareness about the chemicals found in everyday products and their natural alternatives.

Andrew Nisker, right, poses with *Chemerical*'s associate producer, Bernice Kim, while making cosmetics.

"I want a cleaner environment for my son, who's turning six… it's time for all of us to do our parts to be sure these chemicals are eliminated from [our] homes," he said. "The bubbly kids' toothpaste is fluorescent blue. Where do you think that colour comes from? It's all chemicals."

Nisker's movie follows a family who have decided to live a chemical-free existence for three months. The Goode family purge themselves of all household cleaners and hygiene products, and start to make their own products, such as toothpaste.

"This is a point we make in our film. We don't need all of these things to clean. It's about how you clean, it's not about what you're cleaning with," Nisker said.

In his own home, the filmmaker uses vinegar, water and baking soda to clean, buys oatmeal soap and uses a crystal stone, a natural, mineral-based product, as a deodorant.

Through his movie, Nisker learned that chemicals are everywhere, from the formaldehyde preservative in baby shampoo to lead compounds in some lipsticks.

In the documentary, he also talks to a woman suffering from multiple chemical sensitivity, meaning she has a severe sensitivity to chemicals in products such as perfumes and gasoline.

"It's complete madness, what we're surrounded by," Nisker said about chemical-laden goods like air fresheners. "It may not be affecting you now, it may affect you in 15 to 20 years."

Before *Chemerical*, Nisker made *Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home*, for which he asked a family to keep all their garbage for three months and discusses the impact our waste has on the environment.

Nisker's interest in the environment started when he developed asthma as a kid.

"Through asthma, I became sensitive to the environment. I [asked], 'Why do my allergies bother me, why is the air quality bad?'" he said.

Nisker, who's head of Take Action Films, turned to filmmaking to answer these questions.

"Film is a very powerful tool," he said. "[I wanted] to use film in a positive manner, where I can use my skills as a researcher [and] inspire a larger audience."

The editing process for *Chemerical* was about finding a balance, Nisker said.

"You want to tell the story in a way that's going to keep people entertained. We basically have an encyclopedia full of information, but we only have 75 minutes to tell our story," he said. "It's finding that balance between entertaining and story telling. That's kind of what we do in editing."

Nisker hopes his film will force viewers to pause before making their weekly purchases.

"I'm of the power to the people – that's my school of thought. You can go after governments and corporations and try to change the status quo, that's one model, that's going to take a long time. But you don't need to wait for that," he said.

"You can start right now by voting with your pocketbook, by supporting companies doing the right thing. Take power into your own hands and make your own products. That's kind of the next step."

For more information about *Chemerical*, visit www.chemicalnation.com.

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A thoughtful account of the Arab world

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Neil MacFarquhar, currently the United Nations bureau chief of the *New York Times*, is an old Middle East hand.

As a foreign correspondent for the Associated Press and the *Times*, he was usually preoccupied with reporting fast-breaking news stories, but in his book, *The Media Relations Department of Hezbollah Wishes You a Happy Birthday: Unexpected Encounters in the Changing Middle East* (Public Affairs), he sits back quietly and reflects on his travels in the area.

Neil MacFarquhar

Having soaked up a plethora of experiences, MacFarquhar, an Arabic speaker, has produced a thoughtful account of a region yearning for reform but engulfed in authoritarianism and autocracy.

He begins with a reminiscence of his childhood in Marsa Brega, Libya, where his father, a chemical engineer for an American oil company, supervised a refinery and a water desalinization plant.

It was there, he writes, that the "gravitational pull" of the Mideast first manifested itself on him.

When the Six Day War erupted, MacFarquhar was nearly eight years old. In his diary, he observed that Cairo had just been bombed by Israeli aircraft. Concerned that Israel might strike Libya's oil wells, the Libyan government ordered the evacuation of American families from Libya.

As he looks back, he now realizes that the 1967 war shaped the course of much of his professional life and triggered an Islamic religious revival in the Mideast.

But as much as he is drawn to the Mideast, he says that it has been on the "wrong side" of history for the past century, and that it is mired in "suffocating bureaucracy" and "unhealthy nationalism."

These ailments are merely symptoms of a deeper malaise, he suggests.

Democracy is in short supply, corruption is rampant, and poverty and unemployment are deep-seated. "What I found in the Arab world, and Iran, is that the building blocks of a free society remain somewhat abstract in the face of more difficult, tangible problems."

Reform, he discovered, is something of a dirty word in Arab nations. "Anyone pushing for [it] is regarded as an American agent," he notes.

And because Arab reformers tend to work in isolation, he adds, the process of creating open, freer societies depends on dissidents chipping away at the traditional order rather than on any single organized movement. What reformers desperately want is less corruption and better government services.

MacFarquhar is critical of U.S. policy, claiming that Washington has not pushed too hard for "real reform," fearing that radical Islam will triumph at the polls, as Hamas did in the Gaza Strip.

In his view, repressive Arab regimes seek to balance their power and privileges with just enough openness to placate the "simmering frustrations" of the next generation. "Theirs is a generation watching the rest of the world advance while they stagnate," he writes.

Young Arabs regard the western war on terrorism as an assault on Islam and seethe over the inability or unwillingness of Arab leaders to improve the lot of the Palestinians, he notes.

Minority rule is also a contentious issue, since families, sects or military cliques monopolize the wealth and resources of countries such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Syria. Getting down to case studies, MacFarquhar lists the deficiencies of the Arab countries he has visited.

In Libya, from which he was expelled after a fairly brief visit, he finds grassroots resentment that its oil wealth has been siphoned off into southern Africa and that its African guest labourers have imported AIDS and petty crime.

Travelling to Lebanon, where his movements are closely monitored by Hezbollah, he senses the tension between Lebanon's desire to be a cosmopolitan East-West meeting ground and Hezbollah's struggle to accentuate Lebanon's Islamic heritage.

In Damascus, he stumbles upon an anomaly. Syria usually accuses the western press of presenting the Arab-Israeli conflict from Israel's point of view, yet the Syrian foreign minister rejects all his requests for an interview.

Still more contradictions abound in Syria. The president, Bashar Assad, is hailed as one of the founders of the Internet in Syria, yet, as MacFarquhar points out, his Baathist regime has worked tirelessly to curb its use.

If Syria is a long way from enjoying the fruits of democracy, its tyrannical political system and culture is to blame. As he puts it, "After decades of Baathist purges, any structured opposition has been destroyed."

To MacFarquhar, the absence of democracy in Syria is a source of regret: "The tyranny of the Assad regime casts a pall over what should be a delightful country, like pollution eating away some fine edifice."

The situation is not much better in neighbouring Jordan, though Jordan is arguably freer than Syria. He suggests that Jordan has "regressed" under King Hussein's successor, King Abdullah II, in terms of political reforms. King Hussein ushered in a period of liberalization, permitting free parliamentary elections and lifting martial law. His son, however, has not carried on his work, many Jordanians say.

MacFarquhar observes similarities in Morocco, which, he states, "mirrors its Arab brethren in that the entire system of law rests not on a framework of checks and balances but on the whim of a king." Morocco's former ruler, the late King Hassan, was a Machiavellian figure who brooked no dissent, while his son, a self-styled reformer, is not much different in practice.

Turning to Egypt, MacFarquhar leaves the strong impression that long-suffering Egyptians are running out of patience with the president, Hosni Mubarak, and that a cataclysmic event will touch off widespread rioting and topple his authoritarian regime.

Saudi Arabia's "modern veneer," MacFarquhar says, pulses to "a rhythm established in the seventh century, when the Prophet Mohammed founded Islam." He admires enlightened Saudis who chafe under its joyless restrictions but who engage in risky battles to reform its antiquated institutions.

He holds out hope that Al Jazeera, the cable network based in Qatar, can be an engine for reform in the Middle East. Al Jazeera has already altered the landscape of journalism with its criticism of repressive governments and its focus on heretofore taboo subjects.

But it is questionable whether Al Jazeera can alter the status quo in a hidebound region characterized by social inequities, political injustices and economic disparities.

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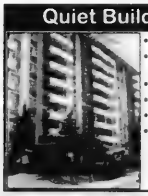

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Volunteering in Haiti on my own

By LIOR ETZIONY
JTA

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — When I saw the news alert about a 7.0 magnitude earthquake in Haiti, I was in the Manhattan production house where I work. I am no geologist, but I knew enough to know this was a big one.

Though I quickly returned to work, by the next morning I had decided I couldn't go on as if nothing had happened. I wanted to go down there to help. I just wasn't quite sure how.

I called my good friend Dr. Craig Zebuda, who specializes in emergency medicine, and asked him to join me on a trip to Haiti. Craig agreed without hesitation.

I then got on the phone with Jane Oster, a philanthropist whose huge heart I knew I could count on.

"I want to help," I told her.

"So do I," she said. "What do you need?"

She gave me twice the amount I asked for.

The next thing I knew we were on a plane to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, on our own private rescue mission. The plan was to rent a car and drive to Haiti right after buying all the things we forgot to pack in the few hours we had to prepare for our journey.

> *'The scale of the disaster was beyond anything my mind could grasp'*

But when we landed, no car rental agency would allow their vehicle to be driven to Haiti. Determined to get there, we teamed up with a strong-willed, Brooklyn-born Haitian woman we met at the airport named Regine, who was on her own quest to find her relatives in one of the most hard-hit neighbourhoods of Haiti's capital.

Hundreds of dollars later, cobbling together different forms of transportation, we arrived at the border only to learn that it was closed for the night. When it reopened in the morning, we boarded the roof of a little Haitian truck, making our way on a dirt road toward the capital.

As we approached Port-au-Prince, the pastoral countryside turned into an urban death trap. We were stunned by the scale of devastation and taken aback by the smell of decomposing bodies.

The driver stopped at the damaged National Palace, refusing to go farther.

"It's too dangerous," he said.

We made the last leg of our trip on foot, climbing a hill to search for Regine's family. The scale of the disaster was beyond anything my mind could grasp. Body parts extended from the rubble. Confused relatives sat nearby, their eyes dimmed with despair.

We found Regine's family members in good condition. Their house remained intact, surrounded by piles of rubble. Neighbours were digging with their hands through the debris. No rescue team was anywhere to be found in this part of the city.

It was about 72 hours after the quake, the voices of those trapped alive were fading and help could not arrive quickly enough.

We stumbled down the road carrying boxes of medical equipment, a camera and two backpacks as we looked for a place to stay for the night. We encountered the first international rescue team down the hill, just as they pulled an exhausted but healthy woman from the rubble of what used to be a seven-storey school.

It took me a second to recognize the accents. It was the ZAKA International Rescue Unit from Israel, which happened to be in Mexico when the quake occurred. It had teamed up with the Mexican delegation for the rescue mission in Haiti.

"We are here to help," we said.

"You cannot stay outside after sundown. You will get shot," they told us.

We jumped on their truck and were escorted by UN peacekeepers from Jordan, of all places, to the Green Zone at the airport, which was guarded by U.S. troops. Some 40 hours after we left New York, our mission to help the people of Haiti didn't seem to be very effective at that point. Exhausted, we fell asleep on the tarmac.

We awoke to the roar of a 747 jumbo jet – an El Al plane. Except for the Americans, who were out in force all around the city, the Israeli delegation seemed to us to be by far the largest, most organized and most effective team. We joined them, and from that moment on, our personal mission took a crucial turn.

At the crack of dawn, we already were on our way to build the largest field hospital in Haiti, an Israeli operation equipped with imaging and X-Ray machines, an emergency department, orthopedic surgeons and skilled support staff. By 10 a.m., the first patients were being admitted to the triage area.

Within a couple of hours, the hospital was operating at capacity, and the work flow from the triage area to the ER to the different clinics seemed seamless. Craig was working magic in the ER, and I was carrying stretchers, assembling cots and using my French to help translate the patients' Creole for the doctors.

The sleepless nights didn't matter now. We were finally doing what we came here to do.

Over the next two days, we saw a bleeding newborn, a wounded pregnant women, a man with a bullet wound in his chest, amputations and all manner of orthopedic injuries. Dehydrated and hungry, the patients were stabilized and treated quickly, proficiently and with a smile by the hospital personnel, most of whom were doctors in the Israeli army reserves.

These medical personnel were regular Israelis who left their families on short notice to cross an ocean, work around the clock and sleep in the field to care for people they never met.

After two days we went back into the city and found the lack of running water, electricity and food was taking its toll, pushing people to the edge. The atmosphere was very tense, and there were occasional riots. Prices for basic services shot up, and whoever had a car with a tank of gas was king.

We wandered around. The same desperate people were just where we left them two days earlier, but now that the dust had settled, reality seemed even gloomier than before.

As just two people on a rescue mission without any organization, we realized our ability to help these people was limited. We gave away all the medicine, batteries and food we had, and made our way to the Dominican border.

Before Craig and I parted, I asked him whether he thought two individuals alone could really make a difference.

"Do you think we were able to save anybody?" I asked.

"We were saving ourselves," he answered.

Lior Etziony is an Israeli-born filmmaker who lives in New York.

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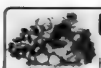

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Hockey heroes visit the Holy Land

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

METULLA — When Paul Henderson and Darryl Sittler received invitations from the Israel Recreational Hockey Association (IRHA) to attend the 4th Annual Roger Neilson Memorial Hockey Tournament in Metulla, the Toronto Maple Leafs legends were eager to RSVP.

"Israel had been on our… list for years. [My wife and I] have always said this is one of the countries we want to go to, so when this opportunity came along, it was perfect," said Henderson, 67, who scored what many considered to be the "goal of the century" against the then-U.S.S.R. in Game 8 of the 1972 Summit Series, clinching the victory for Team Canada. "Eighteen years of pro hockey and scored only one goal. At least only one goal that anyone ever talks about," Henderson joked.

Sittler's reasons for coming had more to do with honouring the memory of Roger Neilson, who in addition to running a hockey camp in Metulla for four years, was one of Sittler's coaches when he wore number 27.

"I have a lot of respect for Roger Neilson, as a coach and a humanitarian. It was really meaningful for me to be part of a memorial tournament in his honour," said Sittler, 60, who still holds the record for most points in a single game – 10 – scored against the Boston Bruins on Feb. 7, 1976.

The tournament at the Canada Centre in Metulla late last month brought together six amateur teams – three from Israel, one from Toronto, one from Ottawa and one American.

Ottawa's lineup included former Tampa Bay Lightning defenceman Shawn Rivers; Jeff Hunt, owner of the Ottawa 67s OHL hockey club; and TSN and CTV sports announcer Rod Black.

The event was organized by Danny Spodek, a die-hard Leafs fan and immigrant to Israel from Toronto. Spodek is founder and president of the IRHA.

"I wanted it to be something special," said Spodek, 38. "When you bring your boyhood idol [Sittler] over from a foreign country, you want to make sure he has a good time."

It was no cakewalk. "Try putting together a hockey tournament in a country where nobody even knows what hockey is," said Spodek, who started organizing pick-up games in Metulla for ex-pat Canadians and Americans in 2004 and now runs a weekly game schedule for some 300 players.

"I love living in Israel, but I couldn't imagine having to give up playing hockey," Spodek said. "When we get out there on the ice, we forget about the fact that we're in Israel and we go back to our childhood."

Sittler was astonished to discover such a dedicated group of hockey-lovers in Israel. "It makes me really proud to see people driving four to five hours to Metulla every week to play hockey," the former Leafs captain said. "It's so nice that people are so passionate about it and put so much effort into carrying it forward here."

Sittler and Henderson flanked Canadian Ambassador to Israel Jon Allen when he dropped the puck to open the recreational tournament.

"I knew [hockey] was a very minute sport here in terms of fan interest," Henderson said, adding that you never would have known it from the atmosphere at the opener. "When that puck was dropped, well, everybody wanted to win. Boys are boys. We're fine until they drop the puck, then it's competition."

After the opener, the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC) hosted Henderson, Sittler and their wives for an intense week-long tour of the country.

"We wanted to introduce these Canadian icons to the whole of Israel, beyond the little snippets people see in the media," said Judy Zelikowitz, national manager of community services at CIC, who accompanied the group's guided tour across the country. "We wanted to show them our Israel from top to bottom, introduce them to Israelis and offer them briefings with political and military experts, to help them understand the country and the people and the precariousness of our existence."

Henderson said the tour was first-class. "It went way above and beyond our expectations. Everything has been amazing. It has been a wonderful experience," he said. "We have learned so much. In Canada, we are just so naïve about Israel and what's going on over here."

"This trip has really opened our eyes to the complexity of the issues here. It's been a real education," Sittler added. "I have also gained a real appreciation for the Jewish People and what they stand for."

"To understand the resilience of the Jewish People and what they have come from 60 years ago… it's mind-boggling," Henderson said. "You've got a country today, a military, a progressive society, commerce, and you're world leaders in a lot of fields. To me, there has to be a God, or you people wouldn't be here."

Henderson, a devout Christian who runs a men's ministry called the Leader Impact Group for over 800 men, was particularly touched by the sites of religious significance.

"As a student of the Old Testament, I was just blown away," he said. "You picture these places in your mind – Masada, the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, the four churches, the Garden of Gethsemane – but man, this stuff is real. It put a lot more bricks in the foundation of my faith to actually see it."

For Henderson, the highlight of the tour was the trip to the Kotel (Western Wall). He went there to put a note in the Wall on behalf of his longtime Jewish friend in Toronto.

"I went down there, I put my note into one of the cracks, and then I put my hands on the Wall and started to pray, and man oh man, what's going on here? I got very emotional, which is something that caught me by surprise. I was overwhelmed by a sense of the awesomeness of God."

Among the highlights of his trip, Sittler lists the afternoon of volunteering they did for the non-profit leftover food rescue organization Leket. The group prepared some 1,200 sandwiches for delivery to needy schoolchildren in Israel's north.

"I just had the feeling the whole trip that this is a society that wants to give back, that wants to help people," he said. "[Israelis] are very giving people, and this was very evident in all the areas we travelled to."

The tournament's closing banquet on Jan. 28 was also Henderson's birthday. Spodek prepared a birthday cake and a DVD with good wishes from Henderson's family in Canada and from former Soviet goalie Vladislav Tretiak, who was the victim of the "goal of the century." Sittler delivered a moving speech about Roger Neilson and his first wife, Wendy, who both died of cancer.

All in all, it was a fitting end to an incredible week, Sittler said. "It was pretty magical. If the opportunity presented itself, I would love to come back."

Sittler admitted that as a kid, he used to be a Canadiens fan. "Jean Beliveau was my hero," he said. "My first year in the league, I got to face-off with him. How did I do? Who cares? I got to face-off with Jean Beliveau!"

Asked about the Leafs today, Sittler, who serves as a community representative for the Leafs in the fields of marketing, community and alumni relations, said that since the departure of Mats Sundin, the Leafs haven't picked a new captain. "They don't feel they have one player that fits the bill," he said.

Still, he's a die-hard Leafs fan. "Like all Leafs fans, I've been waiting since '67 for a [Stanley] Cup, but we need to make the playoffs first. I am waiting to see when we're going to turn this thing around."

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Telling Sderot's side of the story

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — It has been a relatively quiet year in Sderot, the Israeli community of about 20,000 near the border with Gaza.

"We only had 307 rockets fired our way last year," says Noam Bedein of the Sderot Media Center. "That doesn't mean, though, that we can afford to lower our guard. The problems haven't been resolved. It's just a matter of time before the full rocket barrage starts again."

Bedein and his staff continue to work to tell the world what is happening in Sderot and the other communities in southwest Israel within rocket range of Gaza.

"Sderot is the bomb shelter capital of the world," he told audiences during a series of presentations he made in Winnipeg last month as part of a North American tour. "There is no other place in the world that is facing what Sderot has faced. Much of the world takes this for granted and gives legitimacy to terrorism. Our goal is to highlight the human side of Sderot's story – the trauma that people are feeling – and we are succeeding."

Bedein, 27, was born in Safed to American immigrant parents and grew up in Efrat. He came to Sderot originally to attend Sapir College, which offers one of Israel's best communications programs, he says.

"After my army duty, I had visited Tibet and seen the effects of Chinese repression," he says. "I had also visited the battlefields of Vietnam. After that, seeing what has become acceptable in Sderot is ridiculous."

He started the Sderot Media Center in September 2006, with just a telephone and a laptop. Today, the centre has a staff of six. Bedein, says it is the only active, non-governmental media centre in Israel.

"Our goal is to address the imbalance in media coverage," he explains. "Israel lacks the tools to counter the images of destruction and devastation in Gaza. We are focusing on presenting the human perspective from Sderot."

Bedein had one-half hour to try to present Israel's point of view at the Goldstone Inquiry last year.

He says that the inquiry was stacked against Israel from the start. "It is ridiculous to compare Israel's actions with those of Hamas and not condemn Hamas. We teach our children to run to the bomb shelters. They encourage their children to go to the roofs where they can become human shields. It makes for better publicity."

Bedein also appeared on Capitol Hill in Washington last year and has spoken on campuses and high schools in North America, Europe and Australia.

The Sderot Media Center ensures that when foreign reporters visit Gaza, they also hear Sderot's story.

The centre is reaching out in other ways. In January, Bedein and his staff organized the Sderot Rally for Hope to counterbalance the arrival in Sinai of 1,300 activists from 14 countries trying to get into Gaza in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians.

"We had just 10 days to organize our rally," Bedein says. "We had 85,000 people. We had fourth graders write messages to children in Gaza offering friendship. We organized a balloon parade and attached the letters to the balloons."

Another centre initiative is the Sderot Community Treatment Theatre. The program provided 40 teenage Sderot girls with drama therapy sessions to help them deal with their fear and trauma. The girls then produced a play called *Children of Qassam Avenue*. Over the next, six months, the centre is planning 12 performances of the play throughout Israel. You can contact the centre at www.sderotmedia.org.il. or info@sderotmedia.com.

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1/2 tsp sea salt
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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

HENRY STREET SYNAGOGUE

Noted Jewish architect Benjamin Brown was the designer of the Henry Street Synagogue, which opened in 1922 on Henry Street at Cecil Street in the heart of the old Spadina neighbourhood. The Polish congregation, Beth Jacob, moved up north in the 1970s and its old building is today a church.

A NEW HOPE

Daniel and Vladimir, twins born in the Israel Defence Forces field hospital in Port-au-Prince, are held by members of the hospital's medical crew. Altogether, 17 babies were delivered by IDF doctors in Haiti before the IDF team returned home last week.

[Israel Sun photo]

URBAN WRITER

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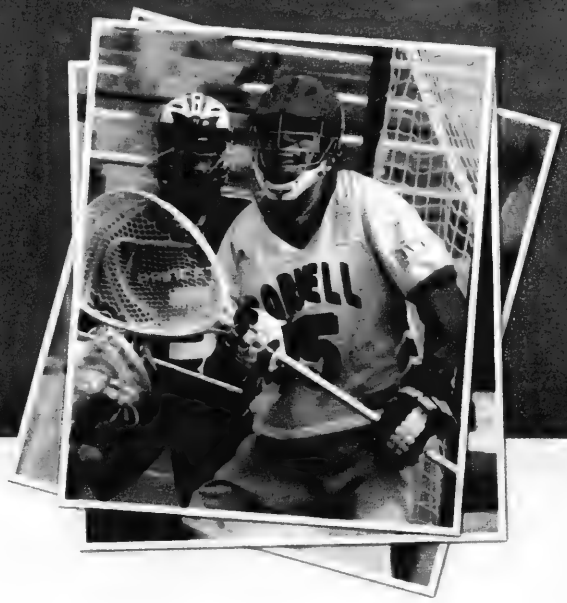

In the prime of his life, Kyle Miller faced a diagnosis that seemed impossible. He was told he had osteosarcoma - a cancer that threatened his life. But thanks to Mount Sinai's renowned Sarcoma Program, Kyle claimed victory over cancer and went on to carry the torch at the 2008 Olympic Games in China. It's your donations that build our centres of excellence and enable people like Kyle to carry on with their lives. To find out more about Kyle's story and to donate, please visit **www.mshfoundation.ca**. Your donation will continue to deliver The Best Medicine.

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Heart attack treatment moves to ambulances

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

It may not be the big city, but York Region is actually part of Canada's leading edge in medicine when it comes to treating heart attacks.

Recently, it joined Edmonton as one of two Canadian regions participating in a global trial looking into interventions by paramedics at the scene and on the way to the hospital.

Delay is the biggest enemy when it comes to heart attacks. "Every hour… significantly reduces the chances of surviving," says Dr. Warren Cantor, medical director of the Interventional and Invasive Program at Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket.

Collaborating with York Region Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Cantor is heading up a new trial that allows patients suffering from a heart attack to receive potentially life-saving treatment in the ambulance on their way to the nearest cardiac centre.

Dr. Warren Cantor

Once paramedics have determined that the patient is experiencing a heart attack (with remote assistance from a hospital-based physician), the STREAM (Strategic Reperfusion Early After Myocardial Infarction) trial randomizes patients to receive either immediate angioplasty or a common clot-busting medication (Tenecteplase), followed by angioplasty within 24 hours.

All patients do receive angioplasty, usually considered the best initial treatment for a heart attack. The problem is, it's not available at every hospital. Specialized cardiac facilities are often several hours or more from a patient's location, especially considering that York Region covers a vast area including Simcoe, Dufferin and the Muskoka regions.

Heart attacks are often caused by the sudden blockage of an artery supplying blood and oxygen to the heart. Cantor hopes the clot-busting drugs will give patients more time to get to a cardiac facility before the heart suffers muscle damage.

Tenecteplase "dissolves the glue that causes the heart attack," says Kyle Grant, an advanced-care paramedic and coordinator for the York Region EMS clinical trials.

"In the past," says Cantor, "patients with chest pain were picked up by ambulance and taken to the nearest emergency department, whether or not the hospital had angioplasty facilities." Only once they got there would they be diagnosed by an electrocardiogram (ECG) and treated for their heart attack.

For the last two years, York Region advanced-care paramedics have been detecting heart attacks in the ambulance using the same ECG technology. "Unfortunately, that's not the norm throughout EMS in Ontario," says Grant, though it's becoming more common.

Once paramedics have diagnosed a heart attack, they can bypass the nearest hospital and bring certain patients directly to Southlake for treatment.

The STREAM trial builds on this capability, letting them take measures other than simply redirect the patient. Once Cantor has remotely confirmed the ECG results, they can administer clot-busting drugs to those who qualify and are randomized to that arm of the study. Previously, drugs could only be given by physicians once the patient arrived at the hospital.

The STREAM study builds on the common-sense intuition that "the sooner, the better" will save lives in cardiac emergencies. "If we reduce the delay… it should significantly improve the chance of the patient surviving the heart attack and significantly reduce damage," says Cantor.

Though the STREAM trial itself has only been going on for a few months, he is pleased with what he's seen so far. "Patients… have been accurately identified, received their treatments rapidly and appropriately, and have generally done very well. We've been quite pleased with our experience so far."

Participating in studies like the STREAM trial offers paramedics a "better understanding of more advanced cardiac care," which Cantor believes has a "ripple effect throughout [paramedics'] assessment and treatment of a wide variety of patients."

Trials like this are indicative of a broader "shift away from diagnosing and treating heart attacks in the emergency department, and moving it to the ambulance."

Other Canadian cities that will be taking part in the STREAM trial over the next couple of years include Halifax, St. John's and Winnipeg. Cantor says the study aims to enrol 2,000 patients worldwide; so far, only 500 have participated.

"In many regions of Canada, paramedics don't yet have the ability to recognize and treat heart attacks," says Cantor. "Regardless of what this study shows, the trend to move treatments to the ambulances will continue."

That will probably result in "better treatment for heart attack patients, in the cities, but even more so in more rural regions where patients can't get to an angioplasty hospital quickly."

Even in big cities, most people aren't aware that few hospitals have angioplasty facilities. This can lead to a common error in judgment: driving to the nearest hospital for treatment. Anyone experiencing symptoms of a heart attack – sweatiness, shortness of breath, neck, jaw or shoulder-blade pain or pain going down the arm – should call 911, warns Cantor, "not have a person bring them to the hospital."

Paramedics will ensure that they are taken to the most appropriate hospital and receive treatment that much more quickly. Patients shouldn't request that they be routed to a particular hospital, as paramedics follow medical directives based on many factors.

Grant agrees that attempts to self-diagnose and speed up treatment can be deadly. "I can't give you solid statistics," he says, "but it seems to be that about 50 per cent of the heart attacks arriving in hospital emergency departments are arriving by personal means. Those people are not calling 911."

Never be afraid to dial 911 if you suspect you or someone else is having a heart attack. "Give us a call," says Grant. "We'll be able to transport you to the most appropriate facility." Grant says expanding paramedics' knowledge and skills is empowering, allowing them "that much more of a pivotal role in [patients'] care."

Feedback Cantor has received from paramedics about the STREAM trial has also been overwhelmingly positive. "They're very excited to be part of this protocol."

A Southlake Regional Health Centre health-care team rushes a cardiac patient into surgery.

Epilepsy doesn't define her, teen says

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Elisheva Eisenberg is a class clown. She loves to laugh, skate, swim and go for long walks. And she's had so many seizures that she can no longer do any of these activities alone.

Well, she can still laugh.

"What's going to come of not laughing?" Eisenberg, 19, said.

The Everest College student has had seizures since she was about 15 months old. She has various types of seizures, from partial, meaning she remains conscious but begins jerking, may stare blankly or has trouble moving; to generalized tonic-clonic seizures, formerly known as grand mal seizures, where she loses consciousness, convulses and sometimes loses urinary control.

Eisenberg has epilepsy. She frequently has seizures, which are caused when normal activity of nerve cells is interrupted in the brain by a sudden electrical discharge.

Eisenberg has fallen down concrete stairs, convulsed in class, and once collapsed on a crowded subway platform and was kicked onto the tracks.

But her worst fear is not of injury or pain. It's of what people will think of her.

Elisheva Eisenberg

"I had a teacher once who told me I was dangerous to her baby," she said, adding that the teacher had brought her baby to class. "This person, I can guarantee you she's forgotten... but it hurt so much that I don't even know if I can forgive her."

Eisenberg's worst memory is of her first month in Grade 9. An Orthodox Jew, she attended Toronto's Bais Chomesh High School. On the third day of classes, she had a seizure.

"I thought everybody knew [about epilepsy]. This was my biggest misconception... They had no clue whatsoever," she said.

"Nobody would talk to me... One [student] decided, 'She's contagious.' Another one decided, 'She has mental issues.' There were 26 different words to describe me, and they were all negative."

Eisenberg spent the next month, and most of the year, alone.

"I was at a loss as to what to do. I felt very confused. I decided, 'This ignorance stinks. I'll go through four years without talking to anyone.'"

Eventually, the student realized that the only real answer to ignorance is education. In Grade 10, her classmates began asking questions about epilepsy and she started answering them. Slowly, her peers learned that seizures aren't contagious and they're not dangerous unless they last more than five minutes. Most of the time, there's no need for an ambulance.

They also learned that the best thing to do when people are having a seizure is to move dangerous objects out of the way, gently roll them to their side if they're convulsing and avoid putting anything in their mouths.

"People don't fit in boxes, people are people. The whole thing of, 'You're different' – we're all human, so why do you really care? If you see something you don't recognize, find out. Don't stare and call people names," she said.

While working at a Jewish summer camp as a teenager, Eisenberg was fired – not for having a seizure, but merely for admitting she had epilepsy. In high school, while in the middle of a seizure, she heard someone yell out: "She's faking." Now, in college, she still has some problems.

"I had a partial seizure. These two women were sitting there, staring at me. They just didn't get it. [The next day] they said, 'You're back in school again. I thought you died.'"

But Eisenberg refuses to stop living. She still goes on her own to school, where she's studying to become a paralegal. She loves walking as much as she can, and she participates in all aspects of Jewish life, including fasting.

"I'm on a five-minute fast. I eat an ounce every five minutes," she said, explaining that this is because she can't allow her blood sugar to drop.

Eisenberg is also on a medication called Epival, an anticonvulsant that helps control her seizures. She takes 500 milligrams in the morning and 500 more at night. If she doesn't take it by a certain time, she starts to get a headache. If she doesn't take it at all, she begins to convulse.

Fatima Santos, the director of child and youth services at Epilepsy Toronto, is trying to spread Eisenberg's message. Santos is part of Epilepsy Ontario's new End Trash Talk campaign, which was started after a conference in the summer of 2008, where teens shared their stories and frustrations. The campaign aims to build awareness about epilepsy through videos, a public service announcement and a website.

"I think there's still a lot of preconceived notions about seizures," Santos said, adding that one in 100 people have epilepsy worldwide. "Our message, and this is what youth themselves say, is that everyone is unique. It's only a part of their lives."

To learn more about epilepsy, visit www.endtrashtalk.com.

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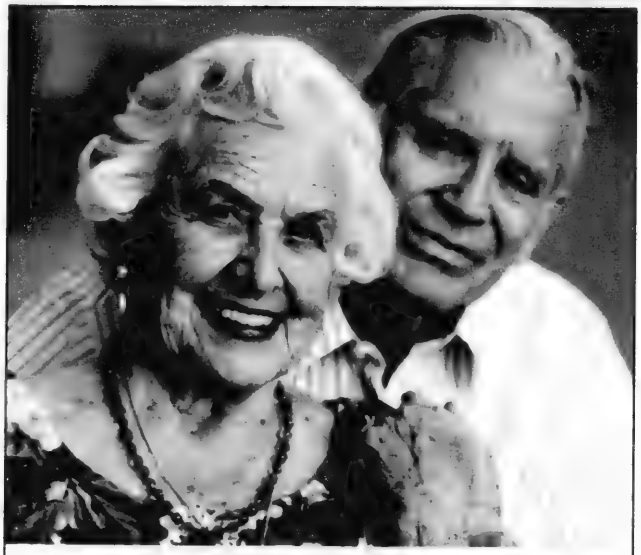

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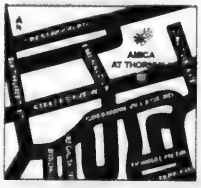

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Changes in your elders' social routine: could pride be stopping them from living life to the fullest?

Holidays are a perfect time for families to spend time together and get caught up again on each others lives. But sometimes what is discovered is very distressing and can change our life.

Sadie had been a widow for 15 years. She had a loving family of two sons and a daughter and eight grandchildren she adored. Sadie's children always knew their mother to be a very independent woman for her time. She had entered the professional world when it was largely dominated by men, had become a very successful accountant, had had a loving and close marriage for 48 years and appeared to her children to still enjoy getting together with her friends once a week for Mahjong and coffee, go shopping and cooking her meals.

During the Holiday celebrations the family thought it best Sadie stay over at her daughter's house for a couple of days. That way she didn't have to turn out in the cold each evening to go home. To the family's surprise Sadie resisted the invitation quite adamantly. She said she was very comfortable in her own place and would be fine. She felt the "young ones" should enjoy their time together and not worry about her. The more the family insisted, the more upset Sadie became.

Finally Sadie's family discovered the real reason behind their Mother's resistance and were both shocked by what they learned and ashamed they had not understood the situation earlier.

Sadie, like most seniors of her era, was too proud to let her family know that many of the activities of daily living we take for granted had become very difficult for her. Sadie had gone to great lengths to keep her lack of mobility and agility to herself and to her family's defense had done so incredibly well. They didn't realize that taking a bath was taking Sadie and hour or longer after which she would have to rest for another hour before she regained her energy enough to get dressed. Between family visits with extras Sadie asked them to bring, unknown to them friendly neighbours were dropping off essentials and meals if they didn't see Sadie out and about for a day or two.

The friends that Sadie told her family she would visit regularly for a game of mahjong no longer lived in her building and these games, when they did take place, instead of being enjoyable were very stressful for Sadie because getting there and back took so much out of her. The ultimate result was that Sadie had become more and more reluctant to leave the security of her own four walls, was not eating properly, was not exercising to help keep her aging joints supple and was getting little to no social or mental stimulation spending hours between family visits in front of the television.

Sadie's family immediately jumped into action. Besides the increasing frailties that naturally accompany aging, Sadie certainly did not require long term care. Too proud to ever become what Sadie believed would be dependent on her children if she moved in with any one of them, that also was not an option. If Sadie remained living at home but with daily caregiver services, that would offer her the physical help she required but her children worried that her social life, other than for their visits, would remain non-existent.

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Sadie's health and well-being noticeably improved as she began enjoying the vast variety of nutritionally-balanced meals served three times a day in a beautifully appointed dining room and, very importantly, now looks forward to sharing every day with great company and stimulating conversation.

Weekly housekeeping services that keep Sadie's suite sparkling, leave Sadie plenty of time to enjoy a mahjong game, right in her own building, keep her body healthy and supple in the gentle keep fit classes and time to enjoy one or all of the many activities organized daily.

Today Sadie feels more vibrant, well and happy than she has for many years. And her family is very thankful that the Holiday their Mother didn't want to be a part of ended up turning her life around for the better.

Food choices can help preserve memory

By JENNIFER LIBMAN
Special to The CJN

When it comes to preserving your memory, whatever is good for your heart is good for your brain, says Cheli Barokas-Agate, a registered dietitian who works with the memory intervention program at Baycrest.

"When we think about cholesterol narrowing our arteries, we often think about it decreasing blood flow to our heart, but it also decreases blood flow to the brain. If the amount of blood flow is less than it should be, the brain can't work efficiently. This can lead to memory loss," she said.

"A healthy diet can help manage and prevent chronic conditions like diabetes or hypertension that may contribute to memory loss."

Barokas-Agate always encourages her patients to follow *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*, a diet planning tool produced by Health Canada. By following this guide, she said, patients can be assured that they're consuming a balanced diet and getting the nutrients they need from all four food groups.

According to the food guide, adults should be consuming between seven and 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, she added.

"This is due to their high levels of antioxidants, which have been linked to memory improvement in older adults."

Cheli Barokas-Agate

While all fruits and vegetables can be healthy choices, she emphasizes cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower or brussels sprouts, as well as leafy green vegetables including spinach, kale and cabbage. She also encourages people to prepare these vegetables with small amounts of oil or other fats. This releases the fat-soluble vitamins from the vegetables and makes them more readily available to the body.

When grocery shopping, Barokas-Agate tells people to purchase exotic fruits and vegetables that they have never tried before. "This can help keep meals fresh and people excited about eating healthy. Variety is 'the spice of life.'"

Barokas-Agate also reminds patients to eat whole fruits and vegetables rather than taking vitamin supplements. "There are so many aspects of whole foods that work in synergy with one another – this cannot be found in a pill form."

In addition to eating fruits and vegetables daily, Barokas-Agate recommends eating two servings of oily fish per week such as salmon, mackerel, or herring.

"These fish are sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which may play a similar role as antioxidants in preserving memory. Purchasing omega-3 fortified eggs can be a good option for people who don't eat fish weekly."

Barokas-Agate recommends consuming beans, lentils and nuts on a regular basis. "This is not just advice for vegetarians. By consuming more vegetable proteins people will naturally consume less red meat. This can play a role in reducing cholesterol, which can help maintain memory."

She reminds her patients to choose whole grains when eating breads, cereal, pasta and other grain products. These are the least processed so they contain the highest amounts of vitamins, iron and fibre. Whole grains are also digested more slowly by the body, which results in more stable blood sugar and a higher feeling of satiety. With so many whole grain options on the market now, choosing them has never been easier.

When it comes to dairy products, Barokas-Agate recommends consuming low-fat milk and milk products daily, and taking 400 IU of vitamin D for adults over the age of 50.

The most important piece of advice Barokas-Agate has for people making dietary changes is to be forgiving with yourself. "Changing the way you eat can be overwhelming, and it is important not to be discouraged if you do not follow this advice every day. It is never too late to improve your diet and every small change helps."

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Kids aren't the only ones who can have ADD

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Howie Mandel, Robin Williams, Whoopie Goldberg, Michael Phelps and Benjamin Franklin have something in common, says David Teplin, a Richmond Hill clinical psychologist.

They all have attention deficit disorder (ADD), he said, characterized by inattention and impulsivity.

Although often thought of as a childhood disorder, research in the past 10 to 12 years has shown that some 70 per cent of those with childhood ADD or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) continue with it into adulthood, and many are living with it undiagnosed or untreated.

"Often they have a child who is diagnosed, and they begin to think that, as a child, they were the same. It is then that they may get diagnosed."

ADD in adults, he said, often presents as an inner restlessness or irritability. "They can't sustain attention, they are disorganized, they are easily distracted, they often lose important items, and they may talk excessively.

The inner restlessness could cause people to quit jobs suddenly, end relationships quickly, drive too fast, lose their temper, abuse drugs or alcohol, and have a low frustration level, he said.

Continued on page B6

Don't let anybody tell you it's easy to quit

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

I had my first cigarette when I was 9 with my friend Tonio, and started smoking regularly sometime in Grade 10. By the time I was studying journalism at Ryerson, I was smoking a pack a day, even more on weekends. Much more sometimes.

The night before Labour Day, 2008, at 42, I smoked my last cigarette. I woke up one morning, after a weekend of barbecues and pool parties and smoking about three packs in two days, with a nasty headache and scratchy throat. I coughed half a lung out in the shower and thought to myself, "That's it."

Of course, as every smoker knows, that wasn't it. It took a bit more persuasion. It wasn't easy, but it's not something I regret doing and hopefully, it's not something I can ever see doing again. I hope these six highly unscientific steps that worked for me may help you or someone you care for quit.

Step 1: Quit cold turkey. Don't "cut down."

I had already cut back to about half a pack a day over the past few years. I had no choice, as it was getting difficult to smoke anywhere, even in my own house. But my attempt that week to slowly cut down from half a pack to nothing was futile. Maybe by the end of that week, I had cut down to 11 from 12, but on the weekend, the number went back up again.

Trevor Miller Illustration

You will always make excuses. "I've had a stressful phone call, I deserve a cigarette."

How often do you hear smokers say, "I'm cutting down"? Some have been "cutting down" for years. Just do it. Throw out your pack and start your new life.

Step 2: Don't give yourself a deadline.

The best time to quit is right now. Not next week. Not in the summer. There's always an excuse. "Well, I said I'd stop when I turn 40, but my friends threw me a party and I had a few drinks and… blah, blah, next thing I knew I was 50."

Just quit.

Every smoker talks about quitting "someday." Sometimes "someday" is tomorrow. Other times, it never really comes. I've thought about quitting many times and made half-hearted attempts over the years. When I finally did stop, it wasn't because my doctor told me to, or because of pressure from my loved ones, or because it was getting expensive.

Quite honestly, I grew tired of it.

The Friday night of the Labour Day weekend, a week or so after that barbecue weekend in August, I sat on the porch smoking, and I suddenly decided that this would be the last one. There was no fanfare as I butted what I thought would be my last cigarette out in the rusty old can.

Continued on page B6

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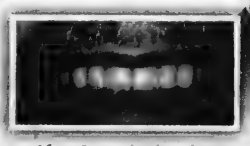

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You really need to want to quit smoking

Continued from page B5

I opened the nicotine gum I'd bought, and started to chew, the way it said on the package: "Chew, chew, park." It tasted slightly worse than day-old vomit, I suspect, but it did the trick, I think. I lasted without a cigarette until Saturday afternoon, when my brother, also a smoker, dropped by for a visit. Soon he asked me if I wanted to go outside for a smoke. Not wanting to be like a prima donna and make an "I quit smoking. I'm so much stronger than you" scene, I acquiesced.

I would quit on Sunday instead.

But on Sunday, my sister called inviting me to her house for a barbecue. Along with the hamburgers came the beer and again, not wanting to make a scene, I lit a cigarette as I always did.

But on Labour Day, I kept myself free of social engagements and did quit.

Step 3: Tell people you're quitting. Don't keep it to yourself.

I'm a "keep it to myself" kind of guy. Never particularly extroverted, I thought I would keep my quitting a secret. This way if (or when) my attempt to quit failed, no one would think less of me for being weak and give me that "I knew it" look. I've seen people tell me they've quit countless times, only to see them smoking a week later.

The first person to find out I quit was my neighbour Wanda. As I got into my car one morning maybe a week after I quit, she was out tending her flowers and she looked at me. "Joe, I don't see you outside smoking anymore. What happened? You quit?" she asked me.

"Yes," I said and all of a sudden a weight lifted off my chest (in all likelihood it was a weight made of tar and nicotine). I did quit. And I was proud.

I started to tell my family and people at work. The reason I encourage you to do this is that it's another defence against falling into temptation.

When that annoying craving came and I was dying for a cigarette, the knowledge that my nosy neighbour Wanda was looking out her window, or that my colleagues at work would see me sneaking out for a cigarette, stopped me.

Telling people is an extra incentive. And telling people also helps them understand why you're being so short-tempered with them.

Step 4: Stay strong.

Quitting smoking was probably one of the hardest things I ever did. I was tense, short-tempered and angry. The toughest moments were the ones I always associate with smoking – like first thing in the morning, after lunch or supper, before and after I drove (I never smoked in the car) and before I went to bed. As every smoker will tell you, smoking is not just a physical addiction. It's very psychological as well. You smoke after supper because it's something you always do. And it feels good.

You may want to try aids like the nicotine gum or the patch. I tried the gum for a few days, but I found I was getting addicted to it. One morning in the shower, I was salivating at the thought of chewing the nicotine gum. I decided to throw the pack away. I was just substituting one addiction for another.

Step 5: Really want to quit.

You're not going to quit for long if you don't really want to quit. I decided that August that I really wanted to quit. It was unhealthy. It was dirty and unsociable. You often had to stand outside buildings like a prostitute. Really wanting to quit can get you past the hurdles, like the cravings and the weight gain. Find something healthy to munch on. Substitute carrots for chips. Water fills you up with minimal calories. Find something else to do with your fingers.

I was restless at night. I had trouble sleeping for a couple of months, but these days, I am able to fall asleep the second I hit the pillow, something I haven't been able to do in all my adult years.

I missed smoking. A lot. I had dreams about smoking. One evening after watching the news, I put on my shoes and jacket and went outside, just as I did for years. I stood there in the driveway before I realized I didn't smoke anymore.

Don't think it will be easy. The cravings can last for three months – longer for some people. But they will go away in time.

Step 6: Reward yourself.

Quitting smoking is a reward in itself. Trust me, fewer things feel better than quitting smoking. You feel a lot better, for one thing. And you smell better. I can now smell a smoker a mile away. But reward yourself materially too. You deserve it. People say I must be saving a lot of money since I quit. Not really. I've never stopped rewarding myself.

Help to quit smoking is available at the Smokers' Helpline, www.smokershelpline.ca/.

ADD can be treated

Continued from page B4

"Especially common is a paralyzing procrastination and poor time management, and they often over-schedule themselves."

Although ADD can't be cured, said Teplin, it can be treated – the first line of treatment is medication – "and anyone who feels these symptoms apply to them should have a comprehensive assessment.

David Teplin

"From a 'brain' point of view, it has been discovered that people with ADD have deficits in their frontal lobe functioning. Essentially, they often lack an editing button. Undiagnosed and untreated, ADD can affect everyone in the person's path," Teplin said.

"Because the drugs are stimulants, patients see changes within the first few days, but we recommend that they start slowly, to ensure that there are no disabling side affects. We also suggest psycho-social treatment such as strategic interventions," he said.

On a positive note, Teplin said, ADD can be a gift. "People with ADD often have high IQs, are quite creative and think outside the box. They march to their own drum, and in their own niche, they can do extraordinarily well.

"However, asking them to sit at a desk all day will not work. They have to find ways to explore their gifts."

Jo-Anne, an aerobics instructor who always had difficulty organizing her papers, managing a budget and being punctual, said that "it always bothered me, but I thought it was just me. I would laugh at myself for being late, for double booking dates and for fidgeting."

It wasn't until her son was diagnosed with ADD and was managed properly that she thought of getting help for herself.

"I consulted a psychologist, and after he talked to me at length, he thought I could benefit from medication," she said.

"After a few weeks, I noticed that I had more time for myself. I used to spend hours hunting for papers, re-arranging dates, and aimlessly wandering around the house. I won't say my personality changed, I just became a little calmer. It was easier to think things through."

She had always "pooh-poohed" most medications, she said, "but I'm converted. I understand that it's not a weakness to take medication. Between my son and myself, the medication has calmed down our household. It's not a noticeable difference to an outsider, but it's a huge difference to us."

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To Your Health

With BJCC closed, members have new fitness routines

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

When the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre (BJCC) closed on Sept. 27 last year, it was the end of an era for longtime fitness members.

Many of them are still adjusting to new workout environments and routines, as well as to a sense of loss for a place that served them as a community.

The 48-year-old centre on the Sherman Campus is slated to be torn down and rebuilt, a process expected to be finished in 2014.

In the meantime, fitness facilities – state-of-the-art cardio and weight machines, as well as classes including yoga, Zumba and Pilates – are available in an adjacent building. The newly built Donald Gales Family Pavilion, which opened Oct. 5, is part of the Prosserman Jewish Community Centre (the "entity" that includes the building replacing the BJCC and operates primarily out of the pavilion).

Former BJCC member Jeff Cooper now plays badminton at two community centres. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

The new facilities are part of a renovation of the 27-acre campus, which also includes the newly renovated Lipa Green Centre and the Leah Posluns Theatre, which will be rebuilt. The entire project is expected to cost between $150 and $200 million.

The pavilion – a 40,000-square-foot, $10-million building next to the still-standing BJCC and connected by an indoor bridge to the Lipa Green Centre – also houses administrative offices and other programming, including educational and culinary programs, as well as seniors programs.

Currently, Prosserman has an athletic membership of just over 650, according to Bryan Keshen, Prosserman JCC executive director, who responded to questions from *The CJN* by e-mail.

Before the BJCC closed last fall, it had more than 1,200 fitness members.

Those who played squash, racquetball and tennis are particularly bereft: the new facility will not have courts for them. As well, pool users will have to wait until the building that will replace the BJCC is completed to be able to swim at the site again.

In 2006, then-BJCC executive director Sherry Kulman said no squash or racquetball courts were planned for the new building because of high cost and low demand. She said at the time that only about 100 members actually played squash and racquetball and that space constraints would make it difficult to include those courts.

Squash player Helen Zicherman, 54, used to play three or four times a week and participate in a wide variety of fitness classes at the BJCC. With a connection to the centre dating back to her high school days, she was "very upset" when she heard it was going to close.

"It's really nice to walk into a place you've been a member of forever, and you know people. It's like part of the community. People were practically in tears [when they heard the news.]"

But, she said frankly, the facilities were "not great," and the health club was "run down."

Keshen says the condition of the BJCC was "one of the reasons why a new facility was essential.

"The facilities at the new Prosserman JCC are exceptionally well maintained," he said. "We're not looking back, we're looking ahead to growing membership… and a proud, new building."

In the meantime, Zicherman divides her workout hours between the Columbus Centre 7.6 kilometres away – which she joined so that she could continue to play squash – and the Gales Pavilion, where she takes fitness classes with friends who have stayed.

On the positive side, the fitness instructors at the Prosserman are "fabulous," Zicherman said. As well, she said, "it's still nice to walk in, and you do recognize a lot of people."

But "there's not the same feeling," she added. "Everyone's dispersed."

In addition to the Columbus Centre, she said she knows people who have gone to Mayfair Racquet and Fitness Clubs and the North York YMCA.

She said she knows a lot of members who left before the BJCC closed because they knew it would be closing.

As well, Zicherman said, her husband, George, whom she got to know at the BJCC some 35 years ago, will not return to the BJCC, because there will be no squash courts for him to use.

In addition, being a member of two clubs is more expensive for her – and less convenient.

Badminton aficionado Jeff Cooper, 55, used to play three times a week at the BJCC, and – along with some of his former badminton partners – has tried out half a dozen other locations in recent months. For now, the group has settled on two community centres, once a week each, at times designated for badminton. At first, they were "kind of lost," Cooper said.

A member of the BJCC – originally the YM-YWHA – from the time he was a young child until university, and again from 1995 until last year, Cooper said he didn't consider giving up badminton if he could find a venue.

Continued on page B8

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To Your Health

The end of an era for fitness buffs

Continued from page B7

"I find it fun – it's a good workout," he said. He particularly enjoyed his last few months at the BJCC because there was more opportunity to play: once members heard the BJCC would be closing, some of them went elsewhere, leaving more court time for those who stayed. "I was playing more badminton than I every played," said Cooper, whose father taught him the sport at the then-Y when he was a child.

Now, he said, depending on the day, the location, and how many other players turn up, he sometimes has to spend more time than he would like waiting for his turn on court.

"We look back now and kind of regret that we lost what we had," he said. "We're running here and there [from one facility to another]."

However, Cooper noted, the BJCC had deteriorated noticeably by the fall, and for that reason, he wasn't sorry to see it close.

Karen Fabian, who is in her early 60s and swam three or four times a week at the BJCC, joined the Columbus Centre, following a brief stint at another facility.

She said the closing of the BJCC was "a shandeh" (shameful) for its breaking up of a community. "It's just sad, because it seemed really unnecessary, and it also seemed insensitive. I felt especially bad for the seniors."

Hilary Edelstein, 26, stayed at the Prosserman mostly because of the fitness classes, notably spinning and yoga, and their "phenomenal" instructors. She joined the BJCC when she was 18 and takes classes three or four times a week.

She noted, however, that "for the price that I'm paying, I could be getting more in terms of amenities elsewhere."

Lily Kraft continues to take fitness classes at the Prosserman Centre.

An adult or senior membership at the Prosserman is $75 a month (teens and students to age 25 pay less). That's lower than the fee was for health club members at the BJCC, but more than what general fitness members paid.

A PhD student at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Edelstein said one advantage for her is that she can use the Miles Nadal JCC downtown up to four times a month, because it has a reciprocal arrangement with the Prosserman.

Lily Kraft, 54, (no relation to the writer of this article) takes classes at the new Gales Pavilion, but has thought about leaving. She said location, sentimental reasons and "top-calibre" classes are keeping her there for now.

She is not happy about the new facilities and what she termed "construction issues," including unreliable water pressure in the showers, and hairdryers shorting out. "It's very disappointing."

Keshen maintains that "a few adjustments were required when the Prosserman athletic facilities first opened, but they were quickly dealt with and corrected."

Kraft, a BJCC member since the early 1990s, said she "felt like Tevya being exiled from Anatevka," and that she misses the sense of community at the old building.

Although she does not play racquet sports, Kraft was among 600 people who signed a petition protesting the decision not to have racquet facilities at the new centre. "I think it was very short-sighted of them not to include it," she said. "At the end of the day, we felt our voices were not being heard."

She believes the new building, which was not originally planned to house fitness facilities, was designed "as an afterthought."

Keshen said the Gales Pavilion was redesigned to accommodate athletic facilities because members did not want to be without them until the new JCC building was constructed. "The decision to provide fitness facilities, although not in the original plans, resulted from extensive consultation and community needs."

On a more positive note, Kraft said that Zumba fitness classes were added to Prosserman's schedule after she wrote a letter to Keshen in September, asking him to reconsider the initial decision not to offer them at the new pavilion.

For Rabbi Moshe Stern, spiritual leader of Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, the closing of the BJCC meant switching to a new facility after 25 years of working out virtually every day (Shabbat and Jewish holidays excepted). Two or three years ago, he switched from the stationary bicycle to the elliptical machine as his main mode of training.

"What they had to offer did not fit my needs," said the 66-year-old rabbi, who wanted to continue using a steam room and to have access to more extensive facilities. The men's change room has only four showers, he noted. (Women have five.)

Rabbi Stern has switched to the Columbus Centre, where he has much praise for the staff and facilities. But it was "a wrench" to leave the BJCC.

He says that the older seniors who were BJCC members were affected most by its closing. "A guy like me, you come, do your thing and you leave," he said. "People into their 80s, even early 90s, would spend hours there. This was their home away from home."

He admits to being disillusioned by the BJCC. "The main building was supposed to be torn down a year ago. Then they extended it, so we hung in there. Then they let us know they're doing it in June. Then June came, and they said September."

The delays, Keshen said, were to ensure that the facilities at the Gales Pavilion were in place before anything was torn down.

In addition, Rabbi Stern said, there were no plans to offer health facilities while the JCC was being rebuilt. Plans changed only after there was an outcry from the membership, in an attempt to "placate" them, he said.

Now, when he drives past the building, he wonders why he and other members aren't still able to use it. "Why couldn't they just clean it up?" he asks.

The rabbi would have preferred to see the old building refurbished at a lower cost, because Jewish schools need funding urgently, he said.

Keshen said that two separately commissioned reports concluded that "a new state-of-the-art building would be more cost-effective than repairing the old one."

Howard English, spokesperson for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, under whose auspices the Prosserman operates, said that "in the most general terms, retrospectively, I suppose you could have always done things better and you could have always done things worse… We're looking forward to ensuring that the Prosserman JCC remains a bustling hive of activity."

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Unprepared for motherhood

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

On Sept. 10, 2009, I heard the words that will change my life forever – "You're pregnant." While sitting in front of my doctor in disbelief, I realized one thing: I was totally unprepared to be a mother, although my husband and I had been trying to get pregnant for two years.

We had spent the past two years taking endless pregnancy tests that never displayed a plus sign, extra blue line, pink line, or the word "pregnant." I truly believe that from

Marni Brinder Byk

September 2007 to 2009, I was solely responsible for keeping the pregnancy-test industry solvent while the rest of North America's economy suffered. Oddly enough, when I finally was pregnant, it was a doctor, not an at-home test, that shared the good news.

I can't help but compare a wedding to giving birth. I always made fun of women who worked so hard at planning their weddings, only to be shocked that it was the marriage that really needed the work. I was always the kind of person who was planning for the marriage.

I should have kept my mouth shut, because from the day my husband and I started trying to conceive to the day I learned I was pregnant, I did absolutely nothing to prepare for motherhood. Instead, I focused on hormones and cycles, fertility foods and such, to finally make a home pregnancy test turn whatever colour, shape or word that would finally give me a baby. Who had time to learn what colostrum, meconium or swaddling was? I never thought about how difficult breastfeeding could be or which pump I should, could, or would eventually use.

Over the last six months I have learned more horrifying, terrifying and mind-blowing facts about babies than I thought I ever would. What is most shocking is that every one of my girlfriends is absolutely amazed that I had never heard of or thought about these things in my 32 years on earth.

I know I am not alone. Not everyone has baby knowledge or knows whether or not to buy a bumper pad for a crib. I have been reading *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, and mostly have learned that every week my baby resembles a different fruit, from the size of an avocado to a grapefruit. The book has only added to my hunger. There have been some useful tips I have taken away, but I am still stuck in pregnancy mode and am no further prepared for motherhood. My husband is no better, unfortunately. Just this morning, I informed him that you don't give baby food to a newborn. He was actually shocked.

All in all, I have to believe that two responsible people in their 30s will figure out how to be the best parents a son could ask for, and if we get confused somewhere along the way, I know we will find the answer somewhere. Isn't that why God created bubbies?

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Enhancing Lives

Weight loss program geared to men

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

The first Sunday in the new year is a bitterly cold day. The wind blows snow across Toronto's Allen Expressway, and the road is slippery. Few people venture out on this bleak winter morning.

In the Dufferin and Finch area, almost all the parking lots are empty. But the lot at 4544 Dufferin Ave. is practically filled to capacity. The inclement weather has not deterred participants in the Harvey Brooker Weight Loss Program for Men. (416-222-9887).

The men meet Sunday mornings at 9:30 in a large second-floor office suite, and on this day 100 men of varying ages and sizes have shown up for their weekly dose of inspiration from their weight loss guru.

Harvey Brooker, 65, has been involved in weight management since 1971, when he and his wife, Helen, ran the Diet Workshop.

Brooker launched his own program in 1985 because he felt there was a need for a weight loss program geared to men. "I thought if I could isolate the men, it would give them the comfort level to learn about nutrition and exercise.

"I thought it would be a safer place for them to share their experiences and that they would be able to support each other."

Having maintained a 50-pound weight loss for some 40 years, Brooker knows from personal experience that focusing on healthy living is critical.

"Most men don't start paying attention to their health until they get sick. My job is to get the guys to make their health a priority."

He stresses there's "no miracle cure" to weight loss. "There's no easy way. You have to be trained by regular attendance at the meetings and midweek coaching. The meetings are free to maintainers (people who reach their goal weight)."

Attending a meeting is also free for prospective clients. They can call or visit the website at www. harveybrooker. com.

Brooker started with 12 men, now he gets an average turnout of 140 men a week. "Until 1998, we never had more than 30 guys. I didn't realize I had to promote and market the program to reach the public."

Since then he's had considerable local media exposure- newspaper articles, radio and television spots– "getting the word out."

Now he has an international audience. His first book, *It's Different for Men: The Men's Weight Loss Strategy for Health, Wealth and Sexual Vitality* (John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.), published in 2008, is selling worldwide.

Back at the Jan. 3 meeting, a tanned Brooker, looking trim and dapper in a two-piece suit, energizes the room when he makes his entrance.

Home after a "dream vacation," he took with his wife, children and grandchildren, Brooker begins his talk by describing his son-in-law's observations about the mass amounts of food consumed by other vacationers on their cruise. "My son-in-law said, 'These people are killing themselves. They don't love themselves.'

"I told him that's what I talk about on Sundays. If you aren't looking after yourself, you don't love yourself."

Brooker is able to create an intimate atmosphere that fosters bonding among group members. "We have a team here of all the guys in the room," he tells the men.

When individuals get up to talk about their progress and/ or struggles, they receive applause of support from fellow participants. On this day they're clapping for a man named Joel. He announces that after losing 81 pounds, he no longer needs his medication. Ditto for Sandro. He's down 48 pounds and also off his meds.

Rabbi Elie Karfunkel, spiritual leader of the Forest Hill Jewish Centre, has been a Sunday regular for the last two years. He says he was unable to lose the weight on his own. "The program made the most sense for me. There are no gimmicks. Harvey has given me motivation, inspiration and an education."

The rabbi has lost 40 pounds and kept the weight off for a year and a half, but it's an ongoing personal struggle, he says. "Harvey is involved in holy work by helping people help themselves."

Rabbi Karfunkel says as an Orthodox rabbi, he is a role model. "Being in self-control in all areas brings ultimate happiness. Eating whatever I see is not a good reflection of what I want to stand for."

Another Sunday regular is Eric Cohen, 50, a manager in accounting operations for the provincial government. Cohen has kept off the 80 pounds for six years.

Sticking to the program turned out to be easier than the father of two expected. "I thought I would be missing french fries… Your tastes change after awhile and you don't miss the old foods."

He says salads are now a diet mainstay, and he has cut back on hard cheese and beef.

He stresses that losing the weight was easier than keeping it off. "You reach the point when you lose weight and you think, 'I can slack off a bit.'

"Then you start gaining weight and you realize this is lifestyle change. It's not short-term."

Cohen started exercising after losing the first 40 pounds. He started walking on the treadmill half an hour a day and progressed to running five kilometres three times a week. He also does weight training.

Being active has its payoffs, he says. "I can do more things with my children. I go running with my 16-year-old daughter, and I climbed the CN Tower with my younger daughter."

Completing a 100-kilometre bike ride this summer was also very gratifying, but his crowning physical achievement was climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, Africa's highest peak, in 2008. Only six out of the group of 16 made it to the summit and Cohen was one of them. "It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. I have a picture of me at the top of the mountain holding Harvey's book."

Harry Freedman, vice-chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, rarely misses a Sunday meeting. The 59-year-old labour lawyer has lost 171 pounds since rejoining the program just over two years ago.

In 1986, he weighed 240 pounds, and dropped 60 pounds on the program. "I stayed with Harvey for a couple years. Then I thought I was smart enough to do it my own," he says.

Some 20 years later Freedman – he had ballooned to 407 pounds – went back to Brooker. "It worked for me the first time," he says, calling Brooker's nutrition plan "a lifestyle, not a diet. "There are certain things you avoid… I haven't had french fries in two years."

Freedman says he has become more conscious of portion control, but there's plenty of room for fruit and vegetables.

He also writes down everything he eats and does personal coaching with Brooker.

Freedman has also incorporated exercise into his life. "I'm at the gym most mornings. Exercise is integral to the program."

One of Freedman's most memorable weight loss milestones was being able to easily put on leather chaps, protective leg covering for riding a motorcycle. "I couldn't bend over at the waist to snap them and zip them up."

In the spring of 2008, seven months after starting the program, Freedman donned his bike chaps.

Selecting food has been a matter of making good choice, he muses. "I either can eat chicken wings and fries or wear those leather chaps. I can't do both."

Harry Freedman, before and after.

To Your Health

Breast cancer survivors Run for the Cure

By MARNI BRINDER BYK
Special to The CJN

In October, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure held its 18th annual run involving more than 30,000 people affected by breast cancer through first-hand experience or through someone they know.

The first run was held in Toronto in 1992, and since then, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure has become Canada's largest single-day, volunteer-led, national event to raise money for breast cancer research, educational and awareness initiatives.

Two breast cancer survivors, Orly Porat and Susan Fine, have been participating in the run for several years with their friends and family.

Porat, who lives in Vaughan, Ont., went through surgery for breast cancer on March 31, 2003, at Women's College Hospital during the early days of SARS in Toronto.

"My husband was not allowed to accompany me," Porat says. "I had to face the prospect of SARS and surgery alone. I was very frightened but kept telling myself that I was a soldier and could handle this on my own."

Porat was born in Israel but lived in Venezuela for 14 years before immigrating to Canada. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in February 2003, and a month later, she had 14 lymph nodes removed and had a lumpectomy. Then she underwent a 12-week session of chemotherapy followed by radiation therapy.

Toronto's Susan Fine was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 after she noticed a lump while she was dressing. Fine was quickly treated with a lumpectomy and radiation. Five years later, her doctor found a lump in her other breast. The second cancer was much more aggressive, and as a result, she had a complete mastectomy and further chemotherapy treatments.

"I consider myself lucky that the Ontario government cleared the way for Herceptin to be made available for the treatment of breast cancer," she says.

She received Herceptin in 18 doses over the course of a year. Fine has been participating in the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure ever since her diagnosis in 2000.

Porat began to participate in the run in 2008, once she had reached the five-year mark and felt confident in declaring herself "cancer-free." She is a member of Team Latino, a group of South American women (as well as a few husbands and her personal trainer) who have friends or family affected by breast cancer. Porat's friend, who lost a friend in South America to breast cancer, organized the group to participate in the run.

Porat also volunteers at Women's College Hospital in the recovery room. "I feel blessed that I have my health again, and by volunteering, I am able to reaffirm this message to myself and give back to those who are in need," she says.

In addition, she talks a lot to women about breast cancer and provides information on how they can reduce the risk. "I want to share my story with women and let them know that there is life after cancer. This is very important to me."

When discussing her own experience with her diagnosis she says, "There was no way I could lose my life."

Fine participates in the Toronto run with family members. Her daughter Rachel says that "it's a good reminder of the journey we have been through."

With the help of her friend Lou Dale and daughter Rachel, Fine also raises money by baking and selling frozen lemon tortes to her friends and family. Last year, she made 70 tortes for Passover and sold them for $50 each.

"Half of the money is donated to the run to help find a cure, and the other half covers the cost of the ingredients."

Fine works hard at fundraising for breast cancer research and believes it reminds the people around her family of everything they have been through. She says she "would really like to get across that I am a two-time breast cancer survivor" and that she found the support at the Toronto East General Hospital and at Holy Blossom Temple was amazing during her treatments.

To order Fine's frozen lemon tortes send an e-mail to lemontortes@gmail.com. To register as an individual or as a team for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation CIBC Run for the Cure or to make a donation please visit www.cbcf.org.

Over 30,000 people took part in the 18th Run for the Cure.

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Jewish boys and girls clubs are still thriving.

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Rabbi ready for Olympic adventure

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — It's not every day that you get invited to serve on the multifaith committee of the Olympics. When Rabbi Shmuel Birnham was asked to be the Jewish clergyman on that body last year, he jumped at the opportunity.

"I thought, 'How cool. What an adventure,'" he said. "I'm sure this is the only time in my life I'll get to do something like this."

The rabbi of Congregation Har El, a Conservative synagogue on the North Shore of Vancouver, Rabbi Birnham, 55, will spend time in the Olympic villages in Whistler and Vancouver. He will also be on call for Jewish athletes requiring spiritual or religious assistance during the 2010 Winter Olympics, which begin Feb. 12.

Over the past year, he's attended a series of meetings and exchanged a host of phone calls and e-mails in preparation for his Olympic duties, but even so, none of the clergy on the committee knows quite what to expect.

Continued on page 20

Rabbi Shmuel Birnham, left, will help attend to the spiritual needs of Jewish athletes. In the second photo, sibling ice dancers Roman and Alexandra Zaretsky, right, and Olympic alpine skier Mikail Renzhin, left, comprise the Israeli delegation to the Vancouver Winter Olympics, which start Feb. 12. For more Olympic coverage, please see page 45 and cjnews.com. ***[Israeli Olympic Committee of Israel/Flash90 photo]***

Federal agency in turmoil over Mideast funding

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Rights and Democracy, a Canadian government agency whose mandate is to promote democratic development and defend human rights around the world, has been plunged into turmoil after its new chair challenged funding to three Middle Eastern organizations that are highly critical of Israel.

Aurel Braun, chair of the Montreal-based agency and a University of Toronto professor, said two Palestinian groups, Al-Haq and Al Mezan, and an Israeli one, B'Tselem, should have been denied grants of $10,000 each that were disbursed last year.

Braun, appointed to his position by the Conservative government last March, about a month after the funds were allocated, charged Al-Haq and Al Mezan with being "toxic" organizations.

Al-Haq has links to terrorism, he said, while Al Mezan has demonized Israel. B'Tselem, he added, is blatantly partisan.

The three groups were asked in e-mail messages to respond to Braun's accusations, but they did not reply.

Braun added that such nongovernmental organizations should only be eligible for federal funds if they're non-partisan, impartial, have no ties to terrorism and don't offend Canadians.

Warren Allmand, a former Liberal federal cabinet minister and president of Rights and Democracy from 1997 to 2002, said in an interview last week he would have opposed in principle the funding of organizations associated with terrorism.

But to the best of his knowledge, based on his discussions with Al-Haq and Al Mezan officials in the Palestinian territories during his presidency, there is no evidence that either group has ties to terrorism.

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Iran dominates Herzliya conference - please see page 37

The News in Brief

Canada

Haifa Gas Field Find

TORONTO — Canada's Bontan Oil and Gas Company said last week that it has found a reserve of up to six trillion cubic feet of natural gas off the coast of Israel. The gas could be worth up to $7.54 billion at current prices, the Israeli daily business newspaper *Globes* reported. The prospective resources in two gas fields, called Mira and Sarah, were found by the Toronto-based company off the Mediterranean coast close to Haifa, near the gas fields Tamar and Dalit, which were discovered last year.

'Weeks' To Find Body

MONTREAL — The painstaking removal of rubble from Port-au-Prince's Montana Hotel – thought to contain the remains of Haitian quake victim Alexandre Bitton, 36, of Montreal and other Canadians and victims – could take "weeks and weeks," Canadian Air Force Col. Scott Clancy was quoted as saying from Haiti last week. Rescue teams reportedly dug a 14-metre tunnel into the hotel as part of the salvage operation. Only 17 people reportedly survived the hotel's collapse, with 25 bodies recovered and scores still unaccounted for. Bitton, a computer technician and the only known Canadian-Jewish victim, was on a business trip when a massive earthquake struck Haiti Jan. 12. In all, 106 Canadians were still missing there as of last week.

World

GA Moves To N.O.

NEW YORK — The Jewish Federations of North America is moving its annual conference to New Orleans and holding it earlier than planned, from Nov. 7-9. The umbrella group of Jewish federations was set to hold its 2010 General Assembly in Orlando, Fla., but said it changed locations for practical reasons and because federations raised $30 million after Hurricane Katrina to help rebuild the area.

Hate Crimes Spike

PARIS — A rise in anti-Semitic crimes in France coinciding with the Gaza war nearly doubled the number of anti-Semitic incidents in 2009 over 2008, says a new report. The Jewish Community Protection Service counted 832 anti-Semitic acts in France in 2009, versus 474 the year before, according to a Feb. 4 report. However, 354 of those incidents were in January, during Israel's Gaza offensive. By February, the number was down to 62 and, by the summer of 2009, incidents dropped below those of 2008.

Mussolini App Nixed

ROME — A controversial new iPhone application featuring a collection of speeches of Italy's World War II fascist dictator Benito Mussolini has been withdrawn. The cancellation of Italy's bestselling iPhone application came Feb. 4 after legal threats and protests by Jewish groups. The film group Cinecitta Luce, which holds the rights to the films of the Mussolini speeches used in the iMussolini app, threatened legal action against its creator, saying the app didn't serve the educational purposes that the clips were designated for.

Survivor's Grandson Buys Mengele Diary

STAMFORD, Conn. — The diary of the notorious Josef Mengele has been sold.

The 180-page journal was sold for an undisclosed sum Feb. 2 "to an East Coast Jewish philanthropist who wishes to remain anonymous," the *Hartford Courant* reported Feb. 3, citing an e-mail from Bill Panagopulos of Alexander Autographs historical artifacts house in Stamford, Conn.

"He is the grandson of an Auschwitz survivor who personally encountered Mengele at Auschwitz," Panagopulos wrote. "He intends to donate the manuscript to a museum devoted to the Holocaust." He said he was "overjoyed that the manuscript is going where it belongs, where it will be available to historians and scholars."

On Feb. 1, it was reported that Alexander Autographs intended to auction off the journal. Nazi memorabilia collectors vying for the artifact belonging to the Nazi doctor known at Auschwitz as the "Angel of Death" were expected to push the price up to about $64,000.

The owner of the diary, reported to be a source close to the Mengele family, acquired the volume in Brazil after Mengele died there in 1979, the *Daily Mail* reported.

The diary begins in May 1960, when Mengele was 49.

At Auschwitz, Mengele determined who would live and die, and he conducted horrific, quasi-medical experiments, including on twins.

News of the auction prompted anger and revulsion among Shoah survivor groups.

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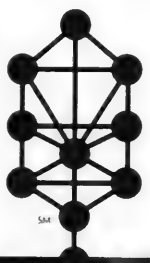

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Congress, United Church patch up differences

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Canadian Jewish Congress and the United Church of Canada appear to have resolved their differences over the Church's links to a Jewish organization that's highly critical of Israel.

Congress and Church representatives met last week at the Lipa Green Building after Congress CEO Bernie Farber suggested the two organizations were close to schism.

Both sides emerged from the meeting pledging "to seek ways of promoting ongoing dialogue, to hear each other's concerns.

"We put our feelings on the table and held the tensions creatively. Both groups made a commitment to ongoing dialogue to deal with difficult issues and to look for ways to work in common cause," a joint news release stated.

The meeting had been requested by Congress to voice its concerns over the Church's relationship with Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), a small group that accuses Israel of apartheid and human rights violations.

Bernie Farber

The group had received a $900 grant from the Church and was involved in joint programs with Church regional bodies.

Farber said Congress was concerned over the Church's relationship with IJV and had requested a formal statement from the Church's senior national leadership dissociating it from the group. He described IJV as "a small rump group of people who engaged this debate in the [United Church] and motivated [anti-Israel] resolutions at the Church's General Council meeting in Kelowna [last summer]."

IJV states on its website that it "has come under attack by pro-Israel groups because we challenge their contention that they speak for Canadian Jews, as well as their unqualified support for Israeli behaviour even when it involves the violation of human rights and international law."

The Church statement, which appears on its website, "acknowledged its longstanding and historical relationship with Canadian Jewish Congress as the place for dialogue and consultation with the Jewish community of Canada. The UCC reiterated its position that Independent Jewish Voices has not been and is not a partner of the United Church of Canada.

"For its part, Canadian Jewish Congress acknowledged that the UCC by its very nature listens to many voices and many perspectives in Canada and beyond on all issues including its reflections on peace in the Middle East."

Farber said that "the meeting was cordial and focused. I think we all understand the need to reconcile for the sake of the faith communities. We both wanted it."

Nora Saunders, general secretary of the Church's General Council, said that "it was a good meeting and a reminder to us and everyone of the importance of sitting down and talking about things… I felt a renewed sense that there are things in common and things we disagreed with and we need to continue meeting."

Both groups are "rooted in faith, with some common roots. Through our different faiths, we're passionate about working for the good."

Continued on page 14

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First of a series.

Hebrew U's 85th anniversary

Some seven years after the foundation stone was laid in 1918, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem officially opened on April 1, 1925.

The renowned artist Leopold Pilichowski captured the ceremony, the significance and the magnificent magic of the university's inauguration on a large 3.5 x 2-metre oil canvas.

Against the beige and brown hills of Judea, the mountains of Moab, the Jordan Valley and the shimmering blue of the northern lip of the Dead Sea, Pilichowski paints hundreds of people (of the thousands who were at the ceremony) sitting and standing, encircling a large dais on Mount Scopus. They are clearly in rapt attention, listening to a white-haired man of senior years delivering an oration of apparent import.

The speaker is British foreign secretary Lord Arthur James Balfour, the author of the Balfour Declaration. Seated behind him in the first row of a five-row gallery of scholars, dignitaries and representatives of foreign governments are Chaim Nachman Bialik; Achad Ha'am; Chief Sephardi Rabbi Jacob Meir; Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook; Lord General Edmund Henry Allenby, the British commander who defeated the Turkish army in 1918; Sir Herbert Louis Samuel, the first high commissioner of Palestine; and Chaim Weizmann.

It is very clearly an important assembly on an equally important occasion. Beyond any doubt, that sunblazed ceremony on that spring day in 1925 on the eastern slope of Mount Scopus, merely one week before the start of the festival of freedom, was a watershed moment in the course of establishing a sovereign Jewish state, in the course of modern Jewish history and, it is not an exaggeration to add, in the course of modern world history.

From the editor's desk...

To commemorate the 85th anniversary of that milestone moment on Mount Scopus, *The CJN* was invited by the Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University to travel to Jerusalem, visit the university and meet and engage with some of its scholars, researchers and teachers.

Our first visit was with Menahem Ben-Sasson, the president of the university.

Ben-Sasson is an internationally recognized scholar of Jewish history. The author of some 40 books and articles, he has won numerous distinctions and honours for his work and taught in many prestigious institutions.

He is soft-spoken of manner, precise of thought and often poetic in expression.

The decision to found the Hebrew University "was itself a breakthrough in Jewish thinking," Ben-Sasson emphasized.

"'How shall we build a Jewish state?' the visionaries asked themselves." But it was actually the very asking of this question and the determination to act upon it, Ben-Sasson pointed out, that laid the real cornerstone of the university.

Menahem Ben-Sasson

"The mission that emerged from the foundational question," Ben-Sasson emphatically said, "was a twofold one: we will be committed to the building of a state and to the betterment of the world."

To ensure that we understand the significance of the twofold commitment of the university, Ben-Sasson elaborated in nearly rabbinic rhapsody.

"The ceremony at the amphitheatre [an amphitheatre exists today at the spot on Mount Scopus where the ceremony took place] symbolized the duality of this mission," he said. "Facing the desert, we face the open vista, the open spaces. We face the future. You can build upon it what you consider important.

"Facing the Old City [below the western slopes of Mount Scopus], by contrast, we face the past and the present. We must build upon it too. Like then, the university sees itself taking from the past and feeding the future."

Gently yet excitedly, as if unwrapping a gift, the president of the university seemed to be almost personally recollecting events as he described the atmosphere, the anticipation, the excitement at the makeshift wooden stage on Mount Scopus 85 years earlier.

"There was a messianic feeling to the ceremony," he said. "Jews had been the subject of quotas and suffered discrimination throughout Europe. Now they had a university of their own. The first programs at Hebrew University were Jewish studies, mathematics and biochemistry."

Ben-Sasson emphasized that the mission of the university today is the same as it was when it opened 85 years ago.

"Our mission is service to the Jewish People and service to the world."

Over the next few weeks, I shall write about some of the ways in which the men and women of Hebrew University apply their knowledge, curiosity, skill and resolve in fulfilment of the twofold mission that was and remains the cornerstone of the university.

–MBD

SeeJN

WORLD WIDE WRAP

Rabbi Philip Scheim leads worshippers at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue on Sunday morning as part of the 10th annual World Wide Wrap, an initiative of the Conservative movement's Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs that has participants join others in using and learning about tfillin. More than 200 synagogues, including congregations in Australia and Brazil, took part in the event this year, and for the first time, participating congregations were linked by video.

[Frances Kraft photo]

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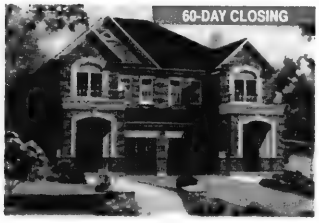

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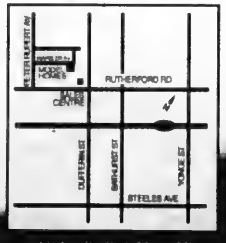

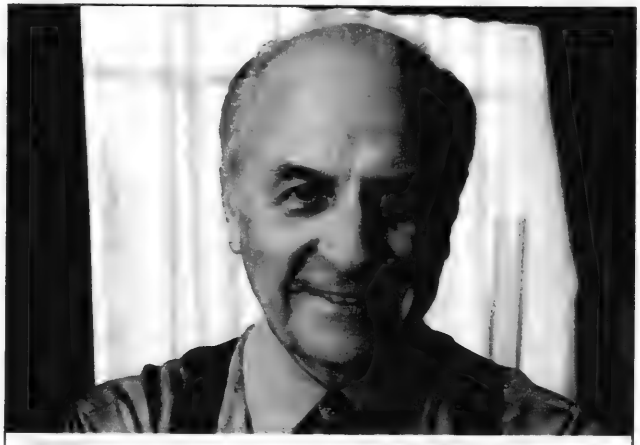

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Greater Toronto Area

York security called to Hasbara event

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Campus security was called to a pro-Israel event last week at York University after a crowd of students surrounded a Hasbara information table and two students were allegedly slapped.

Hasbara Fellowships, a Jewish group on campus, was running a campaign with permission from the university to raise awareness about Hamas and Gilad Schalit, a kidnapped Israeli soldier, when several students began arguing with the information booth's organizers about the legitimacy of their campaign, called Hamas: the Obstacle to Peace.

According to Tyler Golden, Hasbara's co-president, who was at the Feb. 1 event, two Hasbara members took out cameras as the argument escalated, and were hit while students tried to get away from the cameras.

He said two Jewish students were slapped, one on the arm and the other across the face.

"About 50 or so anti-Israel students surrounded us and started asking questions and it led to a heated debate," Golden said, adding that he had been told by York administration to film any anti-Semitic incidents that might occur.

"Anti-Israel slurs were shouted to the point where two Jewish students brought out cameras... it resulted in two Jewish students being slapped."

Golden said that some of these slurs included phrases like: "Go back to where you came from" and "You're from an apartheid state."

Marlee Mozeson, co-president of Hasbara, was one of the students who took out a camera during the incident.

"First a girl approached me and started asking me questions. After awhile, she started to become very hostile... I had my camera out to take pictures and videos," she said. "I guess she didn't want me to have her on camera. She slapped me on my arm and slapped the camera out of my hand.

"Four or five of us called security, because obviously we were exceptionally nervous."

Two university security officers arrived on the scene. Students were asked by security if they wanted to involve the police, but declined.

Toronto police were not called "because we wanted to give the university a chance to put its system into place," Golden told JTA.

He said a complaint was lodged with York's Student Conduct and Dispute Resolution Office.

After reviewing security tapes, the university also chose not to involve the police in terms of a possible assault, but did refer the case to the Toronto Police hate crimes unit, said Alex Bilyk, York's director of media relations.

The university has appointed an adjudicator in the wake of the incident, Bilyk said.

He added that about 30 students were involved in the incident in total and that he wasn't aware of receiving any video from Hasbara.

"There were allegations made about some slurs... since we don't have audio [from the security tape], obviously we turned it over [to the police]," he said, explaining that the university has started its own investigation under the code of student conduct.

Det. Gary McQueen of the Toronto Police Service hate crimes unit said the incident was investigated and no charges will be laid. He added that police will be meeting with students and the administration to talk about how to handle similar incidents.

"There will be further consultation with the stakeholders [about] strategies on how to better handle controversial situations," he said.

Jennifer Diamond, assistant director of Israel affairs at Hillel of Greater Toronto, thinks Hasbara's campaign is legitimate.

"The material that Jewish students were presenting revealed that Hamas is an acknowledged terrorist organization which has imposed oppressive rule on the people of Gaza," she said.

"That anti-Israel students chose to aggressively confront Jewish students is unacceptable and fuels a toxic environment on campus."

In response to the incident, the university posted a statement on its website that said "York deplores any comments and actions that are racist or anti-Semitic in nature."

Hasbara also put out a press release last week commending York University for its "swift investigation into the violent incident... Hasbara Fellowships at York University is confident that after... the implementation of new codes and practices on campus, [the] investigation will lead to quick action against the perpetrators."

Mozeson said Hasbara continued with its campaign all last week.

"We've had a few people coming up to the table and arguing with us, but it's been relatively quiet," she said.

"I think this is just an opportunity for the university to open up a new chapter [for] a safe environment, a place where Jewish students do not feel that they have to hide what they believe in."

A year ago, a group of Jewish students at York were barricaded in the Hillel lounge by a mob yelling anti-Semitic and anti-Israel slurs. Police had to escort the Jewish students out of the building. Two York students, including a member of the student council, were reprimanded for the incident.

In response to that and other incidents involving Jewish students, York established a task force. Among its recommendations were the creation of more student space for studying and socializing, and the expansion of the Student Code of Conduct.

For more campus news, please see pages 22, 23.

With files from JTA

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Ban on UN bullying is not very likely

In accordance with the endorsement last November by the UN General Assembly of the findings of the Goldstone Commission Inquiry into Israel's recent war with Hamas, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon delivered a report to the General Assembly last week, saying Israel had responded to all the accusations against it.

Ban's report was 72 pages long. Of those pages, 46 pages comprised Israel's updated investigation into the war, which outlined the steps Israel has taken thus far to investigate the allegations made against the Israel Defence Forces. That 46-page report was in addition to Israel's first official response, in July 2009, to the Goldstone report.

Of the remaining 26 pages in the Secretary General's report, some pages or perhaps paragraphs (we know not which or how many) were the response from the Palestinian Authority reiterating its "firm… rejection of any equating of the military aggression of and crimes committed by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian people with actions that may have been committed by the Palestinian side." No one seems to have pointed out to the PA that Israel left the Gaza Strip in 2005, that the only occupying power in Gaza are the radically Islamist leaders of Hamas, who are considered terrorists by many western governments, including Canada and the United States.

Hamas, it must be pointed out, did not submit a response. It purported to apologize last week for civilian casualties from its relentless rocketing of civilians in the Negev. But it clarified matters this week by rescinding that purported apology.

The status of the Goldstone report is still hazy, but a steep, harrowing precipice may be looming at the other end of the fog.

Jerusalem was pleased with Ban's report to the General Assembly, despite the fact – or perhaps because of the fact – that Ban offered no comment upon the merits of Israel's response. "Israel expresses satisfaction that the UN Secretary General's report to the General Assembly reflected accurately the Israeli document that was submitted [last] week," a foreign ministry spokesperson said.

Ban will not likely ask the Security Council to take further action on the Goldstone recommendations. Moreover, the Security Council would not likely direct that any further action be taken. That cannot be said, however, for the president of the General Assembly, Ali Abdusalam Treki, of Libya. He has suggested that the Goldstone report findings be moved forward. It is very likely that he will direct the convening of a special session of the General Assembly to once again discuss and debate the findings in the report.

Even before the first delegate stands to speak, we can all predict the outcome of the discussion: the General Assembly will refer the matter to the International Criminal Court.

If that debate does arise, the nations of the West must stand at Israel's side for far more than merely calling a halt to the UN's bullying of the Jewish state is at stake. What will hang in the balance is the very right and the ability of the West to defend itself against terrorism.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The federal government set up a commission of inquiry on Nazi war criminals in Canada, headed by Justice Jules Deschenes of the Quebec Superior Court. It was slated to report in December 1985. Justice minister John Crosbie said he set up the commission to answer concerns that a "considerable number" of war criminals were avoiding prosecution by hiding in Canada.

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Minority decides who makes a good Jew

After reading "Return conversion to local rabbis" (Perspectives, Jan. 14), I am beginning to wonder, why today, 70 years after the most catastrophic and darkest period in the history of the Jewish People, we the Jews who have survived, and flourished, seem not to understand that we must stand together to face the future.

Being a child of survivors and a grandmother of four, I find it very difficult to fathom why we must segregate ourselves into the categories haredi, Orthodox, modern Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, secular, etc. During the Holocaust, we were all Jews, period. Unless we begin to accept one another's differences as Jews, we will again be vulnerable to future persecutions.

What qualifies the haredi community to say who should or shouldn't become a Jew? If qualified rabbis cannot make the decision as to who would make a good Jewish convert, then we have an enormous problem on our hands. One small section of the Jewish community should not be given the powers to decide on behalf of the larger community what legitimate and traditional Torah views should be. In today's world, we as a Jewish nation need people who want to embrace Judaism and stand proudly beside their fellow Jews, and the Land of Israel. They should be welcomed into the fold.

Miriam Abbou
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Ruth's conversion not valid today

According to the Tanach, 3,000 years ago, Ruth the Moabite, a gentile, married the Jewish son of Naomi ("Rabbi warns of conversion 'catastrophe,' Feb. 4). When subsequently her husband died and her mother-in-law urged her to return to her people, Ruth uttered the famous words: "Do not urge me to leave you, or to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." Based solely on these words, Naomi, a woman, accepted Ruth's conversion to Judaism. As we know, Ruth went on to marry Boaz. The Almighty blessed this union, and Ruth became the great-grandmother of none other than King David.

Had these events taken place today, Ruth's speedy conversion by Naomi would have been derisively dismissed by our rabbis, haredi or otherwise. The implication, of course, is that neither King David nor the coming of the Mashiach would now be part of our sacred faith. Where have our traditions, the teachings of our sage Hillel gone? What has happened to our compassionate and welcoming nature?

David J. Gabay
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Israeli Arabs are our people, too

Let us remember that the application of rights is not defined by religion or culture ("Funding of services for Israeli Arabs," letters, Jan. 21). In a democracy, all citizens should be regarded and treated as equals. As a Canadian minority we would accept no less. Israeli citizens, Arab or Jew, should expect no less.

My concern for our people – and remember that Arab citizens of Israel are also our people and that West Bank residents under de facto Israeli control are, from a rights point of view, also our people – is that these rights are often denied or absent. It's possible to balance security and humanity. It is a dictate of Judaism and at the core of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Brian Rothberg
Ardoch, Ont.

* * *

Cotler deserves Nobel Peace Prize

Bravo to Gil Troy for planning to nominate Liberal MP Irwin Cotler for the Nobel Peace Prize ("Tory attacks on Cotler must stop," Jan. 14). No one has done more to bring justice and peace to the world than Cotler. Although Troy outlines some of Cotler's accomplishments, an entire book could easily be written on Cotler's active and ongoing involvement in promoting peace and justice at home and abroad.

Cotler has been referred to as "counsel for the oppressed" (by *Maclean's* magazine), he has received eight honorary doctorates and he has received the Order of Canada, along with many humanitarian awards.

Regarding Tory attacks on Cotler, could it be that some Tories are willing to go to any measures to discredit Cotler because they know that he is a formidable opponent?

Having interviewed Cotler in 2008 and learned about this honourable mensch, I stand behind Troy and all peace-loving citizens, no matter their race or religion, to support the nomination of Cotler for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nella Edel
Cote St. Luc, Que.

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Israel responds to Goldstone with diplomacy

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

The Goldstone wars continue, but beneath the shouting a diplomatic track has emerged.

The Israeli government last week published a reply to the UN Human Rights Council's report on the conduct of last winter's Gaza war with Hamas, insisting that Israel Defence Forces investigations into possible Israeli wrongdoing in Gaza were not principally motivated by last autumn's UN report.

Nonetheless, the reply repeatedly refers to the UN report – known as the Goldstone report for its principal author, retired South African judge Richard Goldstone – and was delivered within the six-month deadline that Goldstone recommended to avoid international prosecution.

Moreover, the bulk of Israel's reply is dedicated to establishing the independence of military investigators and prosecutors, which would satisfy Goldstone's requirement that any investigation should not be a matter of the alleged perpetrators investigating themselves.

The Israeli document notes that two senior IDF officers were disciplined for firing rocket shells into a populated area of Gaza where the field office of the UN Relief and Works Agency, the principal group administering relief to Palestinian refugees, was situated.

More striking is the conciliatory tone taken by the Israeli government toward Goldstone and the human rights groups from which he drew in writing his report – acknowledging that Goldstone and the groups played a critical role in helping the IDF examine its actions.

An Israeli army spokesperson said that while the army relied primarily on its own resources to identify deviations from policy, the human rights groups helped spur along the process.

"We take a look at ourselves and where we were right and where mistakes were made," Capt. Barak Raz told JTA. "It's important that a commander can go home at the end of the operation and look his family in the eye, and that the soldiers 20 years from now can look in their children's eyes."

Richard Goldstone

Nonetheless, he added, "I can't deny that these reports also contributed to our ability to be made aware."

The civil tone does not mean the rhetorical wars engendered by Goldstone, a human rights icon with a pro-Israel history, are over. Top Israeli officials, up to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, continue to cast the report as inimical to Israel's interests as Iran and its putative nuclear weapons program.

Non-governmental defenders of Israel continue to demonize Goldstone. Most recently, Alan Dershowitz likened him to a "*moser*," a Jewish traitor deemed in some interpretations as worthy of a death sentence.

In the meantime, left-wing and pro-Palestinian groups continue to call for war crimes investigations of Israel and have inhibited travel by Israeli officials to Europe lest they face arrest warrants.

Against the noise, the government's description of the Israeli army's co-operation with the same groups was telling.

Noting that 150 separate investigations arose from Operation Cast Lead, Israel's name for the Gaza War, the government reply says that a portion were initiated by the army and "others were opened in response to complaints and reports from Palestinian civilians, local and international non-governmental organizations, and UN and media reports."

IDF forces during ground manoeuvres in the Gaza Strip last year. ***[Matan Hakimi, IDF Spokesperson]***

Of the 150 probes, 36 have resulted in criminal prosecutions – 19 of these involved shooting toward civilians, and 17 involved using civilians as human shields, mistreating detainees and theft.

Between 1,000 and 1,500 Palestinians died in the war. Human rights groups say the majority were civilians, while Israel says the majority were fighters.

Israel launched the operation after Hamas stepped up its rocket attacks on southern Israel. Such attacks had been an almost daily occurrence since the terrorist group took over the strip in 2007, and dated back more than eight years.

Of the 34 incidents outlined in the Goldstone report, the Israeli government says the army was investigating 22 before the report was published – it admits that Goldstone's research led to the other 12 inquiries. (The two officers reprimanded for shelling the UNRWA compound are not among them.)

Additionally, the government reply says, the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division "has sought assistance from non-governmental organizations (such as B'Tselem) to help locate Palestinian complainants and witnesses, and to co-ordinate their arrival at the Erez crossing point to Gaza, to allow interviews and questioning."

B'Tselem is an Israeli human rights group concerned with the mistreatment of Palestinians.

The approach is welcome, said Michael Sfard, the legal counsel for three groups – Yesh Din, Peace Now and Breaking the Silence – that have been targeted by right-wingers and some Israel defenders as antagonistic toward Israel's interests.

"It's the first time since Cast Lead that a government body has done something that is purely professional, and this is how it should have been handled," Sfard said.

Goldstone declined a request from JTA for an interview.

Despite its conciliatory tone, the government's reply said the report reflects "many misunderstandings and fundamental mistakes with regard to the Gaza Operation, its purposes, and Israel's legal system."

A researcher for Human Rights Watch, one of the groups that Goldstone drew upon in compiling his report, said the army investigations, while welcome, focused more on the foot soldiers than on orders that might have been illegal.

"We're concerned that low-level grunts are being investigated for violating orders when in fact the orders themselves may have been illegal," researcher Fred Abrahams said. "We don't have faith in the military's willingness to investigate itself."

Sfard agreed, saying he trusted the integrity of the military prosecutors in dealing with the military establishment, but wondered whether the prosecutors were willing to indict their own commanders.

He noted, for instance, that the report said prosecutors cleared Israel of wrongdoing in the use of white phosphorus while acknowledging the use of the chemical during the war. Army commanders likely would have sought the military advocate general's opinion before using the phosphorous, which burns skin on contact but may also be used to identify targets in areas where there are no civilians.

That puts prosecutors in the unenviable position of saying their commander sanctioned an illegal order.

Moreover, Sfard said, as independent as he believes the military prosecutors are, he doubts that they would take on the military chief of staff himself, Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, who formulated much of the policy.

"If the chief of staff has approved an attack, it is very difficult to expect that the military police and prosecution would deal with that," he said.

Sfard said there was still a need for an independent Israeli commission to investigate the conduct of the war.

Anne Herzberg, the legal adviser for NGO Monitor, a group that tracks the funding and alleged biases of human rights groups, said she believed Israel may yet set up such a commission – but not because of pressures from human rights groups such as the ones Sfard represents.

"If they feel there's room for that and there's enough support, they should do it for internal purposes and because the Israeli public demands it," she said, "not for a certain fringe sector of Israeli society making a lot of noise."

Opinions

Everyday angels

What is an angel? In Jewish thought, the existence of angels is both universally accepted and the subject of controversy. Are they independent beings or manifestations of God? Can they choose their actions and perhaps even sin? The precise nature of angels is vague, a topic that is debated and debatable.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

Even the Hebrew word for angel is ambiguous: "*malach*" literally means "messenger," and this word can refer both to someone bringing a package by bicycle from one office to another, or the winged spirit carrying a message from God to man. This ambiguity is no coincidence. The Torah chose to leave the identity of angels murky, to impart an important lesson. The Torah wants us to shift our gaze and instead of searching for winged angels above, open our eyes to the everyday angels below.

To see "everyday angels," we must appreciate the fact that God has many messengers, and sometimes the message is for us. In everyday life, everyday angels appear on a divine mission to encourage us, protect us and even wrestle with us.

Sometimes, even rationalists like me feel the presence of angels. My wife, Lisa, and I struggled to have children into the third year of our marriage. One Friday night, after a long week, we chose to have dinner at home alone. During Kiddush, we heard a knock on the door. Outside was a young chassidic man with his very pregnant wife. They had gotten stuck in traffic, and had to get off the highway before Shabbat began. After finding their way to the local Reform synagogue, they got directions to our home more than a mile away.

We hadn't prepared for guests, but we happily shared our home with our unexpected visitors. Lisa and I felt that taking in unexpected guests was our special obligation. After all, that Shabbat was the parshah in which Abraham and Sarah show exceptional hospitality to three strangers.

It turns out that the three strangers who visit Abraham and Sarah are actually angels. It also turns out that the angels are coming to tell the old couple that they will finally have a child.

Abraham and Sarah have a son one year later. And, as it turns out, after inviting in unexpected, pregnant guests, Lisa and I had twin boys 10 months later.

The young husband and wife weren't angels, but there's no doubt in our minds that they were *malachim*, messengers from God. They arrived with the message that it's important not just to fill our homes with children, but also to open our homes to guests.

They were everyday angels carrying an extraordinary message.

Are we ready for Anti-Israel Week?

Like clockwork – or a recurring infection – Anti-Israel Week is returning to a campus near you.

One Israel-bashing website declares: "Mark your calendars – the 6th International Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) will take place across the globe from from the 1st to the 14th of March 2010!" Note the duplicated "from" reflecting the organizers' sloppiness. Note the organizers' lack of awareness that a "week" is usually seven days, not 14. Their knowledge of history and their moral sensibilities are equally wanting, although that doesn't stop them from becoming popular on many campuses.

Gil Troy in Montreal

In fact, of the 40 "cities" they claim as participants, 12 are Canadian, and many of those are actually just Canadian campuses. Still, the website indicates that Israel's enemies are planning an elaborate assault on Israel's legitimacy, just weeks from now. Are we in the Jewish community ready? Is our university leadership ready?

Pro-Israel activists need an action plan, and so do university leaders. Recently, when a series of academic administrators testified before the Canadian Parliamentary Inquiry into Antisemitism, most were so busy reassuring concerned legislators that all is well that they failed to acknowledge the trouble and dilemmas they face.

Of course, Canadian campuses aren't hotbeds of anti-Semitism, but that doesn't mean the scourge of anti-Jewish animus isn't motivating and shaping many political attacks on Israel.

Administrators need to prepare carefully for Anti-Israel Week (repeating the actual name echoes the lie). They should keep five guidelines in mind:

First, academic freedom protects all students, enabling them to express a range of opinions on campus.

Second, civility is also a value on campus and must be nurtured. Professors and administrators should take advantage of teachable moments to foster a culture of civility and mutuality.

Third, no student should ever feel menaced or threatened. Hooliganish behaviour, even if politically motivated, should be punished harshly – and swiftly.

Fourth, Jews don't need special treatment but deserve equal treatment. If there's a no-criticism zone on campus around gays, women, blacks and Third Worlders, it should extend to Jews, too. If there's a special attempt to be sensitive to particular groups that have been oppressed historically, Jews merit that sensitivity, too. Moreover, many of the groups trying to ostracize or delegitimize Israel are perpetuating traditional anti-Jewish tropes, accusing Jews and Israel of being at the centre of the world's troubles, of being all-powerful, or of being devious and manipulative. These libels don't pass historical smell tests.

Finally, leadership is about turning potentially destructive moments into constructive moments. Campus leaders – administrators, professors, and, yes, students – need to be proactive pre-emptive and creative in seeing the great opportunity here to turn a week or two of tension into a time of engagement and bridge-building, or at least a truce.

The pro-Israel community should also have some guidelines, including:

First, firefighters need to extinguish fires not stoke them. Sometimes anti-Israel activities are best ignored.

Second, your goal is not to convince anti-Israel activists of anything. Your target audience is other Jews and the vast majority of non-combatants.

Third, don't let haters set the agenda. Far better to celebrate Israel than to get defensive.

Fourth, speak the language of campus on campus. Note that Arab autocracies are anti-democratic; apartheid doesn't apply to a national conflict between two peoples, both of whom have blacks and whites as members; blacklists and boycotts are illiberal and close-minded; many of the attacks on Israel are wildly inaccurate; Palestinians help legitimate terror as a tactic, and that life is more complex than the simplistic sloganeering of Anti-Israel Week.

Finally, do your homework and, like good Scouts, be prepared. Read Alan Dershowitz's devastating critique of the Goldstone report. Use a timeline and maps. Understand the background of the Gaza disengagement and the Oslo accords, which both resulted in massive violence against Israel *after* concessions, and, most important of all, understand why Jews are a nation, not just a religion, why we need a homeland, and why we have a valid historical, ideological, legal, political and living claim to Israel.

Channelling my inner Israeli Scarlett

Remember the scene in *Gone With the Wind* where Scarlett O'Hara scoops up a handful of earth and intones emotionally, "Oh, Tara!"? I was always taken with her love of that little piece of land, the actual earth itself, but I never quite understood it. I was a New York Jew whose only experience with earth was Central Park, and although I certainly loved the park, I couldn't picture kissing the ground. And what real earth that wasn't covered with cement could I attach myself to in my urban landscape?

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Jerusalem

Here in Israel, Tu b'Shvat has just passed, and as I mentioned in last month's column, it was indeed met with great fanfare. It's not a religious holiday, but a natural one, connected to trees (and forever in my mind to JNF) and celebrated with much gusto here. It's a holiday that all Israelis seem to share, revelling in eating dates, figs and seven species cakes, planting trees, and going to forests and parks to see the red cover of poppies now sprouting all over.

Many of us held Tu b'Shvat seders, complete with four cups of wine and all sorts of metaphors. But something still didn't fit for me. Suddenly Tu b'Shvat was real: the almond trees really were in blossom, the sun really was shining, and the birds from every rooftop really were chirping. I was singing a song that wasn't a longing and wasn't a lie. I'm used to saying, "Well, even though the ground is frozen, and the trees are dead and bare, it's Tu b'Shvat over there."

I've discovered a new attachment to land. I don't mean that in a physical way at all. It's not about this piece of territory or that one. I mean it in a spiritual way. Suddenly I'm eating local, and that means mangoes and avocados. Suddenly I'm eating seasonal, and I notice that strawberries are only available for three weeks and you can't get them whenever you want. (The other day I noticed a sign in the market, "First pecans of the season." Pecans have a season?)

You take hikes up mountains and field trips in wadis, and you notice where there is limestone and where there is basalt. You hope for rain. You pay attention to the water levels in the Kinneret, and you don't take long showers. Israelis know where and when the last trees were planted. They identify birds by name and don't think that's nerdy.

While I'm very proud of Canada and especially of Toronto, and I would show it with pleasure to any tourist, I think that after pointing out the first maple tree, I'd be done identifying species. Suddenly, although I live in a big city, I don't feel so urban anymore. It's all "Tara."

But Israel still has so far to go in protecting her. The ecological movement here is in its infancy, and many Israelis can't be bothered. Like women's issues a decade ago being put on the back burner because of security issues, the "green revolution" hasn't quite arrived here, and those who take it seriously are seen as somewhat kooky.

Junk food is normative eating for many Israeli kids, in between the occasional Tu b'Shvat fruit tray. You have to look hard for non-polluting cleaning products. The merchant in the market looks at me funny if I don't want at least two plastic bags. Recycling efforts are puny, and Jerusalem is dirty with litter. Piles of rubbish line the highway, and it's nearly impossible to bike instead of drive in a city of hills with no bike lanes anywhere. So it's an odd mixture of pride and negligence, of knowledge and ignorance. The almond tree may be in blossom, but it's soon going to be choked with smog if Israel doesn't pay attention to facts as much as to figs.

You can read Rabbi Goldstein's blog from Israel at www.jerusalemofgoldstein.blogspot.com.

The Kirshner File

The collector

Eleazar Birnbaum officially retired as a University of Toronto professor in 1995, after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 65. But 15 years on, Birnbaum, an Orthodox Jew in a sea of secular academics, is still working as diligently as ever. For several years after stepping down, he continued teaching graduate students. Nowadays, the bookish Birnbaum, an expert in Turkish language and literature and the history of the Ottoman Empire, can be found two or three times a week in a small book-lined office in the university's department of Near and Middle Eastern civilizations, cataloguing his prized collection of manuscripts and supervising one lone PhD student.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The department was formed in 1996, following the amalgamation of the separate departments of Near Eastern studies and Middle East and Islamic studies. It offers courses in modern and ancient languages – including Akkadian, Aramaic, Arabic, Persian, Hebrew and Turkish – and in a host of subjects: religion, archeology, history, literature, philosophy, architecture and art.

Birnbaum, whose father is credited with establishing the authenticity of the Dead Sea Scrolls, arrived in Toronto in 1964 by way of Germany, Britain and the United States.

Born in Hamburg in 1929, the third of four children, he was the son of Solomon and Irene Birnbaum, a couple who exerted immense influence on him.

A master of languages, Solomon (1891-1989) held the world's first chair in Yiddish, at the University of Hamburg, from 1922 until 1933. He and his family left Germany after his life was threatened by the Nazis. They immigrated to Britain, Irene's birthplace. A scholar in her own right, Irene graduated from the University of London with a degree in English literature and was fluent in three languages.

From 1936 to 1957, Solomon was a lecturer in Hebrew paleography (the study of ancient handwriting and the practice of deciphering historical manuscripts) and epigraphy (the study of inscriptions) at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

Starting in 1938, he taught Yiddish at the University of London's School of Slavonic and East European Studies. After the outbreak of World War II, he was seconded to the British government's postal censorship office.

Upon receiving photographs of portions of the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls, he dated them immediately, passing on his expertise to his son, who now describes himself as a "detective" and "literary sleuth."

Solomon's extensive library whetted Eleazar's interest in languages. So much so that, at the age of 12, he prevailed upon his father to teach him the Arabic alphabet.

Having finished high school, he had to decide what to study at university. "I thought I'd be a doctor and save lives," he said. "But I was much too absent-minded for that."

Nor, as he put it, did he aspire to be "the millionth student" dissecting the works of William Shakespeare.

Enrolling at the School of Oriental and African Studies in 1947, he earned a BA degree in Arabic and Islamic history, a second degree in Turkish and Persian and Central Asian studies, and a diploma in Hebrew paleography and epigraphy.

Among his instructors were Bernard Lewis, the historian, and his father, who taught him the essentials of dating manuscripts in his course on Hebrew paleography. As he immersed himself in these fields, Birnbaum began buying Islamic and Hebrew manuscripts, frequenting Oriental bookshops.

Realizing that his knowledge of the Middle East was incomplete without Turkish, the lingua franca of the Ottoman Empire, he took a crash course in it. But much to his disappointment, he learned that all six university-level positions in that field were already taken.

Flinching at the prospect of being a financial burden on his parents, he accepted a poorly paid job in the mid-1950s as a clerk at the University of Durham's newly created Oriental library. "I lived on almost nothing," he said in a reference to his meagre salary.

Nonetheless, due to his facility with Middle Eastern languages and his ability as a cataloguer and bibliographer, he built a reputable research library at Durham. In his spare time, he studied library science and continued studying Ottoman Turkish texts.

From 1960 to 1964, he worked as a bibliographer at the University of Michigan's library, having been hired by one of Bernard Lewis' former students, a professor in Michigan's Middle East studies department. He was tasked with bolstering its collection of Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts. Birnbaum proceeded to streamline the library's method of ordering, cataloguing and classifying books.

As he acknowledges, the prospect of finding a suitable marriage partner was one of his ulterior motives for leaving Britain. He had made up his mind that she would have to be both Orthodox and well educated.

He met Rebecca (Rivka) Pardes, a Belgian Holocaust survivor, at a lecture at Columbia University in 1961. They were married in 1962. The Birnbaums sired five children, and now have 23 grandchildren.

Eleazar Birnbaum amid his beloved books and manuscripts at the University of Toronto.

[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

A year later, a professor at the University of Toronto specializing in Islamic studies asked Birnbaum to assess the holdings of its Middle East library and make recommendations for expanding it. After submitting a report, he was offered a position as an associate professor of Turkish, on condition that he would train the university's librarians.

He was apparently the first Jew in decades to join the department. Under his stewardship, the University of Toronto's Ottoman/Turkish library evolved into a first-class institution, on a par with Harvard University.

Promoted to full professor in 1970, he taught courses in Turkish language and literature and Islamic bibliography. The very picture of a traditional observant Jew, Birnbaum never had any problems with his Muslim colleagues, having resolved long ago not to discuss politics, a volatile topic.

For many years, he travelled to fairly exotic destinations, notably Turkey, Morocco, Iran and Egypt, in search of Islamic and Hebrew manuscripts to augment his burgeoning personal collection, and often struck gold. "I'm the beneficiary of other people's ignorance," he observed, saying that vendors rarely really knew the value of the manuscripts they sold.

As his collection multiplied, he honed his skills as an authority in watermarks and inscriptions and poured his prodigious knowledge into a torrent of scholarly articles. Birnbaum, who has neither an MA nor a PhD, said, "The articles and scholarly studies I published, and the papers I presented at academic conferences, were considered to be at least equivalent to a doctorate dissertation."

Since 1954, Birnbaum has amassed nearly 300 Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Hebrew leather-bound manuscripts, which span an era from the ninth to the 19th century.

For my edification, he displayed four of his most valued manuscripts. The first one, an extremely rare piece adorned with gold leaf and inscribed by the 19th-century Turkish governor of Alexandria, brims with the verse of Nefi (1572-1635), one of the greatest Ottoman poets. The second one, written in Turkish, was produced in the 16th century and focuses on the power struggle between the two feuding sons of Suleiman the Magnificent, a reformist Ottoman sultan who expanded the empire.

The third manuscript, commissioned by Suleiman the Magnificent during roughly the same period, is in Persian and documents the line of Ottoman dynasties. The fourth one, written in a dialect known as Jewish Persian, is from the mid-19th century and features a selection of biblical psalms.

Asked what his beloved manuscripts are worth, he chuckled, saying, "Big money." Yet he has no plans to sell them. Instead, he hopes to publish them in book form one day soon.

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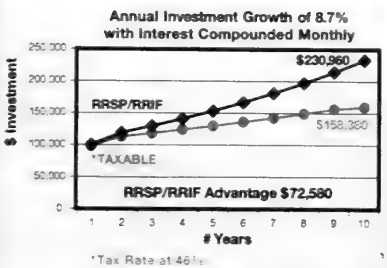

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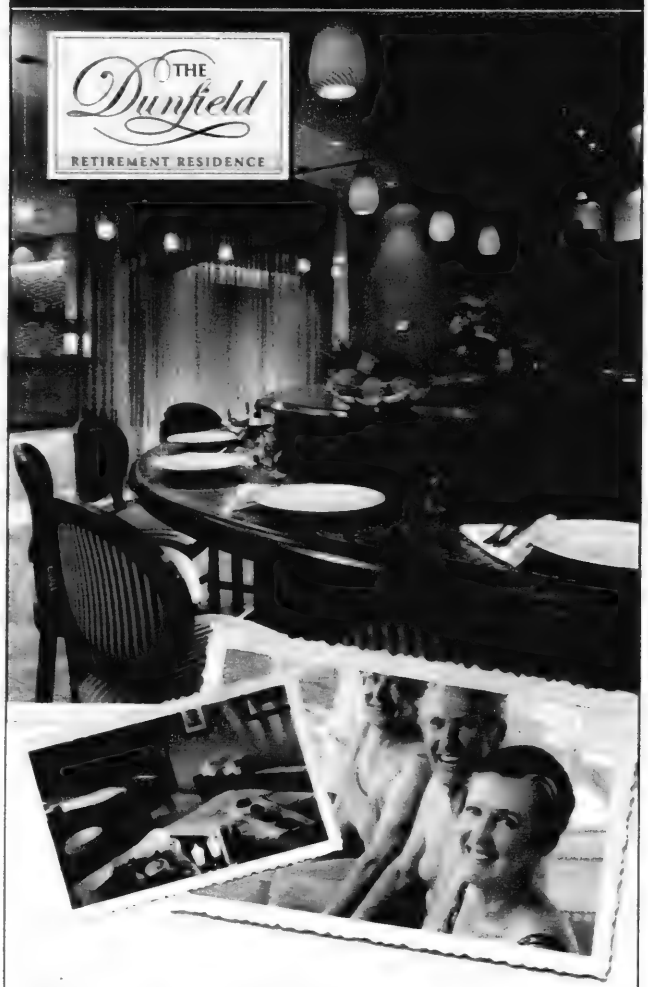

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Synagogue's new name pays tribute to Aish rabbi

By JENNIFER MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

Almost every Jew has a Hebrew name and so does almost every synagogue.

But up until recently, Toronto's Village Shul was the exception. At a gala event on Jan. 25, it received its Hebrew name, Kehillat Mishkan Noach.

The shul has been at its current location on Eglinton Avenue West for more than 10 years.

The name was chosen for Rabbi Noach Weinberg, founder of Aish International, with which the Village Shul is affiliated, on the first anniversary of Rabbi Weinberg's death.

Speakers paid tribute to Rabbi Weinberg and offered his life of humility and dedication as an inspiration for the classes and programs at the synagogue over almost 20 years, as well as for the shul's future.

"Boy, do I miss Rabbi Noach," the Village Shul's Rabbi Ahron Hoch said in a brief talk. Yet he urged the congregation to use the first yahrzeit of this beloved leader to absorb a lesson in leadership and getting involved in the broader Jewish community.

Village Shul becomes Kehillat Mishkan Noach

"As the congregation of the sanctuary of Noah [a literal translation of the new name]," he said, "we can change the world."

Changing the world – in small and large ways – was the topic of keynote speaker Rabbi Yaakov Salomon. So many of us avoid taking on leadership roles, thinking there's little we can do, said Rabbi Salomon, a Brooklyn psychotherapist who co-authored with Rabbi Weinberg the book, *What the Angel Taught You: Seven Keys to Life Fulfillment*. "Rabbi Weinberg would say you can do a lot."

An incident on a plane brought home the truth of this for Rabbi Salomon when he fell asleep briefly and his kippah fell off. After a frantic search, he spotted it in an unlikely location: on the face of the woman stretched out, asleep, across the seats behind him. Attempting to retain some dignity while reaching stealthily for the kippah, he suddenly realized she was wearing a sleep mask.

He found the real kippah wedged in the seat. The lesson? "Don't let your kippah become a blindfold."

A humorous thought, perhaps, but sobering as well for those in our community who might feel that wearing a kippah is involvement enough. "'I pray, I keep Shabbat,' they might say. Marvellous!" said Rabbi Salomon, "but you're missing something."

The danger, he suggested, is that observant Jews might be blinded to the need to reach out to their fellow Jews, thinking ritual observance is enough.

Jews comprise only one-fifth of one per cent of the world's population – or, as Salomon said, "basically zero." Basically zero, yet we account for 25 per cent of all Nobel Prizes and many more accomplishments. We are each so small, he said, yet we each have the ability, and responsibility, to change the world in our own unique way. Rabbi Weinberg, he said, called this the "power of one."

Rabbi Salomon spoke of an elderly Chassid he met whose entire family was killed in Auschwitz; he arrived in the United States alone and penniless after the war. Sixty years later, the man has between 300 and 400 descendants. "That's the power of one."

Rabbi Salomon called Rabbi Weinberg the ultimate contradiction, "both a pragmatist and a visionary, a thinker and a doer, so opinionated, but so open-minded... a fighter and a lover." Aish HaTorah, the little yeshiva Rabbi Weinberg started in an apartment in Jerusalem in 1974 – against the objections of rabbis who thought teaching unaffiliated Jews was foolish or impossible – now reaches more than a million people each year.

For Rabbi Salomon, Rabbi Weinberg's life illustrates the contradiction and challenge before every Jew today: living at once with the talmudic thought, "For my sake, the world was created," and its implications about our own importance, while putting aside any trace of ego – taking off the blindfold – to serve the Jewish people.

The Village Shul, a community Rabbi Weinberg loved and visited often, has been significant on the Toronto landscape. Rabbi Hoch called it an "unbelievable privilege," watching the synagogue evolve over the years to serve, beyond its own needs, those of the broader Jewish community.

The gala dinner, catered by Eran Marom of nearby Marron Bistro, included a tribute book featuring the photography of Toronto artist Marni Grossman, which highlighted close-ups of objects in the synagogue: a fine detail of the menorah, a corner of the sanctuary's Jerusalem-stone wall and the fringes on a folded tallit. In an essay in the tribute book, Rabbi Hoch wrote that the new name will "always inspire us to live up to Rav Noach's ideals."

Rabbi Weinberg "cared so much about this [Village Shul] community," said Rabbi Salomon. "There's no place I'd rather be on his yahrzeit."

Greater Toronto Area

New anti-Semitism threatens democracy: British MP

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

A Sudanese minister compares the failure to reach consensus at the recent Copenhagen climate change conference to the Holocaust.

A Polish member of the Council of Europe says Poles will apologize to Jews for war-era atrocities when Jews apologize for having killed Poles.

Two leading British military scholars, one being Sir Martin Gilbert, are excluded from the United Kingdom's commission of inquiry into the Iraq war because they are Jews.

Meanwhile, Iran continues to be the world's greatest source of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel vitriol.

These are just a few examples of a new, frightening and escalating anti-Semitism gripping the globe, two parliamentarians told a synagogue audience last week.

Irwin Cotler

Anti-Semitism "attacks the core values of democracy" and "is defining an ongoing worldview that poses a huge challenge to democrats worldwide," warned British Labour MP Denis MacShane, who shared the podium with Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, Canada's former justice minister, at Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

MacShane, a non-Jew who chairs the European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism and headed an all-party parliamentary commission of inquiry into anti-Semitism in Britain, said the "new" anti-Semitism in Europe is less about Holocaust denial than "Holocaust vandalization."

An example of the latter is the recent theft of the "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign at the Auschwitz concentration camp. The Polish government has issued an arrest warrant for a leading Swedish neo-Nazi in the case.

MacShane, who served in former prime minister Tony Blair's cabinet and addressed the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, noted a "significant" rise in anti-Semitic incidents across Europe, while in Britain, the newest figures show a 70 per cent increase in anti-Jewish attacks last year over the year before.

Most of them, he pointed out, mix traditional anti-Semitism with anti-Zionism and anti-Israel prejudice, and "we are seeing a lively advance by hardline Islamists."

European universities, he added, are not doing enough to combat on-campus anti-Semitism and anti-Israel speakers, whose appearances are always defended under the guise of free speech.

"This is how rotten the European body politic has become."

In his talk, Cotler repeated many points contained in his address last year to the founding conference of the London, England-based Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (ICCA).

An internationally recognized human rights advocate, Cotler said the world is witnessing an "escalating, sophisticated, global, virulent and even lethal anti-Semitism" not seen since the end of World War II.

He reserved his harshest condemnations for Iran, a "clear and present danger to international peace" because of four converging dangers: the nuclear threat; its voicing of "genocidal" anti-Zionism; its support for terrorism in the Middle East, and a "massive domestic assault" on the rights of its own citizens.

"Let there be no mistake about it," Cotler warned. "Iran is in standing violation of international prohibitions against the development and production of nuclear weapons. Indeed, [it is] a serial violator."

The regime is also guilty of incitement against minorities, prohibited under an international convention against genocide to which Iran is a signatory, he noted. Cotler said there are more incitements to genocide in Iran today than there were in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia prior to ethnic slaughters in those countries.

"What we have here is the toxic conversion of the most horrific of crimes, genocide, embedded in the most enduring of hatreds, namely anti-Semitism."

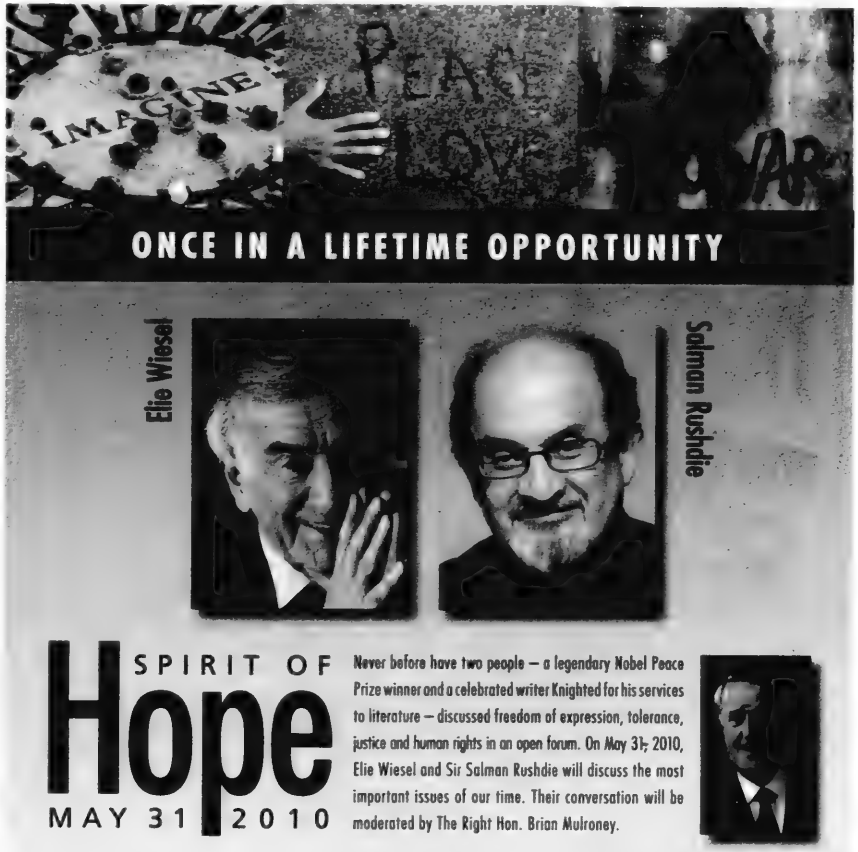
There are several manifestations of this genocidal anti-Semitism, he explained, such as the call by Iran's president to "wipe Israel off the map." As well, there are the covenants and charters of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and Al Qaeda, which not only call for the destruction of Israel and the killing of Jews worldwide, but also for terrorist acts in furtherance of those objectives. And there are fatwas – religiously-sanctioned writs – in which Jews are characterized as enemies of Islam, causing Israel to become "the Salman Rushdie of the nations."

Less overt, but perhaps more pernicious, forms of the new international anti-Semitism are ideological ones, in which anti-Judaism is "laundered" under the cover of the struggle against racism (and where Israel is tarred as an apartheid state), and "legalized" anti-Semitism seen in anti-Israel resolutions at the United Nations.

Cotler pointed to one sign of how Iran thumbs its nose at the international community: Interpol has issued an arrest warrant for the country's defence minister, Ahmad Vahidi, as a leading suspect in the 1994 bombing of the Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, which killed 85 people.

The terrorism Iran supports "is not only Mideast-oriented, but has a global orientation." But by focusing solely on the nuclear threat, the international community risks ignoring or "sanitizing" the other threats.

Cotler's ultimate message is that "silence is not an option."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Jumping the gun in Hamas official's death

Assassinations, even alleged assassinations, in the Middle East are bound to attract a lot of media attention, especially if Israel is deemed to have carried them out.

That was surely the case late last month, when Hamas initially accused Israel of having recently assassinated one of its members.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

What's interesting is the different ways this story was reported and how it evolved.

Under the headline "Hamas Official Murdered in Dubai Hotel" (*New York Times*, Jan. 30), Robert Worth and Isabel Kershner reported that Hamas revealed the previous day that one of its senior officials, Mahmoud Mabhouh, had been murdered in his Dubai hotel room (on Jan. 20), and that it held Israel responsible and threatened to retaliate.

While the *Times* reporters noted that Mabhouh "is said to have organized the capture of two Israeli soldiers during a Palestinian uprising in the 1980s" and that he "was imprisoned several times by Israel," in the absence of any evidence, they did not speculate about the party responsible. They wrote only that "Israeli officials declined to comment."

However, Reuters reporter Khaled Yacoub Oweis, in "Israel accused in death," (*National Post*, Jan. 30) was less cautious about attributing responsibility. Oweis wrote that "Israel has killed dozens of leaders and military figures in Hamas, founded two decades ago as a religious resistance movement against Israeli occupation. Mr. Mabhouh is believed to have been an Israeli target since engineering the capture of Israeli soldiers in the 1980s during a Palestinian uprising."

Oweis quoted the Dubai police chief: "I cannot rule out the possibility of Mossad involvement in the assassination of Mabhouh." But not ruling it out is very different from taking it for granted.

Taking Israel's responsibility for granted seems even more pronounced in Patrick Martin's Feb. 1 *Globe and Mail* story, "Israel is prime suspect in killing of Hamas official."

Martin's opening line, "The apparent assassination of a senior Hamas official poses serious consequences for Israel – and for certain Israelis" points, without qualification, to Israel.

While Martin, like Oweis, noted that according to the Dubai police chief, the Mossad is "one suspect" and quoted him as saying that "I don't exclude any party that has an interest in the assassination," Martin himself mentioned no other possible parties other than Israel. In Martin's account, Israel is not only the "prime" suspect, it's the only suspect.

Nonetheless, when he wrote that Mabhouh "was developing Sudanese connections that have helped facilitate weapons smuggling from Iran into Gaza" and that "Hamas acknowledged that Mr. al-Mabhouh was in Dubai to buy weapons," Martin opened the door to a consideration of other parties that might also have an interest in seeing this senior Hamas operative dead. Martin, however, didn't pursue it.

Martin mentioned *Ha'aretz* reporter Avi Issacharoff, who wrote about the assassination. Ironically, on the same day Martin's story appeared, Issacharoff provided the following revelation in *Ha'aretz*:

"A preliminary investigation conducted by Hamas suggests that the assassination of one of its officials in Dubai last month was likely carried out by agents of an Arab government, and not by Israel's Mossad spy agency… A Hamas source told *Ha'aretz* on [Feb. 1] that Mabhouh was wanted by authorities in both Jordan and Egypt, where he previously spent a year in prison."

Citing a Hamas leader in Lebanon, Issacharoff added that Hamas also "suspects its Palestinian rivals in the West Bank," namely, Mahmoud Abbas' Palestinian Authority.

Back on Jan. 29, Issacharoff and Amos Harel ("Choosing Up Sides in the Middle East") remarked that with Iran's increasing and destabilizing intrusion into the region (supporting Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas), "Egypt and Jordan are co-ordinating security matters with Israel in an impressive way."

So it shouldn't be difficult to assume that in the case of Mabhouh, several parties, any of which acting alone, or in concert, could have been responsible for his murder.

Journalists writing about this – since there is only speculation and no hard evidence at this time – need to keep a broad, open mind, especially in light of the changing balance of regional forces.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

UPCOMING BUBBIE APPROVED EVENTS

GENERATION TO GENERATION IN JEWISH LIFE AND HISTORY
Wednesday, February 17 • 2 pm
Enjoy a presentation by Educator and Scholar Sara Schafler-Kelman.

SHABBAT DINNER
Friday, February 19 • 6 pm
Always a special and reverent time – come share it with us as our guest.

LUNCH AND LEARN:
Wednesday, February 24 • 2 pm
Learn to Manage your Health Today - Prevention Tomorrow. Guest speaker Occupational and Physiotherapist Suzie Kelman.

PURIM MASQUERADE PARTY WITH ARKADI TULCHINSKI
Thursday, February 25 • 2 pm
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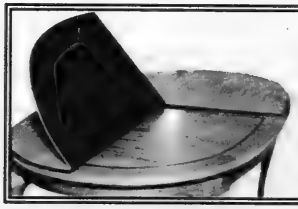
CJC, UCC talk

Continued from page 3

At the same time, she said, "I think we will always have differences – differences in who we are and how we approach things."

As for IJV, Saunders said the Church "regretted" its prior relationship with the group. "I'd also like to clarify that we have a longstanding relationship with Canadian Jewish Congress and see it as the place for dialogue. We don't have any formal relationship with IJV."

Asked whether she thought Congress' concerns might have been caused by the Church considering positions similar to those of IJV that are harshly critical of Israel, Saunders sidestepped the query, saying differences must be resolved "by sitting down and talking directly from time to time and to remember the things in common, as well as the differences."



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FEBRUARY 25

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Contest rules: The recipe must be a Passover entrée, side dish, dessert and must be nut-free and dairy-free.

FEATURE PROGRAM

OTHER FEATURED PROGRAMS & EVENTS

PURIM FAMILY DRUM CIRCLE

Sunday, Feb. 28 10:15 am – 12:15 pm

Put on your favourite costume and drum to the beat in this fun-filled family program! Join us for drumming, face painting, refreshments and cookies.
$25 for a family of four/ $5 per additional person

Must register by Feb. 21st - limited space! Call 416.638.1881 x 4235

HAMENTASCHEN BAKING WITH SOMEONE YOU LOVE!

Sunday, Feb. 21 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Have fun making your own unique hamentaschen!
$5 fee (for ages 5 and up)

crEATivity CLUB - A TASTE OF JEWISH CULTURE

With Lori Starr, Executive Director of the Koffler Centre of the Arts

Wednesday, Feb. 24 Noon – 1 pm

Join us at lunchtime in the Prosserman JCC lounge. Lori Starr will offer a taste of what food tells us about Jewish culture as you nosh on hamentaschen while sharing your favourite foodie stories. Please bring your lunch. FREE!
Presented with the Koffler Centre of the Arts

UNVEILING ESTHER

With Rabbi Rena Arshinoff.

Wednesday, Feb. 24 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Prepare for Purim with this workshop exploring the depths of Megillat Esther. We'll explore what Megillat Esther conceals and reveals about ancient social issues and how it continues to function as social commentary today. FREE!
Presented by Kolel

THE HEALTHY HAMENTASCHEN

With Nutritionist/Chef Aviva Allen

Wednesday, Feb. 24 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

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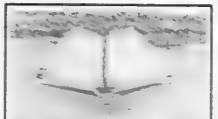
Jewish Life

From lowliness to leadership

By RABBI JARROD GROVER



Former prime minister Jean Chrétien recounts many memorable and entertaining vignettes in his memoirs. One tells of a peculiar realization from the G7 conference hosted by Canada in Halifax in 1995.

To entertain these world leaders, Chrétien invited Cirque du Soleil to perform. Afterward, one of the performers approached Chrétien and asked if he could be introduced to British Prime Minister John Major. Chrétien happily agreed and listened in as the two shook hands. The performer explained that his father was a friend of Major's father when they were in the circus together many years before.

Realizing that Major was the son of a circus performer, Chrétien proceeded to survey the other leaders in the room. There was chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, the son of a minor tax official. Nearby was president Jacques Chirac of France, the son of a low-level bank clerk. Russian president Boris Yeltsin's father was a construction worker. U.S. president Bill Clinton was the stepson of an alcoholic car dealer. Chrétien himself was one of 19 children born to a factory machinist from Shawinigan, Que.

Gathered together in Halifax were the leaders of the most powerful countries of the world, and all of them were ordinary people. There were no wealthy big shots or fine old families standing behind any of them.

Chrétien's observation is a wonderful tribute to the greatness of democracy. At the same time, it also teaches us much about being a popular political leader. Although there are always exceptions, we tend to have an affinity for candidates who can understand our own struggles.

There's a midrash that teaches that when Solomon built the Temple, he offered the following prayer: "Lord of the world, if a man prays for riches, and You know that they would be bad for him, give them not to him, but if You see a man who riches would become, then grant them." Solomon, the son of great wealth and privilege, thus reflects back on his life and considers the potential detriments of his upbringing. Depending on the person, riches have the potential to hurt a person.

We all know stories of people who have been hurt by newfound wealth. It's the lottery winner who ditches his family and friends only to find life filled with empty replacements to once meaningful relationships. It's the successful businessman who spends his fortunes unwisely, discovering empty accounts when business turns sour.

Further, if the great national leaders Chrétien surveys at the G7 had come from privilege, would they have been as successful? If they had no struggles to overcome, would they ever have had characters deserving of popularity?

It's easy to compare our fortunes to those of others and feel sorry for ourselves. And yet faith asks us at least to consider that struggles can be a blessing. They can form the very road that establishes our greatness.

Rabbi Jarrod Grover is assistant rabbi at Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto.

Standing together

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

There's an interesting distinction about Israel the country that usually goes unnoticed. There's no question that Israel is a modern political state that deals with internal politics, economics and legalities while also negotiating tricky international relationships. As such, many Jews outside of Israel feel that the view we have of the country cannot accurately reflect the view of citizens within the country who must live there every day. With respect, Jews outside of Israel defer to this distinction, as there is validity to it.

But the other side of Israel, the country isn't political, but rather has to do with the fact that it's a Jewish country, and in that way, it connects to Jews outside Israel as part of the Jewish People and Jewish religion. In that regard, every Jewish person is a citizen of this Jewish country, and every Jewish person has "internal" views about its Jewish expressions. This view of Israel does not touch on politics, but goes to the core of the Jewish soul.

In November 2009, a Jewish woman was arrested at the Kotel in Jerusalem for wearing a tallit and praying from a Torah. A Jewish policeman arrested a Jewish woman for wearing a Jewish garment at a Jewish place of holiness. This isn't about politics, it's about our Jewish soul.

Starting at Mount Sinai with the signing of the covenant between God and the Jewish people, the rabbis expressed that Judaism was communicated by God in multiple voices and, therefore, heard by the people in multiple ways. There is no question that throughout Jewish history, groups of Jews have preferred certain expressions and condemned others. Until recently, condemning a Jewish expression meant not attending a particular minyan. In November, it began to mean Jews arresting other Jews because we don't like how they're talking to God.

We should all be alarmed at crossing this line. It's not about whether or not anyone agrees that a woman should or should not wear a tallit or read from the Torah, it's about whether we support Jewish expressions of faith as a beautiful thing. In today's world, we should be grateful that Jewish spirituality is finding an expression in community and prayer. Instead, we are arresting someone as if we are God's protectors, as if God cannot defend the Divine Honour.

This goes beyond modern concerns, but frighteningly reminds us of a warning that's clearly stated in the Talmud. The First Temple of Jerusalem was lost because of the sins of idolatry, immorality and bloodshed. The Second Temple was lost for a greater sin: baseless hatred – one Jew hating another Jew and dividing the people. How ironic that the site of the arrest was the Kotel, the Western Wall, all that remains of the Second Temple.

Jews around the world have been responding to this event with petitions and e-mails of protest. In Toronto, there will be an event planned that doesn't respond with protest, but with support. On Feb. 14 at 10 a.m., a community prayer event will be held at the Prosserman JCC to support the woman who was arrested and to support Jewish expression.

In Toronto, we're blessed with many venues for Jewish learning, and yet Pirkei Avot reminds us that actions must be the result of our learning. "The one whose deeds exceed the learning is compared to a tree whose branches are few and whose roots are many, so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow, they will not move it from its place." We can choose to hate and divide, or we can choose to gather together and support.

Ultimately, Hillel's words echo through the centuries: if not now, when?

Jewish Life

Earliest Israelite inscriptions

By ALEX GROPPER

A discovery of an ancient 10th-century BCE inscription in the Elah Valley in Israel drew worldwide media attention recently. *The CJN* featured the story on its front page on Jan. 14.

One of the reasons for this interest is that some scholars believe that writing was not widespread in ancient Israel before the destruction of the First Temple and the Babylonian captivity. It is widely believed that the books of the Bible were not brought together until the sojourn in Babylon, during the sixth century BCE.

Past Forward

However, there is evidence of the use of writing in the land even before the Israelite period (after 1200 BCE). A number of examples have been found in pre-Israelite Canaan at Shechem, Gezer and Lachish. At the site of Ugarit, in what is now coastal Syria, an entire archive in which an alphabetic script, written with cuneiform symbols, was found. The cuneiform symbols had been invented in Mesopotamia some 2,000 years earlier.

Indeed, some of the language used in the Ugaritic documents has a strong resemblance to biblical Hebrew. The archive dates to the latter part of the Bronze Age, just before Israel emerged on the scene, and just prior to the earliest mention of Israel outside of the Bible.

The earliest extra-biblical inscription mentioning Israel is the Merneptah Stela (a stela is a formal inscription on stone, usually commemorating an important event). It dates to the reign of Pharaoh Merneptah, the son of Ramses II, around the end of the 13th century BCE, with the date usually given as 1207 BCE. It states that there was a people called Israel living in Canaan at that time.

As for the earliest alphabetic inscription written in Hebrew, one has to go back to the 12th century BCE. At a number of sites in Israel, inscriptions have been found that show there was an alphabetic script in use in the land adopted by our ancestors.

At Khirbet Radanna, an early Iron Age site, evidence of alphabetic writing has been found inscribed on a pottery handle. It was there that one of the earliest examples of the so-called Israelite "four-room house" was found. The presence of the four-room house is usually a strong indicator of Israelite settlement.

Khirbet Radanna is just north of Jerusalem, near the Arab village of Deir Dibwan. It was a site that I was involved in excavating in 1968, under the leadership of Prof. Joseph Callaway. Callaway was a pupil of the legendary English archeologist Kathleen Kenyon, who dug at both Jericho and Jerusalem. She played an important role in the archeology of the Holy Land by introducing her excavation techniques to the area. Because of his meticulous fieldwork, which he had learned from Kenyon, Callaway's important discovery was not seriously challenged.

At Izbet Sartah, near Aphek, on the coastal plain near the source of the Yarkon River, an abecedary, dating to the 12th century BCE, the period of the Judges, was found. An abecedary is a teaching aid that was used for practising writing the alphabet. In this case, experts have said the abecedary belonged to a middle-aged individual who was learning his or her letters.

The site itself contains one of the earliest Israelite settlements on the coastal plain, and the person practising his or her aleph-bet was probably an Israelite. It shows that one is never too old to learn.

This brings to mind what the great Harvard scholar Frank Cross once told me. He said that the alphabet democratized knowledge.

It was this democratization of knowledge that would play a role in the ideals of universal justice that our prophets have given humankind. Their words would become a beacon to the world, and they were written in an alphabetic script.

Israel goes to Winter Olympics

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

When you picture Israelis facing off against elite international athletes, you might think of them competing in sports like judo or windsurfing. But how about ice dancing or downhill skiing? That's what they'll be doing when the world's finest meet this month at the XXI Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver.

The Jewish Highway

Although this is the fifth Israeli delegation to the winter games, they must be used to being overshadowed by their high-profile summer counterparts. Even Israel's official Olympic website barely mentions them. **[bit.ly/isrolym01]** Israel first sent a winter delegation to the Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994, where skater Michael Shmerkin finished a respectable 16th. At Nagano, Japan, in 1998, Shmerkin was joined by ice dancers Galit Chait and Sergei Sakhnovski, and the pair would return to compete twice more, finishing as high as sixth in Salt Lake City in 2002. **[bit.ly/isrolym02]**

The Israeli contingent grew to five in Salt Lake City, where Israel first competed in short-track speedskating, with Olga Danilov placing 14th. Many familiar names were back in Turin, Italy, in 2006, where Chait danced with Sakhnovski and Alexandra (Sasha) Zaretsky paired off with her brother, Roman. That year, Israel was first represented off the rink by alpine skier, Ukrainian oleh Mikail Renzhin. **[bit.ly/isrolym03]**

Renzhin will be there this year, but one Israeli hopeful won't be there. Although figure skater Tamar Katz qualified according to Olympic standards, the Israeli Olympic Committee decided that she was not strong enough to compete. Boris Chait, chairman of the Israel Ice Skating Federation, disagrees. He told the *New York Times*: "I'm trying to explain that these people are ambassadors. We've been to countries where people come up and say, 'We didn't know you Israelis knew how to skate. We thought you only knew how to shoot' … Israel is not like Germany or the United States, where they can be choosy. They have hundreds of athletes, all capable of winning medals." **[bit.ly/isrolym04]**

The Zaretskys will also be back again this year. The three-time Israeli national champions came in 13th at the 2009 World Figure Skating Championships in Los Angeles. Roman, 26, and his sister, Alexandra, 22, were born in Minsk, Belarus, and immigrated to Israel in 1992. You can learn more at their official website **[bit.ly/isrolym05]** and watch them perform to Ray Charles' *Hit the Road Jack*. **[bit.ly/isrolym06]**

Like most of Israel's top winter athletes, the Zaretskys live and train in the United States. That can be controversial, but the athletes say they need to be there for the facilities and the coaching. "We may train in the U.S. most of the time, but we grew up in Metulla and we are proud to be Israeli," Roman Zaretsky told the *Jerusalem Post*. "We chose to skate with the music of *Hava Nagila* and *Schindler's List* for a reason. We want to make Israel proud and show the world that we are here." **[bit.ly/isrolym09]**

Speaking of music, there has been some noticeable Jewish content leading up to the Games in Vancouver. Official Olympic broadcaster NBC has been featuring in their ads the song *One Day*, by chassidic reggae star Matisyahu. **[bit.ly/isrolym08]**

Although they haven't had a chance to represent their country at the Olympics (yet), I do want to mention that Israel does boast its own bobsled team. Reminiscent of the Jamaican bobsled team that caused a stir at the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary, the Israelis have participated in two world championships. The team maintains a Facebook page, where you can keep track of their progress. **[bit.ly/isrolym10]** The team's website is not being updated, but it does have a great video of them whizzing by in their slick blue and white sled. **[bit.ly/isrolym11]**

Realistically, none of the Israeli athletes to Vancouver is expected to come home with gold (or silver or bronze). That may take a bit of time. After all, it took 40 years of competition until Israel won silver and bronze at the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona. And it wasn't until 2004 in Athens that *Hatikvah* was played as an emotional Gal Fridman was awarded gold for his incredible achievement in windsurfing. **[bit.ly/isrolym12]**

Hopefully, it won't take Israel's winter elite quite as long.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Netivot students join survivor interview project

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

"Tales told from the heart reach the heart," children's book author Steve Sanfield tells us. So it promises to be for a select group of Grade 8 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School in Thornhill who have embarked on a very special project.

Guest Voice

No field trips here. No shoebox dioramas to be built.

Beginning March 8, 19 Netivot students will interview local Holocaust survivors, and the sessions will be filmed. Working in pairs, the kids craft their own questions after careful study (and prepare for any eventuality that may arise), conduct the interviews, operate the equipment, and edit the final, 15-minute cuts.

It may sound like something director Steven Spielberg thought up, but it's actually the brainchild of American educator Tova Fish-Rosenberg, who six years ago created "Names, Not Numbers," an interactive, multimedia, intergenerational Holocaust oral history project that, as its website understates, "takes the teaching of the Holocaust and its lessons well beyond many previous efforts."

To date, nearly 300 students in grades 8 and 12 in seven U.S. cities have successfully interviewed and videotaped 110 survivors and World War II veterans. The curriculum and project have received wide attention stateside, and Rosenberg has been awarded the prestigious Baumel Award for Excellence in Jewish Studies from Yeshiva University.

As at other schools, the kids at Netivot – the first Canadian school to be chosen for Names, Not Numbers – will sit face to face with those who lived through the history being taught.

They also learn which questions to ask, and how to ask them.

Which is where I come in.

Recently, I was flattered to be invited to Netivot to talk to the students involved about interviewing techniques, especially when it involves a topic as massive and potentially touchy as the Holocaust.

I was prepared to explain the difference between interviewing for historical or archival purposes, and what journalists often do, which is to try to exact maximum drama from a subject. But if I've learned anything through 30 years of talking to Holocaust survivors, including both of my parents, it's this: pretty much anything they say is dramatic and worth preserving.

I stressed heavily the importance of being prepared with advance study of the pre-chosen subject's birthplace and places of incarceration, and of fine-tuning questions in ways that yield fuller, more detailed answers. (Example: "How do you feel about Holocaust deniers?" versus "Should Holocaust deniers be prosecuted?")

I also advised the students that while it's important to exercise sensitivity, they should not be afraid to ask direct or difficult questions. By their very nature, survivors are tough.

Still, the kids rightly expressed concerns.

What if a survivor breaks down while being filmed? What if they ramble off-topic? What if they answer with just a "yes" or "no"?

One slight lad wondered, "What if *I* break down?"

In a role-playing session to round out our encounter, I played the survivor. The students had learned their lessons, for they listened well enough to pick out specifics of my answers, stray momentarily from their scripts, and request elaboration.

I was impressed enough to ask to sit in on their interviews.

HELPING THE HUNGRY: As the final stage of a tikkun olam project, Grade 6 students at Leo Baeck Day School's Holy Blossom campus sorted more than 1,000 pounds of food for Toronto's needy at the North York Harvest Food Bank. The students collected more than 2,300 pounds of non-perishable food items. Pictured with the students are branch principal Jonathan Harris, back left, and social studies teacher Marc Kates.

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Coast to Coast

Gustav Klimt masterpiece fetches $45.4 million at auction

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A Gustav Klimt masterpiece that was lost during the Holocaust and had been in the collection of a Viennese Jewish family sold for over $45.4 million (Cdn) at auction in London last week, changing the life of the painting's rightful Montreal owner to whom it had been restored.

The family's heir, Georges Jorisch, 81, who has lived modestly and obscurely in Montreal since 1956, is sharing the proceeds of that sale with the painting's unidentified owner, under an agreement that was brokered by Sotheby's auction house.

Sotheby's said the family of the other party to the agreement had acquired *Church in Cassone* "in good faith and with legal title," and that they "voluntarily agreed" with Jorisch to offer the painting at auction.

The terms of that agreement and identity of the purchaser have been kept confidential. The winning bid was more than 50 per cent higher than Sotheby's high-end estimate – about $30 million – of what it would go for.

Jorisch's son Stéphane Jorisch told *The CJN* that his father, who went to London for the auction, was "very happy, but very tired."

The younger Jorisch, with his three siblings, grew up listening to his father's incredible stories of his privileged childhood in Vienna and how it was all destroyed.

"We never believed this would happen, but my father has a lot of perseverance," he said, alluding to the fact that the owners of the painting had the resources to put up a legal challenge if they wanted to.

He said his father began looking into the recovery of his grandmother's art collection about 10 or 15 years ago, with the changes in laws in Europe and the United States that make the recovery of art despoiled during World War II more feasible.

However, Stéphane would not say when his father began pursuing this particular picture or how he learned of its whereabouts.

The original owners of *Church in Cassone*, a square oil-on-canvas Italian landscape painted in 1913, were Georges Jorisch's great-uncle, Viktor Zuckerkandl, an iron magnate, and his wife, Paula.

Sotheby's describes the Zuckerkandls' collection as one of the greatest early collections of the work of the Austrian Klimt, who is often cited among the most outstanding painters of the 20th century. Viktor and his siblings were leading patrons of the arts in turn-of-the-century Vienna.

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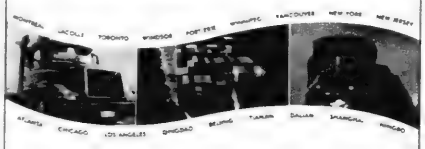
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Coast to Coast

Eight rabbis team up to meet athletes' needs

Continued from page 1

"They told us that the needs of individual athletes won't be known until they arrive," he said. "But consider that the athletes are people who have spent 10 years, perhaps their whole lives, preparing for this one activity. Most of them are not going to get the medal, so one can only imagine what will be going on inside their heads."

The multifaith committee has Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish clergy, and each member has sought assistance from other clergy in their communities.

Rabbi Birnham, who will be juggling his full-time job at Har El with his Olympics responsibilities, has asked eight rabbis from all affiliations in Greater Vancouver to cover different times during the Games.

The other rabbis weren't so keen to volunteer for the job initially, Rabbi Birnham said. But as the date of the Winter Olympics drew closer, they became more enthusiastic about participating.

There will be Friday night and Saturday morning prayer services in each village, and each rabbi will be available on an as-needed basis for spiritual or religious counseling.

VANOC, the local Olympic organizing committee, told the multifaith committee that approximately one per cent of the participants in the Winter Olympics will seek assistance from the multifaith clergy.

"There's a total of about 5,500 athletes, and some will come with families and coaches," Rabbi Birnham said. "There could be 30 Jewish people in each village. But they may want nothing to do with a rabbi."

If they do choose to get involved, the rabbis will have prayer books and tallits on hand, and they'll host small kiddushes and onegs over Shabbat.

"We haven't organized a Friday night meal because we have no idea of the numbers," Rabbi Birnham said. "Once we meet the Jewish athletes, we can ask about those kinds of things."

Of course, the rabbis may well provide counselling or a spiritual ear to athletes who are religiously unaffiliated, too.

And all the clergy have been prepped about the "three-metre rule."

"When we're visiting in the Olympic villages, we've been told to smile, reach out and be friendly to anyone within three metres, to create a real atmosphere of connecting," Rabbi Birnham said.

"If someone non-Jewish wants to talk to us, of course, we'll talk."

As the start of the Games approached, he said he was feeling honoured and excited.

"All of us are looking forward to being there to help the athletes," he said earnestly. "Wherever their needs go, we'll help."

There are no synagogues in Vancouver's downtown corridor, so it's unlikely Olympic security will affect any services or community activity.

Romy Ritter, regional director of Canadian Jewish Congress' Pacific region, said it will be "business as usual during the Olympics," for the Vancouver Jewish community.

"Members of our community will be attending events and participating in the Olympics, and there's heightened security in some congregations, and certainly heightened awareness," she said.

At Ohel Ya'akov Community Kollel in Vancouver, Rabbi Shmuel Yeshayahu said there will be "more events for tourists this month than usual, but everything other than that will remain mostly the same."

Meanwhile, a local Jewish woman who competed in the 1972 Munich Olympics will be among the last torch bearers carrying the Olympic flame on its way to BC Place Stadium for the opening ceremonies.

Karen James, who chairs women's philanthropy for the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, will carry the flame about 300 metres on the afternoon of Feb. 12 in downtown Vancouver.

"It's very thrilling," said James, who swam the 200-metre individual medley in Munich and placed "17th or 18th." She can't remember exactly.

At the 1972 Games, James was returning to the Olympic Village after hours when, rather than walk around to the main gate, she and her friends took a shortcut over a fence. Some dark figures nearby decided to climb with them.

The next morning, James said, she awoke to the sound of helicopters and remembers watching Israeli athletes and coaches who had been taken hostage by Palestinian terrorists being led out to a bus. Eleven Israelis died later in a failed rescue attempt at a nearby airport.

On Feb. 14, James will light a candle in their memory at a ceremony in Vancouver.

"The Olympics – in general ever since then – I have mixed feelings," James said. "I always sort of sit with that ambiguity."

To keep the Vancouver Games secure, officials plan to deploy a reported force of about 15,000 at a cost of $1 billion.

As part of the Jewish community's observance of the Olympics, the Vancouver Holocaust Centre will run an exhibit for the duration of the Winter Games highlighting Canada's dilemma over whether to participate in the so-called Nazi Olympics, the 1936 Games in Berlin. It was in Berlin that many features of the modern Olympics were introduced, including the idea of a torch relay, according to the centre's executive director, Frieda Miller.

"We were very careful not to make a direct link between those Games and the contemporary Games," Miller told JTA. "It's not a polemic. We do not pass judgment. We present the dilemmas and the situation as is and let people make their own analogies."

With files from JTA

Coast to Coast

Turmoil at federal agency

Continued from page 1

In earlier comments made to the CBC, Allmand said the Conservative government had "packed" its board with members who share the "biases" of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Problems at Rights and Democracy, which operates on an $11-million annual budget, erupted after Harper's government installed new board members in 2009.

Disagreements arose over the propriety of funding organizations such as Al-Haq, which is based in the West Bank town of Ramallah and monitors human rights violations, and Al Mezan, which promotes human rights from its headquarters in the Jabalya Palestinian refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

The philosophical clashes reportedly pitted old and new board members against each other and involved the agency's 47 staff members.

Aurel Braun

Remy Beauregard, the president of Rights and Democracy, died after a stormy board meeting early last month.

After his sudden death, a public letter bearing all the names of the agency's employees was sent to Braun and two of his fellow board members. The letter said they had lost confidence in Braun and demanded his immediate resignation.

Since then, three senior managers have been reportedly suspended with pay and a host of non-governmental human rights organizations have called Braun's comments a "public smear campaign" intended to stymie NGOs from monitoring and reporting human rights violations.

Last week, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon told reporters that he would not intervene in Rights and Democracy discussions at the board level and that he would "make sure that [it] is smooth-running and functioning correctly."

Cannon met Braun in Ottawa late last week, and Braun described the meeting as "very constructive."

The controversy swirling around Rights and Democracy is reminiscent of the federal government's decision late last year to cut funding to KAIROS, a church-based organization that Immigration Minister Jason Kenney charged has taken "a leadership role in the boycott, divestment and sanctions" campaign against Israel.

Braun, a professor of international relations and political science, claimed the director of Al-Haq, Shawan Jabarin, is a senior activist in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which has carried out terrorist attacks aimed at Israel since the Six Day War.

Several years ago, Jabarin, who has denied membership in the PFLP, was prevented by Israel from travelling to the Netherlands to accept a Dutch human rights prize. Israeli and international human rights groups protested the ban.

Israel's Supreme Court reviewed the case, but dismissed a petition calling for an end to the travel ban, prompting the Dutch foreign minister to express disappointment.

According to Braun, Al Mezan, or the Al Mezan Center for Human Rights, has justified the killings of Israeli civilians by terrorists as acts of resistance, branded Israel as a criminal entity and participated in the anti-Israel boycott and divestment campaign.

NGO Monitor, an Israeli organization in Jerusalem, says that Al Mezan has pursued "a virulently anti-Israel political agenda, while entirely ignoring Palestinian terrorism."

B'Tselem – an Israeli NGO whose stated objective is "to document and educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the occupied territories" – has defended Al Mezan, saying it attempts "to address the needs of the marginalized" Palestinian population in the territories.

Braun, claiming that B'Tselem has taken "a very partisan" position on the Arab-Israeli dispute, said it does not deserve to be funded by Rights and Democracy, which was created in the late 1980s by then-prime minister Brian Mulroney to encourage democracy and monitor human rights.

B'Tselem, formally known as The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, provides information to Knesset members, participates in protests in the West Bank and publishes material on such current issues as torture, restrictions on movement and expropriation of land.

Braun said that Beauregard, just days before his untimely death of a heart attack, decided to "repudiate" the grants to Al-Haq, Al Mezan and B'Tselem.

"He understood that funding these groups was a huge mistake. He admitted we shouldn't have funded these organizations. He said we should have done our homework better."

Lamenting that the atmosphere at Rights and Democracy has turned poisonous of late, Braun said his opponents have launched a "vicious," "repugnant" and "irresponsible" smear campaign of "misrepresentation" against him and some of his fellow board members.

To Braun, the main issues here are accountability and transparency.

Charging that the chairman's report had been sent to Parliament before he had an opportunity to read it, he said, "The board has to be responsible to the Canadian people, but we did not receive cooperation from the staff and found serious problems.

"This is about accountability and transparency," he reiterated.

Attempts to elicit comments from the acting president of Rights and Democracy, Jacques Gauthier, were unsuccessful. Gauthier was twice reached by phone in Washington, D.C., but he was unable to answer questions. On the third attempt to contact him, his voice mailbox was full.

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Being gay 'shouldn't be a struggle,' YU student says

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Toronto native Avi Kopstick considered holding a panel discussion at Yeshiva University on gay issues, he was hesitant.

Kopstick, who is openly gay, helped start the Orthodox school's Tolerance Club in September 2008, but he didn't want to harm his group's reputation by organizing such an event.

"We already had this reputation of being the gay club," Kopstick, a chemistry major who's scheduled to graduate this year, said of the Tolerance Club, which spreads awareness about racial and sexual minorities on campus.

"It wasn't helping our success. We were thinking of not doing anything of the sort."

Kopstick changed his mind after reading an anonymous public letter written by a student who was too scared to come out of the closet. A YU student newspaper wrote about the letter, which helped Kopstick open up a dialogue.

"I was really hoping to reach struggling people who are still in the closet," he said. "That was my goal for being on the panel. I didn't want people to feel the need to write anonymous letters."

The controversial panel event, called Being Gay in the Orthodox World, was held Dec. 22 at the university, and attracted about 800 people.

The reaction from the school's administration was almost immediate.

After the event, Yeshiva University president Richard Joel and Rabbi Yona Reiss, dean of YU's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), issued a statement saying that, because of recent events "we want to reiterate the absolute prohibition of homosexual relationships according to Jewish law."

A letter, signed by six rabbis, was posted around the campus, stating that "homosexual activity constitutes an abomination."

Rabbi Mayer Twersky, one of the roshei yeshiva at RIETS, responded to the panel with a speech.

"There was a point in which such a shmooze would have been unimaginable... Not only unnecessary, but inappropriate. Wrong," he said to a group of students on Dec. 28.

"Appropriate sympathy [for gay students] is correct and warranted, but it's a travesty when that sympathy is... exploited to create... a new category of a Jew who should be able to come out of the closet and identify himself," Rabbi Twersky added.

Kopstick, who has been openly gay since he was 18, disagrees with Rabbi Twersky.

"[Rabbi Twersky] was the voice of fire and brimstone. He said basically that the event was a desecration of the school and a desecration of Heaven," Kopstick said, adding that the rabbi also sent out a petition after his speech urging students to condemn the Dec. 22 panel.

Kopstick knows that being gay in the Orthodox Jewish community isn't easy. He said he decided to attend YU in New York because of the lack of support groups in Toronto's Orthodox community.

Justine Apple has seen first-hand the difficulties faced by Orthodox gays and lesbians.

As executive director of Kulanu Toronto, Toronto's Jewish social group for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people, Apple has met Orthodox Jews who have struggled to come out of the closet.

"I think in the extreme Orthodox areas in Toronto, it wouldn't be accepted to do what we're doing," she said. "We have [a Kulanu member] who comes from an Orthodox background and she's very closeted. If her name gets out, that's the end."

Apple thinks groups such as the Tolerance Club would be good to have in any Orthodox institution.

"Orthodox Jews who are gay are not readily accepted into the community," she said. "For them to have a tolerance group, it takes a lot of courage."

For Kopstick, it took more courage to come out of the closet than to start the group at YU.

"The scariest part... is not really knowing what the risks are. You get a sense from what people say, what their viewpoints might be, but [you]... come face to face with someone [you] love, you never really know," he said, adding that he told his rabbi about his sexuality when he was 18, and his parents when he was 20.

"I can't say they're not disappointed, but they still love me," he said.

While Kopstick said he has enjoyed his time at YU, he knows of some gay students who have struggled.

"My time wasn't made worse because I was gay," he said. 'But there are students who go to YU and have difficulty. Usually they're... in the closet. If your rabbi doesn't know you're gay, he's not going to talk more sympathetically when he talks about these issues."

When rabbis talk about the fact that homosexuality is forbidden in Halachah, Kopstick doesn't get upset.

"I think to do anything less would be intellectually dishonest... it's very clear what the Halachah has to say on the matter," he said.

The controversy at YU hasn't stopped Kopstick from encouraging others to come out of the closet.

"I would like to universalize this challenge," he said. "It shouldn't just be a really sad struggle for someone who's gay. It should be something that all Jews recognize as something very difficult."

March OF THE LIVING

On behalf of the 2008 March of the Living, we express our deepest condolences to the family of

Ernest Weiss zt"l

who joined us on the 2008 March of the Living.

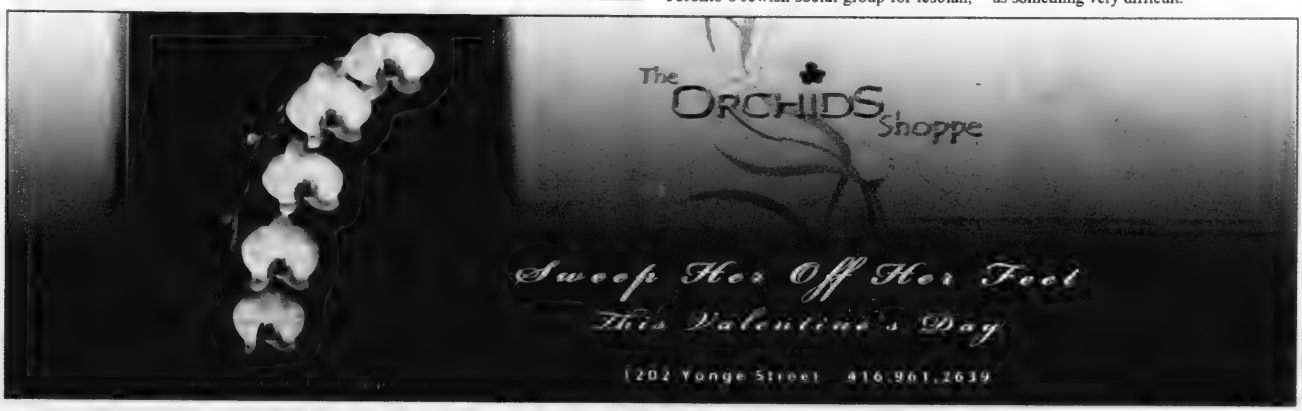
Ernie was an incredible gentleman, scholar, educator and friend who will be greatly missed.
May his family be comforted in the wonderful memories they shared together.

Ruth Ekstein and Jack Frieberg
2010 Co-Chairs, Toronto March of the Living

Sarena Koschitzky
Past Chair, Toronto March of the Living

Dani Fine, Sherri Rotstein, Eli Rubenstein, Michael Soberman
Canada Israel Experience

UJA FEDERATION
CANADA ISRAEL EXPERIENCE



On Campus

Students raise more than $13,000 for Haiti

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Hunger is not a laughing matter. But the laughter was resounding at a recent comedy event that raised more than $13,000 for hunger relief in Haiti.

The Charity Comedy Night, held Jan. 31, was organized by the Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) club at the University of Western Ontario.

CFTC club co-president Elan Panov, a third-year science student, co-produced the show with award-winning, Toronto-based comedy writers Daniel and Steven Shehori.

Elan Panov, left, and Daniel Shehori organized the recent Canadian Feed the Children comedy fundraiser through the University of Western Ontario.

More than 200 Western students showed up at the London Music Hall for a night of stand-up comedy, headlined by Nathan Macintosh.

"The event was amazing," Panov said. "We packed the place. The people who came out had a great time. The comedians were hilarious."

Daniel Shehori described the audience as "enthusiastic." He said many of the students knew each other, and that seemed to make them more receptive to the comedians.

He noted that comedian Josh Saltzman, a former Western student who grew up in Thornhill, Ont., drew on his Jewish roots to connect with the group. "I'm guessing, but I think 80 per cent of the audience was Jewish. Josh had a lot of fun with that."

The CFTC comedy night was a family affair. In October, Panov approached the Shehori brothers, who are his cousins, to help with CFTC-Western's annual fundraiser.

As well, his mother, Rochelle Schwartz, offered to raise funds to underwrite the cost of the show.

Panov said the Shehoris were the ideal partners.

"Daniel and Steven are comedy writers and producers. They promote comedians and comedy events. They were all for helping with the fundraiser."

He said they were able to get two comedians from Toronto, Macintosh and Saltzman, "at great prices," while the three London comics donated their services.

Panov said raising funds for disadvantaged people has been an important focus of his university experience.

"I started the Canadian Feed the Children club at Western to get involved in a charitable organization on campus," he said. "I was drawn to Canadian Feed the Children because they help poor children all over the world. Once I started getting involved, it opened my eyes. So many children live in poverty.

"It made me realize how much I have… Fundraising for Canadian Feed the Children is my way to give back."

After the devastating earthquake hit Haiti in January, CFTC requested that the Charity Comedy Night be in support of Haiti, Panov said. "You see the Haitians on TV. You hear their heart-wrenching stories. We were very willing to send the money to Haiti."

Back in October Panov set a modest fundraising goal. "We thought $2,000 would be a nice sum. Now we're over $13,000," he said.

"My mom had sent out all these letters. Once the earthquake in Haiti happened and people got word that we were fundraising for Haiti, the donations started flowing. People were very generous. They opened up their hearts and wallets for Haiti."

For more information about CFTC, contact Panov at panov@rogers.com.

LADIES Bikur Cholim Luncheon

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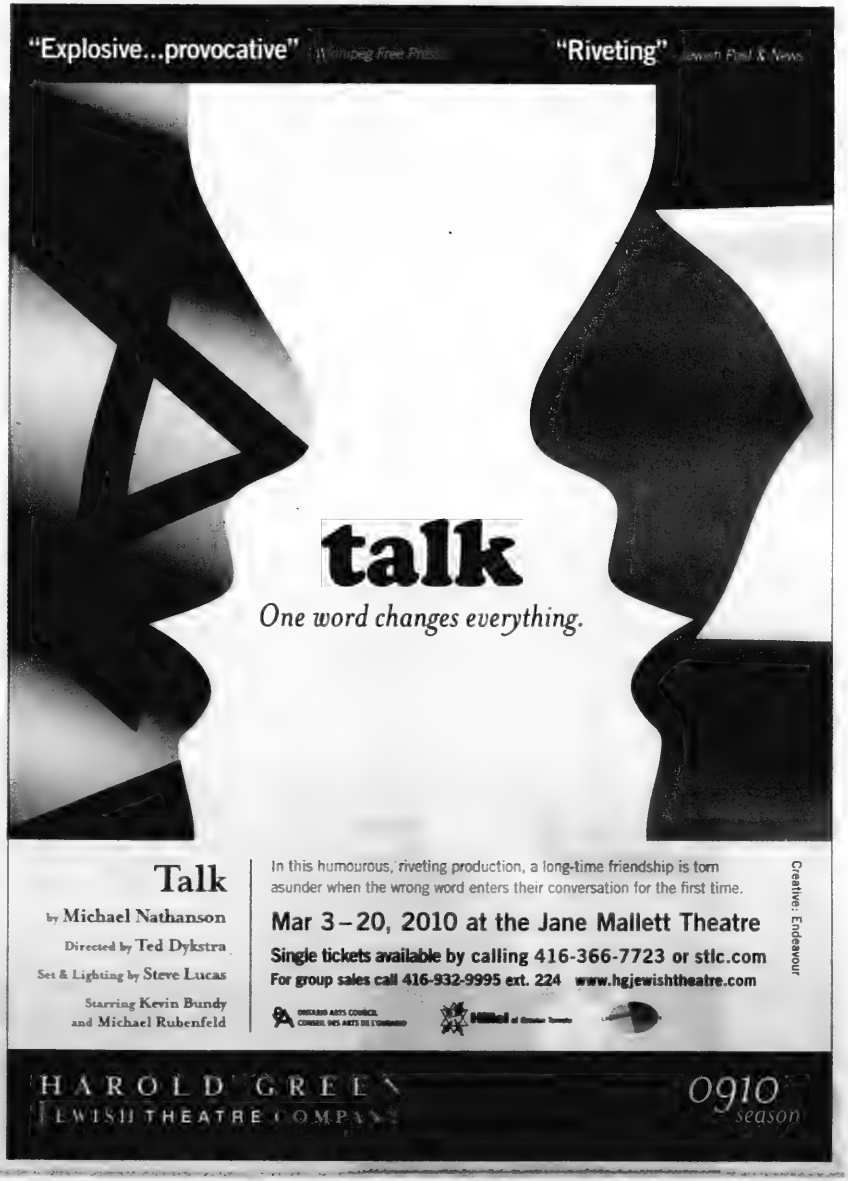
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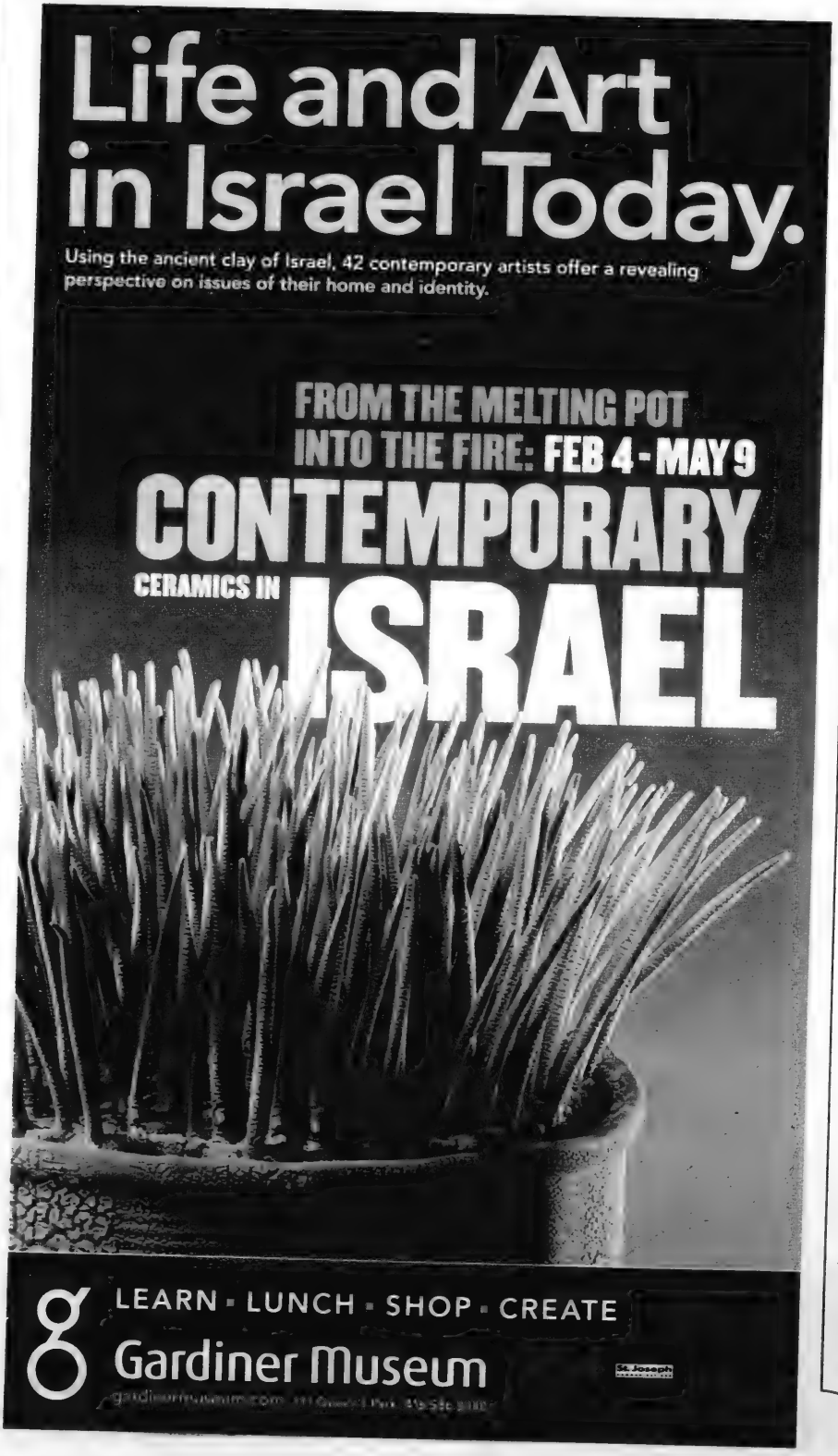
Life and Art in Israel Today.
Using the ancient clay of Israel, 42 contemporary artists offer a revealing perspective on issues of their home and identity.
FROM THE MELTING POT INTO THE FIRE: FEB 4 - MAY 9
CONTEMPORARY CERAMICS IN ISRAEL
LEARN • LUNCH • SHOP • CREATE
Gardiner Museum

Spice of Life

Israeli wines available in Vancouver

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — If you're in Vancouver and in the mood for a glass of good kosher vino, you won't have to look too hard to find it.

Thanks to the hard work of International Cellars Inc., which represents Galil Mountain, Dalton Wines and Golan Heights Winery (the latter better known under their Yarden label), Israeli wines are now available in local liquor stores and in a handful of restaurants including Cactus Club, Gastown's PourHouse and Kerrisdale's Senova.

"We've been working with Israeli wine for the past two years, and we've been very persistent," says Norman Gladstone, co-director of International Cellars Inc. "Having these wines listed in restaurants doesn't happen overnight – you have to keep at it until you finally make some progress. It takes time and exposure."

Galil Mountain pinot noir accepted on its own merits

The restaurant listings came simply because Israeli wine is very good, Gladstone says. "The Galil Mountain pinot noir is very good, and when we presented it to Cactus Club, they accepted it on its own merits."

Based in Vancouver, International Cellars imports and markets wines from 12 countries. Israeli wines represent less than 1 per cent of the company's volume, and Gladstone only began marketing Israeli wines after being approached by the British Columbia liquor distribution branch.

"They said they had a need and some interest in listing Israeli wines for a special Israel section in their liquor stores," he recalls. "It was exciting and interesting to us that they were willing to create an Israel section, as opposed to a kosher section."

The challenge when it comes to Israeli wines is not just exposure but also price. "It would be nice to find Israeli wines with lower prices than what we have now," Gladstone reflects.

The cost per bottle ranges between $18 and $40 today, mainly because Israel is a high-cost producer and doesn't have large tracts of vineyards. That, coupled with the dollar-to-shekel exchange rate and the expensive cost of importing the wine across the ocean accounts for the relatively high price tag, Gladstone says.

He's hopeful for the future of Israeli wine in Canada, though he says there's much work to be done.

"Israel has a seat at the international wine table, but it's at the end of the table," he says. "It's going to take a huge effort on our part as importers, and on the part of the Israeli trade commission, to establish Israel as a wine entity. For now, the country is fighting for market share against well-established countries like Italy, France and Spain – tough competitors."

Class Act

PLANTING AHEAD

Samara Green and Justin Levinsky, Grade 2 students from Bialik Hebrew Day School, decorate pots for Tu b'Shvat. When all the students have decorated their flower pots, they will use them to plant dill that will grow for use during Passover or later in the spring. This was one of several activities the students enjoyed during a session of games related to Tu b'Shvat, led by representatives of JNF, to enrich the students' understanding of the significance of this holiday.

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Update your calendar!

Women's Auxiliary of the Baycrest Foundation
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Games Girls Play

Tuesday, June 1, 2010
(changed from June 2)

Games begin at 6 p.m.
Shaarei Shomayim | 470 Glencairn Avenue
Admission $80

mahjong | bridge | scrabble
dinner | wine | munchies
bid to win auction | games boutique | door prizes
free parking

For registration and sponsorship go to
www.baycrestgamesgirlsplay.com
or contact Alison at 416 785 2500 ext 2568
anorton@baycrest.org

"Bring your group or we'll make a match"

Baycrest
Baycrest Foundation

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov to Jaclyn & Josh on their recent engagement. Excited parents are Esther & Harold Milstein, and Fraida & Eric Lakien.

Vera Zarek, Betty & Gerry Yasskin announce the engagement of their children Rebekah to Rob. An August wedding is planned. Jack Zerek is lovingly remembered.

as featured on
onlysimchas!

Mazel tov on the recent engagement of Micah Druckman & Megan Rosenmeier.

Mazel tov to Tzvi Shuchat & Rochie Altein on their recent engagement.

Mazel tov on the recent bat mitzvah of Esti Margolis.

Mazel tov to Shaji Marcovich & Sari Zayat on their recent engagement.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @
for the :-) generation

What's New deadlines: Due to Family Day, submissions for the Feb. 25 issue must be in by Feb. 16. Deadline for the March 4 issue is Feb 22. I take calls Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-8829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com or info@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, Feb. 11

ENDING POVERTY

Darchei Noam's social justice and advocacy committee presents **Senator Hugh Segal**, in a seminar, which puts the spotlight on poverty in Canada, 7:30 p.m. at the synagogue, 864 Sheppard Ave. W.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Panel of experts discuss the key legal, economic, financial, accounting and investment issues associated with climate change, at a breakfast meeting sponsored by United Jewish Appeal, Israeli division, and PricewaterhouseCoopers, 7:30-9 a.m., PricewaterhouseCoopers, Royal Trust Tower, 77 King St. W., 30th floor, $20 includes kosher breakfast.

Saturday, Feb. 13

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah Torah class, Mishpatim, with **David Schaeffer**, 10-11 a.m., all welcome.

Sunday, Feb. 14

CONVERSOS

Darchei Noam presents the annual Elka Klein Memorial Lecture, "Seeking Revenge and Seeking the Messiah – Perspectives on the Jewish Conversos of Medieval Spain," with **Prof. Mark Meyerson**, 7:30 p.m, at the synagogue, 864 Sheppard Ave. W.

YIDDISH SONGS

The importance of Yiddish song to Jewish culture will be portrayed by **Varda Berenstein**, in a lecture presented by Friends of Yiddish, 2:30 p.m., Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Members free, guests $5.

SWEETHEART DANCE

Shaar Shalom Brotherhood's Sweetheart Dance, $36 per couple features **James Regan**. At the synagogue. **David**, 416-224-9494.

Monday, Feb. 15

SKATE FOR HAITI

Magen David Adom for Israel invites the community to a pleasure skate to raise funds for Israel's rescue organization. 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. No fixed donation, Chesswood Arena, 4000 Chesswood Dr. 416-395-8406, james.pasternak@tdsb.on.ca

Tuesday, Feb. 16

TEMPLE HAR ZION

The daytime program committee presents the film *The Syrian Bride*, 1 p.m., at the temple, 770 Chabad Gate, Thornhill.

TUESDAYS WITH LARRY

The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob, 2 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue. No reservations, $5 at the door.

Wednesday, Feb. 17

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Tonight's program, "Uprooting Anger." No charge. 416-633-3838.

WOMEN'S EVENING

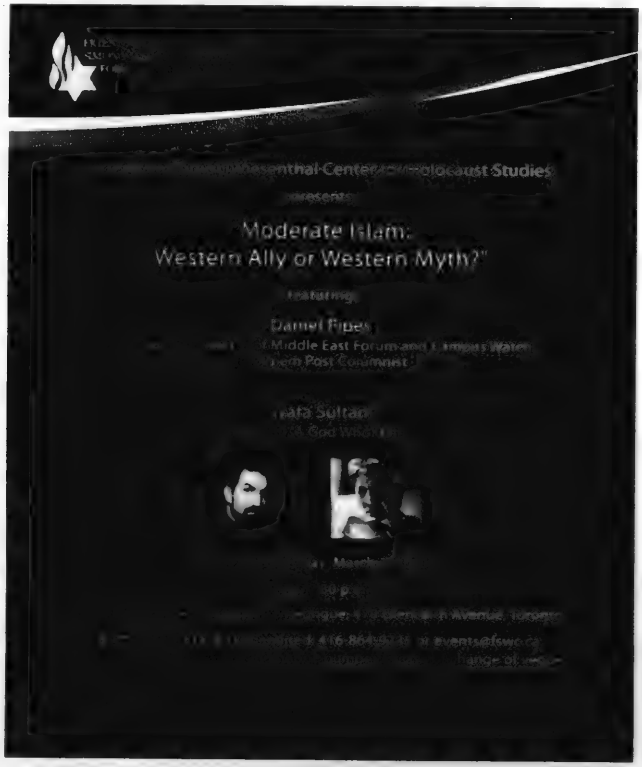
The third in a series of a joint initiatives of women from BAYT, N'Shei Chabad, Zichron Yisroel, Ayin L'Tzion, Westmount, BEis Franklin and the Thornhill Community Shul features a talk by **Dr. Esther Libman**, and a comedy skit. 8 p.m., Chabad Lubavitch Community Centre. No charge.

Thursday, Feb. 18

STORY OF A WALL

Rabbi Jarrod Grover speaks on "Kotel: The Story of a Wall," 2-4 p.m., Beth Tikvah Synagogue, $5. 416-221-3433 for reservations.

Continued on page 27



The Mark and Gail Appel Program in Holocaust and Antiracism Education at York University is pleased to present:

two lectures by
ANTHONY JULIUS

Anthony Julius is an eminent British lawyer, academic, and public intellectual, who successfully defended historian Deborah Lipstadt against Holocaust denier David Irving. Julius also acted for Princess Diana.

HOLOCAUST DENIAL, WHAT'S THE POINT?
Saturday, 13 February, 8:00 pm

HOW CAN GOOD LITERATURE BE BAD FOR THE JEWS?
Sunday, 14 February, 2:30 pm

YORK UNIVERSITY

Both sessions will take place in the Founders College Assembly Hall (152 Founders College), York University, Keele Campus. The sessions are open to the public free of charge. Parking is available nearby at the York Lanes Parking Garage

For information, contact Bridget Newson (tftf2@yorku.ca or 416 736-5695). www.yorku.ca/tftf

Continued from page 26

OTHER NEWS

JF&CS GROUPS

One Family Two Homes, 3-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate age appropriate groups. Topics for parents include: tips for keeping the kids out of the conflict, trends in family law and the impact of separation and divorce. Feb. 23, 4600 Bathurst St. 6th floor, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com.

MOUNTAINS OF MITTENS

Jewish Women International Canada is looking for donations of wool for its Mountains of Mittens program, which provides schoolchildren with hand-knitted hats and mittens. Call 416-630-9313.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Domestic abuse in the Jewish community is often considered a taboo subject, but it does exist and we all have a responsibility to learn more about it. Trained speakers are available for your group. No charge. Call JWIC at 416-630-9313.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. "Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity" begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are friendly and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for winter/spring courses at the Prosserman JCC, including: King David: Traitorous Serial Killer or National Religious Hero? on Wednesdays, Feb. 17-March 17 at 8 p.m. with **Prof. James Diamond** of the University of Waterloo, and the Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn, Thursdays, April 15-May 6 at 9:30 a.m. with **Prof. Paul Franks**. Courses at Shaarei Shomayim: Trei Asar: The 12 Prophets with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner,** Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., "Amos," Jan. 12-March 16; "Yoel," Tuesdays 1:30 p.m., from April 13-June 8. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca.

HEBREW READING COURSE

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda is running a free Hebrew reading course for those who can read Hebrew slowly and want practise reading, singing and understanding prayers. Course runs for six 90-minute sessions beginning Feb. 14. 416-633-3838 to register.

RESOURCE CENTRE

Chana Sergon, a Torah instructor, leads a five-week journey of Torah exploration, one Wednesday a month, 7:30-9 p.m., Family Resource Centre, Promenade Mall, Suite 313. $10 per workshop, 905-882-0191.

BIKUR CHOLIM

Bikur Cholim luncheon, March 3, recognizes gynecologist **Dr. Paul Bernstein**, *rofeh* of the year. The Ahavas Chesed Award will be presented to **Esther Anisfeld**. Kehilat Shomrei Shabbos Congregation. bikurcholimtor@rogers.com.

50-YEAR REUNION

Northmount High School, Montreal, is holding its 50th reunion, Oct. 22 weekend. If you were a student, or are in contact with others, call **Joyce Ostroff**, 514-486-8141 or joycemjo@gmail.com.

DISABLED VETERANS

Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel - Beit Halochem Canada is seeking 10 families to host a disabled Israeli veteran for two weeks this June. Families provide a home, breakfasts, support and companionship. Also needed, co-host families to assist with transportation and attend activities. Call 905-695-0611.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call Pearl, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 3, 10 a.m. departure. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse by a spouse, caregiver or family member. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., Marisa Di Nardo, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

Association of Jewish Seniors presents **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, education director of Jews for Judaism, who speaks on the topic "Is Religion Killing Judaism, Feb. 18, 1 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Members free, guests $2. **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Active Seniors, Purim musical celebration, Feb. 18, 12:15 p.m. with singer **Mickey Lewin**. Reserve by Feb 15, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Denture clinic, Feb. 16, 10:30-11:30 a.m., clinic room. Ext. 126 for an appointment.

Wellness lecture, "Explore your Creativity" with **Judy Weiss**, personal growth coach, Feb. 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m., free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Kolel presents Legends of the Rabbis: A Narrative Introduction to the Talmud with **Mark Clamen**. Tuesdays, Feb. 16-March 23. 7:30-9 p.m., and When Our Ancestors Had Feelings, a new Torah study course with **Sarah Margles**. Wednesdays, Feb. 24-March 24. 7:30-9 p.m. Prosserman JCC. Call to pre-register: ext. 4235. "Unveiling Esther," a Purim workshop exploring the depths of Megillat Esther with **Rabbi Rena Arshinoff**. Feb. 24. 7:30-9 p.m., Prosserman JCC. Call to pre-register: ext. 4235.

Inquire about new programs at the Culinary Arts Studio, featuring chef **Ellen Grossman**. Includes "I'll Drink to That!" with wine judges of Canada and simchah wines, Feb. 17th 7:30-9:30 p.m.; "Bubbie's Hamantashen Never Tasted Like This!" Feb. 18, 1-3:30 p.m.; "Hamantashen Baking with Someone You Love!" Feb. 21, noon-3 p.m., ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Valentine's Concert, **Andrew Craig**'s Celebrate Love 2010: An Evening of the World's Greatest Love Songs with **Molly Johnson** and others, Feb 14, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC. Tickets $45 adults, $40 seniors; couples, $80, senior couples $75. Ext. 0.

Cooking with chef **Elise Burton** Feb. 16, 7-9:30 p.m., "Magnificent Mishloach Manot: Incredible Edible Gifts." Members $35, nonmembers, $40. Ext. 0.

Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation present, direct from Israel, ISH Theatre's *Odysseus Chaoticus*, March 4 and 6, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre. Clown theatre for adults/teens, general admission $18. Students (ages 13+ only) and seniors $12. Ext. 0.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel at the Miles Nadal JCC, all welcome. Services: Sundays at 8 a.m. and Thursdays at 7:15 a.m.

Kosher breakfast buffet after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Cooking class in Hebrew, Feb. 24, 7-9:30 p.m., with instructor Chef **Avinadav Levy**. Explore the tastes and meals of the kitchens of Jerusalem. Members $25, nonmembers, $30. Ext. 0.

Correction

Maj 4 Mammaries, not Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, raised more than $100,000 in support of the cancer support group PYNK (What's New, Feb. 4). *The CJN* regrets the error.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

***L'DOR V'DOR*: Harry Perlstein, a Holocaust survivor and supporter of United Synagogue Day School, joined the school's Beth Tzedec campus students at a tfillah service. From left are Perlstein; student council co-presidents Leslie Schwartz and Lainie Yallen; and principal Ashley Waltman.**

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 20

Obituary

Rabbi Joel Wittstein
[Walter Zimmerman photo]

London rabbi recalled for interfaith work

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Joel Ira Wittstein, spiritual leader of Temple Israel in London, Ont. since 1987, died at his home on Jan. 28, of cancer. He was 74.

A native of Cincinnati, Rabbi Wittstein will be remembered not only for his congregational leadership and personal integrity, but also for his interfaith and interdenominational work in the greater London community.

In addition to teaching Hebrew at Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) for some 20 years – as he had at the University of Cincinnati – Rabbi Wittstein co-founded the Centre for Catholic-Jewish Learning at King's University College at UWO. He also established Abraham's Café, a project to foster dialogue and understanding among Jews, Christians and Muslims.

As well, he organized an annual community-wide Shabbat service for Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jews to promote co-operation and understanding, and contributed to program notes and an information forum dealing with anti-Semitic themes in *St. John's Passion* at Parry Sound's Festival of the Sound, where he was honoured last summer.

The rabbi was an accomplished poet, classical music lover, expert pool player, and "a mensch," Rabbi Daniel Gottlieb told an estimated 600 mourners at his funeral at the London Jewish Community Centre. "[H]e was a gentle soul, compassionate and caring, empathetic and loving."

Rabbi Gottlieb also remembered his friend as "erudite and articulate… he would present even the most challenging ideas and complex arguments in an interesting and engaging fashion."

When Rabbi Wittstein applied for the position in London in 1987, he and his wife Ailene were running a bed-and-breakfast in St. Ignace, Mich., where he made award-winning cinnamon rolls to serve their guests.

A student of Classics and Latin, the rabbi originally studied in Cincinnati to become a teacher. He began his rabbinic studies in Israel in the early 1960s, but would not complete them until 1975. After the stint in Israel, he studied on a Fulbright Scholarship in Greece, where he taught high school English before returning to Cincinnati to eventually become a Jewish educator.

Serving at the city's Isaac M. Wise Temple, he met – and hired – Ailene, also a Jewish educator. They married in 1981, a second marriage for both. The same year, they moved to West Bloomfield, Mich., where they worked at Temple Israel before moving to the northern part of the state and opening their bed and breakfast.

As a couple, they had travelled across North America doing seminars for Reform Jewish educators. Rabbi Gottlieb, who met them in 1980 at a conference, said they were highly regarded for their creativity and dynamism.

For his doctorate in education at the University of Cincinnati, Rabbi Wittstein researched moral development in early childhood. He also completed his rabbinic studies in Cincinnati, at Hebrew Union College.

But he didn't pursue a congregational career until later, continuing to devote the next few years to Jewish education.

It wasn't until they were living in St. Ignace that Rabbi Wittstein "fell in love with that whole role" of serving a congregation, after being asked to fill in for a colleague at an Orthodox synagogue in Sault Ste. Marie, Ailene told *The CJN*.

Karen Ross, who now lives in Toronto, chaired the committee that hired Rabbi Wittstein for what would become Temple Israel, a fledgling congregation known at the time as the London Jewish Family Association. Under Rabbi Wittstein's leadership, it grew from 40 families to 140.

Ross, who became a family friend, recalls an "immediate connection" the first time she spoke to the rabbi, based on their shared passion for Reform Judaism. "He just seemed very easy to talk to, totally unpretentious… He was not a chatty person at all, but if you asked him a question, you got a really knowledgeable, well thought-out answer."

Rabbi Michal Shekel, who has been serving as the temple's interim rabbi since last year, said Rabbi Wittstein was "quite a force in that community. He was a man of integrity and a fabulous role model."

Rabbi Wittstein leaves his wife Ailene, sons Eric and Ilan Wittstein, of Brooklyn and Baltimore respectively; Eric and Jonathan Avner, of Cincinnati and Austin, Texas, respectively, and five grandchildren.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Ilse Obar-Hirsch	Jan 22/10	7700 Bayview Ave., # 344
Bebe Ganz	Jan 22/10	1035 Eglinton Ave. West, # 305
Harold Silverstein	Jan 23/10	7905 Bayview Ave #622
Morrie Glicksman	Jan 23/10	65 Skymark Dr. #1406
Gail Simcoe	Jan 22/10	1003 Avenue Road
Rima Lischinski	Jan 23/10	80 Antibes Drive, # 1507
John Eisenberg	Jan 23/10	5 Kenneth Ave., # 1105
Henry Walfish	Jan 23/10	68 Yorkville Ave., # 402
Samantha Hans	Jan 24/10	330 Vesta Drive
Ruth Fromstein	Jan 26/10	7300 Yonge St., # 1809
Dorothy Green	Jan 25/10	102 Davos Dr.
Helen Rosen	Jan 26/10	1201 Steeles Ave. West, # 207
Joe Pomerant	Jan 24/10	39 Crosby Ave., # 1207

בס"ד

ברוך דיין האמת

With great sorrow and pain, we announce the death of our beloved husband, brother, father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather

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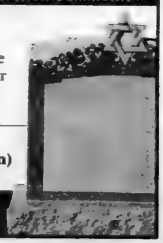

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Class Acts

HELPING HAITI: Grade 6, 7 and 8 students at Netivot HaTorah Day School took part in a special assembly highlighting the catastrophe in Haiti. Students were encouraged to bring in loonies and toonies to donate to UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's "Hope for Haiti Fund." Pictured, from left, are grade 7 students Ariella, Nadav, Ari and Ayelet. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

TIKKUN OLAM: As part of celebrating the 100th day of school, the Miles Nadal JCC Nursery School hoped to raise $100 for Haiti. The school surpassed its goal tenfold by raising $1007 donated from families, staff and the Miles Nadal JCC Community Choir. Pictured, from left, are Noam Tal, Kyra Schnoor, Ali Silver, Sophie Clark, Lila Offman, Luca Stojanovic, Antoine Koiran-Portier, Adam Finlay and Elijah Levy

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Celebrate with the Stars

"People often have the misconception that planning a wedding, bar or bat mitzvah has to be a stressful and tedious experience," states Marla Kay, organizer of "A Celebration of Stars," a trade show which assembles a large variety of party professionals serving the Jewish community.

"As a bridal and party consultant over the past 20 years, I know how wonderful it is to plan a simcha. There are so many details to be looked after. For the past 10 years at each of my shows, I have brought together over 60 professional "stars" of the party industry to display their wonderful products and services."

This year, the Celebration of Stars Wedding, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show will take place on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at Meron Banquet Hall. It starts at 6 p.m. and runs until 10:00 p.m.

When you attend the Celebration of Stars Show, all of your entire party needs will be represented and you will be able to meet our party's finest on an informal basis. Each of the various stages of party planning will be available and by having more than one company displaying their unique talents in a particular category, you have the choice of which individual will suit your needs. You may choose from a variety of party professionals who will strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence in their particular area of expertise. You will be offered bridal and party consultants, catering (Kosher), invitations, florists, make-up artists, personalized party favours, photography, videography, cakes, creative room decor and centrepieces, orchestras, DJ's, and jewellery & giftware. Some of the "stars" are very well known in the simcha industry and there will also be some new faces as well.

"Every Celebration of Stars Bridal, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show that I have organized has proven to be so successful for both guests and exhibitors that as soon as I finish one, I begin plans for the next one," says Kay. "Organizing a party is what I do best and I think that it is certainly reflected in my shows."

Come and see for yourself that the Celebration of Stars has got it all and is one show that you don't want to miss. Admission and parking is free. For further information ... contact Marla Kay at **905-669-0777.**

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Comedian explores new worlds through improv

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Lauren Stein has created a new world. Its inhabitants can travel through time, fly planes, shop for ground bull meat and drift through upside-down universes.

All without leaving the stage.

Stein, 25, teaches and performs improv in Toronto. Through her private improv classes, she has created a special dimension deep within the city, where each student must choose a new name and a new identity.

"You become your best self. It gives us that freedom to play," she said.

> ***'This is Toronto's art form, more than ballet, more than opera'***

Stein's best self is named Thelle. She was born last March, when Stein started teaching improv in Toronto. But in reality, Thelle has been a part of Stein since she was five years old.

"I've been acting my whole life. At five, I did a shul play," she said. "That was a ton of fun. I've been doing drama non-stop."

Stein studied acting at Trinity Guildhall in London, England, and later worked as an assistant teacher in the program. Although the school didn't focus on comedy, it did give Stein a taste of improv.

"I've always been random. I was always in improv, I didn't know that there was an art form that was just improv," she said.

Stein, a graduate of the University of Guelph's drama program, first taught improv while in Hawaii in the summer of 2008. That October, she started taking courses at Impatient Theatre Co., a Toronto improv theatre company.

Last August, she was put on an incubator improv team, which is the first of three team levels.

After the first level, performers can advance to the Herald, which is a three-scene improvisation performance, and then on to the house team, the highest level at Impatient Theatre.

"When I looked into this, I realized, yes, this is my passion. This is what I was meant to be," she said. "When I go back to a play, they're [rehearsing] the same scene. I'm like, 'How do you do that?'" she said.

For Stein, improv is about exploration.

"You start out with an initiation. You're exploring this world. You just go further, and you reach the limits of this world," she said. "There are no mistakes. Everything that happens is meant to happen. Everything is right."

Improv is about taking simple concepts and creating intricate dimensions, Stein said. A character who doesn't know his name could turn into a 30-minute scene.

"We take [it] to a ridiculous height. And funny things will happen," she said. "'What's your name?' 'Um, I don't know.' That can be explored until the world ends."

Apart from her private classes, Stein also held improv workshops for the B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) and worked with children at the Jewish Family and Child's Jerome D. Diamond Adolescent Centre.

"I'm so involved in the Jewish community, that's where I meet a lot of [students]," she said, adding that improv is a good way of exploring Jewish themes and studying the Torah.

While performing improv, Stein enjoys the unique connection she can create with the audience.

"You're breaking the fourth wall. The audience is a part of the show," she said. "It's a different vibe. The audience informs what you do."

But not everything works on stage.

"Everybody has bad sets. I try not to panic, or try and redeem it," she said. "Improv doesn't always have to be funny. But sometimes you feel [it's a bad set] and that's the worst thing."

This is a risk Toronto audiences have to take, Stein said.

"People don't want to spend a night not knowing if it's going to be the best thing ever. But it is," she said. "This is Toronto's art form, more than ballet, more than opera."

Lauren Stein

While Toronto is filled with improv comedians, few get paid for performing. As a comedian and a teacher, Stein has made it her mission to spread the art form through her city.

Stein, second from right, and other fellow improvers performed at the St. Joseph's Street Festival last summer. From left are Caitlin Chu, Daniel Tseng, Derek Ensoll, Stein, and Micah Vernon.

"The thing I'm finding hardest is that most people haven't heard of improv. They're like, 'Yoga we know. Come to us with yoga.' Within 10 years, everybody will do improv... I'm willing to take that on as my mission," she said.

"I like local art a lot, it's the greatest thing to be able to create that art."

Stein spent the last few summers doing just that. In the summers of 2007 and 2008, she organized a theatre festival and then a film festival, both called Random Thoughts Come Alive, that showed off local work.

Stein also co-wrote, co-produced and co-directed a web show called Starving Artist, which follows a group of poor artists who live together. When one becomes famous, he decides to hide his success from his friends.

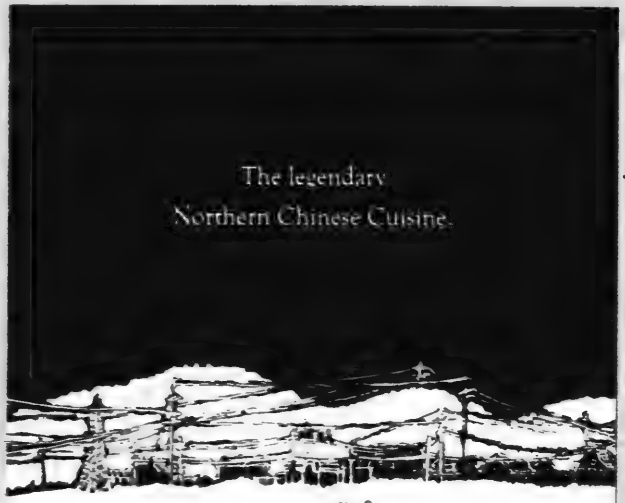
"It was so much fun to make something and have it posted," she said, adding that only several episodes made it up. "We rented equipment, but we couldn't get someone to edit it for free."

Stein may still be climbing the comedic ladder in Toronto, but she knows where she wants to be.

"I would really love to spend my life performing and teaching," she said.

To watch Starving Artist, visit www.StarvingArtistTheShow.com. To find out more about her classes, contact Stein at LNAProductions@gmail.com.

Dining Pleasures



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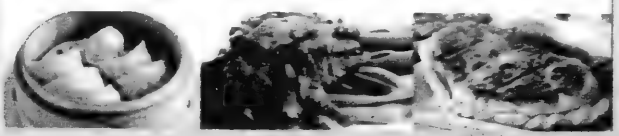

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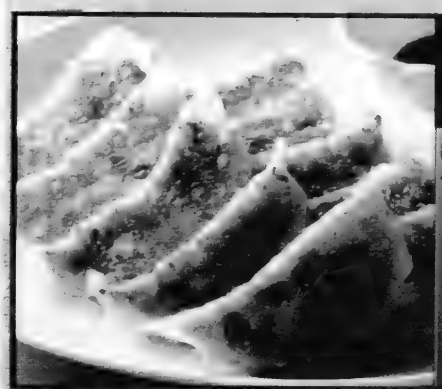

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Quebec biotech firm makes deal with Israelis

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — A Montreal-based manufacturer of antimicrobial products has struck a deal with an Israeli company to distribute its products in that country.

Noveko International Inc. has concluded an agreement with the biotechnology firm Zer Hitech for exclusive distribution of its antimicrobial masks and respirators, air-filtration and purification systems and hand sanitizers for the next three years.

Noveko, which was founded in 2002, has a patent on the antimicrobial technology it developed.

Joe Hiess, Noveko's vice-president for strategic alliances, said Israel's interest in importing such products is noteworthy in light of the country's international leadership in biotechnology.

Zer Hitech has a contract with the Israeli health-care products company Sarel to supply the Noveko masks to health-care establishments throughout Israel. Sarel acts as the official purchaser for the Israeli Ministry of Health.

The Noveko air filters, which are biodegradable, are to be installed in a Tel Aviv hospital, the company said.

"We are convinced that Noveko's advanced patented technologies are a unique, major breakthrough helping to provide a healthier and safer environment," stated Zer Hitech senior vice-president Uri Zer.

Noveko, whose chair and chief executive officer is André Leroux, is a public company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The agreement between Noveko and Zer Hitech comes at a time when the Quebec and Israeli governments are actively encouraging greater economic ties.

In September 2008, then-Quebec economic development minister Raymond Bachand and his Israeli counterpart signed an agreement in Jerusalem to strengthen economic and technological co-operation. It was the culmination of an economic mission to Israel led by Bachand, which included Quebec businesspeople, investors and researchers, intended to promote trade, investment and collaboration.

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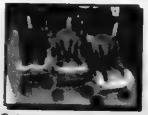

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מרדכי נעבירטיג איז אַן אומ סוף ספּק דער באַליבטסטער יידישער פֿאָלקסדיכטער פֿון צוזאַנציקסטן יאָרהונדערט. אין פֿילן, צוזישן ביידע וועלט מלחמות, זינגען זיינע לידער נעמען ברייט באַקאַנט אין זינגען גזונגענע נעוואָרן דורך פּשוטע פֿאָלקסמענטשן אויף פֿראָפעסיאָנעלע אַרטיסטען צוגלייך.

אַליין אַ פּשוטער פֿאָלקסמענטש, האָט ער פֿאַרמאָגט אירסער דעם איינגעבירענעם טאַלאַנט פֿון אַ דיכטער אויף תּורה מיסטער, אויך אַן אידעלע, פֿילבאַרע נשמה, אַ רחמים גענפֿיל פֿאַר יעדן מענטש, ספּעציעל פֿאַר די שוואַכע אויף באַפּוחל'טע אין דער מענטשלעכער געזעלשאַפֿט; דאָס אַלץ באַריכטערט מיט אַן אידעלן, שפּילעוודאיקן הומאָר אויף טיפֿן גלויבן אין דער היילקייט אויף וועריזיקייט פֿון מענטשלעכן לעבן. נישט קיין ווונדער, האָט דאָס פֿאָלק האָט זיין שירה אַזוי וואַרעם אויפֿגענומען אויף אירע נעזאַלבט פֿאָר זיין שליח-ציבור.

מרדכי נעבירטיג איז נעבוירן געוואָרן אין 1877 אין קרעקע אויף דאָרט אומגעברענגט נעוואָרן, אין עלטער פֿון 65 יאָר, דורך די נאַציס. ער איז נעוחתן אין אַרטמער מעבל-סטאַליער, אויך אין דער וויניק פֿאַרבליבענער פֿרייַער צייט זיך נעקענט אָפּגעבן מיט זינגע לירים-מוזיקאַליש שאַפֿונגען.

ערשט אין 1920, ווען נעבירטיג איז אַלט נעוחתן 43 יאָר, האָבן אַ צאָל פֿון זיינע פֿרייַנד אַרויסגעגעבן זיין פֿרשטע לידער-זאַמלונג אונטערן נאָמען "פֿאָלקסטימלעך". מיט זעכצן יאָר שפּעטער, אין 1936, האָט מען אַרויסגעגעבן נעבירטיגס צווייטן בוך, "מיינע לידער".

אונטערן איינדרוק פֿון די רידיפֿות קעגן יידן אין פּוילן אין די דרייסיקער יאָרן, ספּעציעל נאָכן פֿאַרפֿאַל אין פּשיטיק, האָט נעבירטיג, אין 1938 אָנגעשריבן זיין באַרימט ליד "עס ברענט", אין וועלכן ער האָט געוואָלט נישט צו שטיין "מיט פֿאַרליגנטע הענט", נאָר פֿרויבירן ראַטעווען דאָס שטעטל פֿון די שטיינדיקע פֿלאַמען. דאָס איז געווען אַ נביאיש ליד, וואָס איז לייַדראַיז גיכן מקרם נעוואָרן. מיט אַ יאָר שפּעטער זיינען די דייטשן אַרייַן אין קראַקע און פֿאַרטריבן די יידן אין נעטאָ.

אין "בלוטיקן דאָנערשטיק" (4-יוני, 1942) האָט מען נעבירטיגן מיטן רוב קראַקעווער יידן אַרויסגעפֿירט פֿון נעטאָ, צום טרט קיין בעלזשעץ. אויפֿן וועג איז נעבירטיג נעפֿאַלן פֿון אַ דייטשישער קויל.

עס איז אַבער נעשען אַ נס, וואָס יולי האָפּמאַן, אַ טאַכטער פֿון נעבירטיגס פֿרייַנד, האָט אויפֿגעהיטן זיינע נעטאָ שריפֿטן און זיי אויבערגעגעבן אין אַרכיוו "מורשת", אין קיבוץ גבעת-חביבה, ישראל.

אין 1992 האָט אַ יונגער דייטשישער זינגער און קאָמפּאָזיטאָר, מאַנפֿרעד לעס פֿון האַמפֿורטאַל, דייטשלאַנד, אַרויסגעגעבן אַ פּראַכט אָוועס פֿון אַלע ביז איצט באַקאַנטע נעבירטיגס לידער. דאָס בוך שליסט אייַן דעם יידישן טעקסט, אַ לאַטיַינישע טראַנסליטעראַציע, אַ העראַלעכע דייטשישע איבערזעצונג און די מוזיק מיט אַראַנזשירונגען פֿון מאַנפֿרעד לעס. לעס אויך זיין אָנסאַמבל טרעטן אויף בייַ נעבירטיגס קאָנצערטן איבער מערב און מיזרח אייראָפּע.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט נעדרוקטן חתנה אונזער וויניק לאָזט וויסן. שרייבט מיר אויף מיין אַדרעס, דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליץ פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

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Israel satisfied with Ban's report on Goldstone

JTA

JERUSALEM — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's report to the General Assembly "reflected accurately" Israel's response to the Goldstone report on the Gaza war of 2008-09, the Foreign Ministry said.

"This Israeli document expresses Israel's full commitment to carry out credible independent investigations that meet the standards of international law," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement released shortly after the General Assembly's meeting last Friday on the status of the implementation of the recommendations set out by the fact-finding mission headed by Judge Richard Goldstone.

The statement continued: "Despite the difficult combat conditions against Hamas terrorism in Gaza, Israel took care to respect international norms and will continue to do so in the future while maintaining its foremost commitment to protecting the security and well-being of its own citizens."

In his report submitted to the General Assembly last Friday, Ban said Israel had responded to every allegation made against it. He said it was too early to determine whether Israel and the Palestinian Authority had implemented the recommendations, since investigations were ongoing.

Ban did not offer his opinion on whether the investigations were independent and conformed to international standards, as required by Goldstone.

The General Assembly in November called on both Israel and Palestinian groups to investigate alleged war crimes enumerated in the Goldstone report. The assembly threatened to turn over the cases to international courts if the sides did not undertake the investigations properly.

The Palestinian Authority set up a commission of inquiry and provided Ban with preliminary findings, according to reports. The PA has no authority in Gaza, which is run by Hamas.

Hamas responded to Goldstone by saying it did not target Israeli civilians, reports indicated.

The Israeli military conducted an in-depth investigation into its conduct and last week provided Ban with a response that included a point-by-point refutation of Goldstone's charges.

Toyota to recall 32,000 cars in Israel

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Importers of Toyota in Israel said Sunday that there are more than 32,000 Israeli car owners who need a faulty accelerator pedal fixed.

The importers are currently drawing up a list of all the models and chassis numbers of the cars affected, and will recall the vehicles once the relevant parts arrive from abroad.

Union Motors, Israel's official Toyota importer, has pledged that relevant garages will be open for extended hours in order to facilitate the repair process.

The repair will not involve replacing the gas pedal, but will include placing a small metal rod to prevent the pedal from being worn down and breaking, which will then keep the accelerator from sticking, and causing the car to speed out of control. The service will take about two hours, and – of course – will be free.

The problem with the cars is widespread, and so far Toyota has recalled some eight million vehicles worldwide.

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Israel Briefs

PM's son wins Bible Quiz

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's youngest child won the Jerusalem district Bible quiz Feb. 3. Avner Netanyahu, 15, will represent Jerusalem public schools in the national Bible Quiz later this year. He scored 98 out of 100 to defeat 50 opponents. His mother, Sara, has three older brothers who have won the national quiz and her father is an expert in Bible study. Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu have two sons, and he has a daughter from a previous marriage.

Kinneret rises

Lake Kinneret water level has risen by some 34 inches since November. The measurement was the first since Water Authority workers returned to work Jan. 31 after a two-month strike, and follows the largest January rainfall in five years. Another 15 feet would bring the lake to capacity.

Berlusconi addresses MKs

The Goldstone report "tried to incriminate Israel for its justified response to Hamas rockets," Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said. Berlusconi addressed Israel's Knesset on Feb. 3, the final day of his three-day visit to Israel, during which he and seven of his ministers held a joint cabinet meeting with Israel's cabinet. Berlusconi noted in his address the strong ties between Jerusalem and Rome, saying that "Italy is like a big brother to Israel."

Retaliation for barrel bombs

Israel attacked two Gaza smuggling tunnels in response to Hamas' attempts to attack Israeli targets in the Mediterranean Sea. The air force destroyed two tunnels on Feb. 2 used by Hamas in southern Gaza. One was used to bring terrorists into Israel and the other for smuggling weapons, the IDF said. Three Gazans were injured in the attack, Palestinian reports said. On Feb. 3, a third explosives-laden barrel washed up on the beach at Palmachim, in central Israel. Two others washed up Feb.1 on beaches in Ashdod and Ashkelon, while others reportedly exploded in the sea the previous Friday. Police patrolled beaches looking for more bombs and urged the public to be alert for suspicious objects. A spokesperson for a Gaza group linked to Hamas said there were still many unexploded barrel bombs in the sea. He said they aimed to avenge the assassination last month of Hamas operative Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in a Dubai hotel. Hamas accuses Israel of the murder.

– *Files from JTA*

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

Annual Passover Literary Supplement

We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

They should not exceed 2,000 words. Selected submissions will appear in the Passover Supplement of The CJN on March 25, 2010, in either our Montreal or our Toronto edition, or both. If you have a preference, please state it on your submission. Not all submissions can be published. We look for originality.

E-mail submissions are preferred. Send submissions to cjnliterarysupplement@gmail.com. Double-spaced, typed manuscripts can also be sent to:

Passover Supplement,
The Canadian Jewish News
1500 Don Mills Rd. Suite 205
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Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.

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CJN Purim Art Display

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The Canadian Jewish News,
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If you want us to return the pictures to you, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Otherwise, we will be unable to do so.

Submissions will not be accepted after Friday, February 12, 2010 - 3 p.m.

We will make our selections based on a number of factors such as the use of colour, the imaginative quality of the drawing and the way it tells an aspect of the story of Purim. The chances of being selected depend upon the number and quality of submissions received.

A selection of the entries will be displayed in the February 25th issue of The CJN.

U.K. Jews weigh fight after 'Who is a Jew' court ruling

By WINSTON PICKETT
JTA

LONDON — To fight or not to fight?

That question has bitterly divided the Jewish community in Britain following a Supreme Court ruling late last year striking down a Jewish school's policy of limiting admission to the children of Jewish mothers.

The ruling, which said state-funded Jewish schools can't award places on the basis of whether a student's parent is Jewish because it contravenes Britain's Race Relations Act, went beyond forcing an expansion of admissions criteria to children whose Jewish identity is a matter of dispute between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews.

By detaching Jewishness from Jewish legal criteria, whether Orthodox or Reform, it opened up the possibility that non-Jews could qualify for admission. It also introduced the idea that the government, rather than Jewish religious authorities, can determine who is Jewish in Britain.

"This case had nothing to do with denominations or conversions," Britain's chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, wrote in London's *Jewish Chronicle*. "It focused on one simple fact: that Jewish identity is – conversions aside – conferred by birth, by the mother, or in the case of liberal Judaism, by the father if the mother is not Jewish."

The mid-December ruling struck down those interpretations of Jewish identity and introduced its own, he said.

British Jews across the denominational spectrum have viewed the ruling with alarm as government intrusion into religion.

But a debate has erupted within the Jewish community over how to respond, exposing deep fault lines in the community and fuelling Britain's "Who is a Jew?" debate.

For now, the umbrella organization for British Jewry, the Board of Deputies, has decided to take a wait-and-see approach on how the ruling will play out. Leaders of non-Orthodox movements here have praised the stance, but Orthodox leaders are unsatisfied.

"We were deeply concerned that a change in legislation is not being actively pursued," said the rabbinical council of the United Synagogue, Britain's mainstream Orthodox movement.

The debate started with the case of a Jewishly observant 12-year-old boy, identified in court papers as "M," whose father is Jewish and whose mother is a convert to Judaism through the Reform movement.

The boy applied to the state-supported JFS school, a flagship of North London's Jewish community founded in 1732 as the Jews' Free School. The school, which has some 1,900 students, rejected M on the grounds that he isn't Jewish according to Halachah, which says only those born to a Jewish mother or a woman who converted to Orthodox Judaism is considered Jewish.

Britain has 7,000 state-supported parochial schools, including some 50 Jewish ones. Under the law, schools can favour applicants from their own faiths using criteria set by a designated religious authority.

But M's family sued, saying the school discriminated against him. The family lost, but the ruling was overturned by the Court of Appeals. Ultimately the case reached Britain's new Supreme Court, which ratified the Appeals Court decision in a 5-4 ruling, saying that basing school admission on whether one's mother is Jewish is by definition discriminatory and in violation of the 1976 Race Relations Act.

The decision has divided British Jews.

On one side are the Orthodox, who urged early intervention by seeking an amendment to legislation that would nullify the court's decision and re-establish Halachah – and with it, the primacy of Orthodoxy – as the determining criterion for school admission.

On the other side are non-Orthodox movements, who said they'd support a change in legislation only if their converts will be accepted into mainstream Orthodox schools. These movements were pleased the court ruling struck a blow against Orthodox dominance of religious matters even as they were alarmed by the government's level of meddling in Jewish religious matters.

To articulate a unified Jewish response to the ruling, the Board of Deputies set up a consultative committee with representatives from the various denominations, with the exception of haredim, who generally attend Jewish schools that don't get state funds. The effort to forge a consensus Jewish position failed, however, and a default approach was adopted: wait and see how the ruling affects the community, "then consider what kind of amendment we need rather than rush into it," said Board of Deputies president Vivian Wineman. "Everyone felt it sensible to wait."

Meanwhile, JFS and other state-funded Jewish schools have changed their admissions criteria, which now focus on requiring applicants to show participation in faith-based activities, such as shul attendance, which Rabbi Sacks characterized as "a Christian solution for a Jewish school."

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Canada

Socio-economic gap between Israeli Jews, Arabs widening

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Socio-economic gaps between Jews and Arabs in Israel are widening, says Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel.

In a conference call with reporters from Canada and the United States, Sikkuy's co-directors, Ron Gerlitz and Ali Haider, called on the Israeli government to close them as soon as possible.

"We want to achieve full equality between Jewish and Palestinian citizens in Israel, which is possible," said Haider, an Israeli Arab.

The fissures are growing due to unfair government allocations in health, housing, education, social welfare and employment, he noted.

Gerlitz, a Jew, cited "discriminatory policies" by Israel to account for the fact that Israeli Arabs don't enjoy full equality with their fellow Jewish citizens.

An Arab child born in Israel today will typically be raised in a poorer family, attend a school that is less properly equipped than one in the Jewish sector and find it harder to get a job, he said.

According to data released by the Central Bureau of Statistics in December, 1.5 million Arabs live in Israel, comprising 20.3 per cent of its population.

Robert Walker, director of communications at Israel's embassy in Ottawa, said: "Equality is a core value in Israel, and while there are still challenges, Israel is committed to eliminating gaps between different groups, whether economic, social or educational."

He added that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appointed Labor party MK Avishay Braverman to the post of minister of minority affairs, thereby demonstrating that Israel "takes this challenge very seriously."

Judging by Sikkuy's latest Jewish-Arab equality index, containing data for 2008, inequality continues to fester, much to the detriment of Israel's Arab minority. The situation has worsened across the board in all areas except education funding, Sikkuy reported.

In health, there has been a seven per cent increase in the inequality gap. In housing, employment and social welfare, the comparable figures are roughly five per cent, three per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

But in education, the inequality gap has decreased by almost five per cent.

Urging Israel to come up with a clear strategy to wipe out existing gaps, Haider charged that the current Israeli government, headed by Netanyahu, hasn't even bothered to lay out its plans for the Arab sector.

"This sends a bad message," he said, claiming this is the first time that an Israeli government has not presented a plan to improve conditions in the Arab community.

Warning that the gaps are multiplying at an alarming rate, Gerlitz said that Netanyahu's predecessor, Ehud Olmert, took preliminary steps to deal with the deteriorating situation.

He tempered his criticism by acknowledging that some government officials are ready to change the status quo.

Gerlitz pointed out that gaps are accentuated when Jewish philanthropic funds in the Diaspora are channelled solely to Israeli Jews rather than apportioned on an equal basis.

"In the struggle for justice and equality, funds should help all Israelis," he declared.

Saying that many unemployed Arab university graduates want to join the labour force, Haider admitted that some jobs are simply unattainable to Arabs due to security reasons and locale.

Only 18 per cent of Arab women, as opposed to more than 50 per cent of Jewish women, are gainfully employed, he said.

Jessica Balaban, executive director of the Inter Agency Task Force on Israeli Arab Issues, said that 13,000 Arab youths who don't serve in the armed forces are currently working as volunteers in alternative national service programs, while many more are waiting to join.

"Seventy seven per cent of Arab youths want to be community volunteers," she added.

Alluding to the fact that most Israeli Arabs refrain from enlisting in the military and are thereby not eligible for certain state benefits, Haider said there should be no connection between duties and rights.

Complaining that Israel practices double standards, Haider said that while haredi Jews don't usually join the army, they're still not denied such benefits.

Sikkuy, founded in 1991 as a Jewish-Arab advocacy organization, is a non-partisan, non-profit, non-governmental group whose goal is to advance equality in Israel in terms of government budgets, resource allocation, hiring policy, land usage and access to government services.

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Please submit your resume asap via e-mail to resumes@bethtzedec.ca or mail to the attention of Markham Silver, Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1325 Glenmore Trail SW, Calgary, Alberta T2V 4Y8 and mark "Confidential" on the envelope. We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those considered for interviews will be contacted.

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New Israel Fund targeted in ad

JTA

WASHINGTON — Christians United for Israel (CUFI) objected to an advertisement run by a group it funds that depicted the president of the New Israel Fund (NIF) wearing a horn.

"Although we are often demonized by our critics, CUFI never demonizes those with whom we disagree, and we object when anyone does," CUFI spokesperson Ari Morgenstern told JTA.

The ad, run by Im Tirtzu, an Israeli right-wing grassroots group, attempts to link the New Israel Fund to the Goldstone report, the UN Human Rights Council investigation last year that charged Israel with war crimes in the Gaza Strip during its military operation last winter.

"Without the New Israel Fund, there could be no Goldstone report and Israel would not be facing international accusations of war crimes," says the ad, illustrated by a cartoon of Naomi Chazan, NIF's president, sporting a horn and a predatory grin.

Im Tirtzu has singled out 16 groups from among the hundreds NIF funds as having contributed to Goldstone's inquiry. NIF has denied funding one of the groups.

John Hagee Ministries, founded by the pastor who also founded CUFI, donated a total of $200,000 to Im Tirtzu in 2008 and 2009, citing its pledge toward "public advocacy on behalf of the State of Israel and of Zionism on campuses," Morgenstern said.

Hagee Ministries did not have advance knowledge of the campaign, he said. A number of liberal pro-Israel groups have decried the ad and other attacks on NIF and human rights groups in Israel.

Asked whether Hagee Ministries would continue to fund Im Tirtzu, he would say only that "all activities of organizations have an impact on" the process of deciding which groups to fund.

Iran hijacks Herzliya Conference agenda

By HERSHELL EZRIN
Special to The CJN

Guest Voice

The subject of Iran hijacked the agenda at the recent Herzliya Conference on the balance of Israel's national security.

Strategic and military experts from across the globe shared a deep-seated concern about Iran at the conference, Jan. 31 to Feb. 3. That concern, about Iran's nuclear intentions and capabilities and the imminent threat, not just to the Middle East but also to global stability and security, was repeated by Israeli and international politicians.

Israeli President Shimon Peres set the stage for the need for global action with his references to Iranian plans for hegemony. "Walking like emperors, they believe that who controls the Middle East controls the world," Peres said. He spoke about the moral corruption of the Iranian regime, a state whose leaders deny the Holocaust, finance terrorism and perpetrate human rights violations against their own people.

Iran is a "source of evil to the state of Israel, the security of the Arab world and to the values of the broader democratic world," he said. He called for the widest possible coalition to impose tough economic sanctions as well as co-ordinated support for the struggle in Iran against the regime.

The sense that dealing with Iran has become the preoccupation of most international policy-makers prevailed at the conference. Several U.S. and EU policy-makers explained the rationale for concerted international action: wherever you look, you see the hand of Iranian intervention, from support for the Iraqi insurgents and Afghanistan rebels battling western troops and undermining the Pakistani regime, to the exporting of terror through their involvement with Hamas and Hezbollah. Iran's influence also extends to the shores of the Western Hemisphere, where it had established a presence in guiding the Chavez regime in Venezuela.

The emergence of a Shia Iranian bomb would likely lead to the breakdown of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the development of a Sunni nuclear response, Peres said.

Even those countries critical of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians took unequivocal aim at the threat of Iran. Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Moratinos said that securing Iran's compliance with UN Security Council resolutions is a high priority, and that diplomatically confronting Iran could bring together moderate Arab states.

Ron Asmus, a former senior State Department official, summarized the thinking about Iran at the Herzliya Conference, saying that "Iran brings everything to the forefront," including NATO policies in defence of allies.

Retired German general Klaus Naumann, who headed NATO's military committee from 1996 to 1999, stated that NATO's extended deterrence would be the first provision to be put to the test by a nuclear Iran. "We have to guarantee [the security of] those who feel dominated by a nuclear Iran," he said.

The consensus at the conference was that Iran has been accelerating its efforts to produce nuclear weapons. Expectations are that Iran will achieve the nuclear bomb threshold, including critical ignition testing, in the months ahead.

Because of Iranian longer-range ballistic missile capabilities, strong action starting with deeper sanctions must be taken by countries, including Canada, to restrict and pressure the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, who are the bulwark maintaining the current regime in power. Naumann said that "2,000-kilometre ballistic missiles only make sense as delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction. There is no other military value for them."

Hershell Ezrin is the CEO of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy.

JEWISH FEDERATION — EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

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Helen Fox, B.A., Campus Principal
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

CALEDON HILLS GALLERY REPRESENTS ISRAELI ARTIST YAEL ERLICHMAN

Works by Israeli artist **Yael Erlichman**, who won the prestigious Lorenzo il Magnifico President's Award at the 2009 Florence Biennale for Contemporary Art, are on view at the Alton Mill Gallery, which has become the artist's "Canadian home."

The gallery opened last spring with a solo exhibition of Erlichman's bronze sculptures and continues to showcase selections of her work, both inside and in an outdoor sculpture garden. Erlichman returns to Toronto and the gallery, March 4 to 7. The Alton Mill Gallery is located in the Alton Mill Arts Centre in the Caledon Hills, an hour northwest of downtown. 519-941-9300, www.altonmill.ca

* * *

Teatron Presents *Bluish*: Teatron Jewish Theatre Company presents the Canadian première of *Bluish*, a comedy by **Janece Shaffer**, with **Ron Boyd, Andria Siegler, Carrie Adelstein, Melissa Battey-Pratt, Bob Cooper** and the original music of **Noam Bergman**. The story revolves around a young man, **Ben Kishman**, whose ostensibly non-Jewish fiancée discovers that she is really Jewish; Ben and his family each react differently to her enthusiastic immersion in her new-found tradition.

Directed by resident artistic director **Ari Weisberg**. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. March 3 to 14. $29 to $44. 416-616-5350, www.teatrontheatre.com

* * *

Joshua Then and Now: The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Joshua Then and Now*, the adaptation of **Mordecai Richler**'s semi-autobiographical novel, with director **Ted Kotcheff** in attendance. $15, $10. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Feb. 21, 4 and 7:30 p.m. No advance ticket sales; rush seats on sale 15 minutes before each screening.

* * *

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Academy Award Nominations: *Ajami* became the third Israeli entry in consecutive years to be nominated as top foreign-language film for the 2010 Academy Awards.

Ajami paints an unsparing picture of Arab-Jewish and intra-Arab tensions in a mixed quarter of Jaffa. Its co-directors are two young Israelis, Scandar Copti, a Christian Arab, and Yaron Shani, who is Jewish.

* * *

Evening of Israeli Films: The Jerusalem Foundation of Canada's New Leaders group presents Sit Your Tuchus Down 2, an evening of three short Israeli films by students of the Ma'aleh and Sam Spiegel Film Schools. The films are *The First Night* by **Chen Galon Klein**, *Cock Fight* by **Sigali Liphshitz**, and *Minus Plus* by **Shahar Cohen**. $17.50. Varsity VIP Theatre, 55 Bloor St. W. Monday, Feb. 22, 7 to 9 p.m. http://ca.brownpapertickets.com/event/96216

* * *

Four Sons by Rabbi Israel Isaac Bensacon

Names in the News

• Art collector and philanthropist **Ydessa Hendeles** is donating a collection of 32 Canadian and international contemporary artworks to the Art Gallery of Ontario, representing the most significant single gift of contemporary art in the AGO's 110-year history. Artists represented include **Kim Adams, Ian Carr-Harris, Max Dean, Betty Goodwin, Liz Magor, Ken Lum, Ron Martin, John McEwen** and **Ian Wallace**. A member of the AGO board of trustees, Hendeles founded the Toronto-based Ydessa Hendeles Art Foundation and has devoted the last 22 years to curating exhibitions from works in her collection.

• **Alex Poch-Goldin** plays Mr. Marks, an Orthodox Jewish textile merchant on the Lower East Side of 1905, in the Canadian Stage Company's production of *Intimate Apparel*, the acclaimed play by **Lynn Nottage**. The piece opens this week at the Bluma Appel Theatre, 27 Front St., with a cast that also includes **Raven Dauda** and **Kevin Hanchard**. It runs to March 6. Tickets from $20 or pay what you can. www.canadianstage.com

* * *

Music Notes

• The Ashkenaz Festival presents a "big-time brass band blowout" with **Susan Watts** and **Fanfare Severni**; Watts is part of a "klezmer dynasty" that originated with bandleader **Joseph Hoffman**, her great-grandfather. Drake Hotel, 1150 Queen St. W. Saturday, Feb. 13, doors open 8:30 for 9 p.m. show. $15, $12. www.ashkenazfestival.com

• Singer, teacher and choir director **Varda Hall Berenstein** presents "Yiddish Songs and the Legacy of Mordecai Gebirtig," a lecture presentation sponsored by Friends of Yiddish. A prolific poet and songwriter, Gebirtig was killed in the Holocaust but his works live on. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W. Members free, guests $5. Sunday, Feb. 14, 2:30 p.m.

• Celebrate Love 2010 is an evening of the world's greatest love songs with **Andrew Craig, Molly Johnson** and others. Adults $45. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday, Feb. 14, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. www.algreentheatre.ca

• Israeli pop singer **Mickey Lewin** performs a Freilach Purim Musical Celebration, Miles Nadal JCC Active Seniors. Reserve by Feb. 15, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• **Sara Farb** pays tribute to the music of award-winning rock artist **Ben Folds**, with **Mark Selby** on the keys. $15. Dark Night Cabaret Series, Berkeley Street Theatre Downstairs, Feb. 16, 8 p.m.

• **The Oren Neiman Quartet** explores a combination of jazz, Balkan, Middle Eastern and Jewish-klezmer music, a natural outgrowth of Oren's upbringing in both Israel and Canada. The New York-based group performs in Hart House's Arbor Room on Feb. 19, 9 p.m. and at Trane Studios, 964 Bathurst St. on Sunday, Feb. 21, 8 p.m. www.orenneiman.com

• Albertan saxophonist **Brent Mah** and Toronto-raised jazz guitarist **Alex Goodman** release their debut album, *Convergence*, this month and perform with their band in Ontario and Quebec. www.alexgoodman.ca

* * *

At the Galleries

• Glowing Faces is an exhibit of solo art by **Rabbi Israel Isaac Besancon**, a French-born chassidic leader who is spiritual mentor of Shir Chadash, a Jewish outreach program in Tel Aviv. A dessert and wine reception promises to be "an evening of art, music and mysticism" with live chassidic music; couvert $54 per person, $100 per couple. All proceeds go to Shir Chadash. Art & Soul Fine Art, 1180 Caledonia Rd. (north of Lawrence). Sunday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m. Ahuva, 416-783-7263, besanconart @gmail.com

• "Building Storeys 2010" is a photo exhibit of Toronto's industrial past. On view at the Gladstone Hotel until Feb. 27 as part of "Come Up To My Room 2010." 1214 Queen St. W. 416-531-4635.

• The Echo Sculpture Studio offers classes in sculpturing and rents out equipped studio space with "24/7" access. 3906 Chesswood Dr. www.echosculpture.com

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Arts & Travel

Israeli ceramics exhibit explores identity and architecture

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

By no coincidence, many of the pieces in "From the Melting Pot into the Fire," the new exhibition of Israeli ceramics at the Gardiner Museum, turn on two themes – identity and architecture.

Israel, a Jewish but multicultural state composed of Jews, Muslims and Christians, is a work in progress, as evidenced by its changing urban landscapes.

If there is one nation in the world where construction cranes are an ever-present reality, it is surely Israel.

The country a tourist may have visited in 1967 has been transformed by waves of new immigrants, particularly from the former Soviet Union, and by a series of building booms.

Taking their cue from the changes in their midst, Israeli ceramicists have produced works that reflect the sheer diversity of the country's citizenry and the evolving nature of its cities.

The 37 stylized, highly conceptual works at the Gardiner Museum, the exhibition's only Canadian venue, explore such issues as land and home in modern Israel.

"It is an outstanding selection of contemporary studio ceramics we believe demonstrates the diversity of experience among the presenting artists," said Charles Manson, the museum's chief curator.

He added, "The union of ideas and culture makes Israel a centre of a vibrant ceramics scene."

"From the Melting Pot into the Fire," which opened Feb. 4 and runs until May 9, is organized by the Ceramic Artists Association of Israel, a non-governmental, non-profit professional organization.

The Building Blocks of Memory/Monument for the Hebrew Language.

Its representative, Yael Novak, was at a press preview last week, as was one of her installations.

Funding to bring the exhibition to Canada was provided by Israel's ministry of foreign affairs, which has launched a public relations campaign to de-emphasize politics and strife in the portrayal of Israel.

Prior to its arrival in Toronto, the exhibition was at the Mint Museum of Craft + Design in Charlotte, N.C.

The important theme of identity is explored in a number of visually striking ceramics.

The Building Blocks of Memory/Monument for the Hebrew Language, by Avner Singer and Varda Bar Shamai, unfolds in the letters of the alphabet and in visual images of historic figures such as Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism.

My Melting Pot is by Brazilian immigrant Martha Riegner, who was raised as a Jew despite the fact that one of her parents is a Catholic. Riegner's work consists of three white and blue vessels symbolizing the Jewish and Catholic faiths and their influence on her.

Sabras in a Tin Can, by Zipi Geva, conveys the essence of the Israeli people, prickly externally but sweet internally

Anna Kirzner's *Free Space* resembles an open attache case and represents the invisible borders that surround us all.

Lie of the Land, by Marcelle Klein and Tami Bar-Lev, focuses on the notion of belonging through the medium of an hourglass and falling sand.

Dina Shahar's *Urban Tiles* dwells on the bold facades of typical Israeli residential buildings.

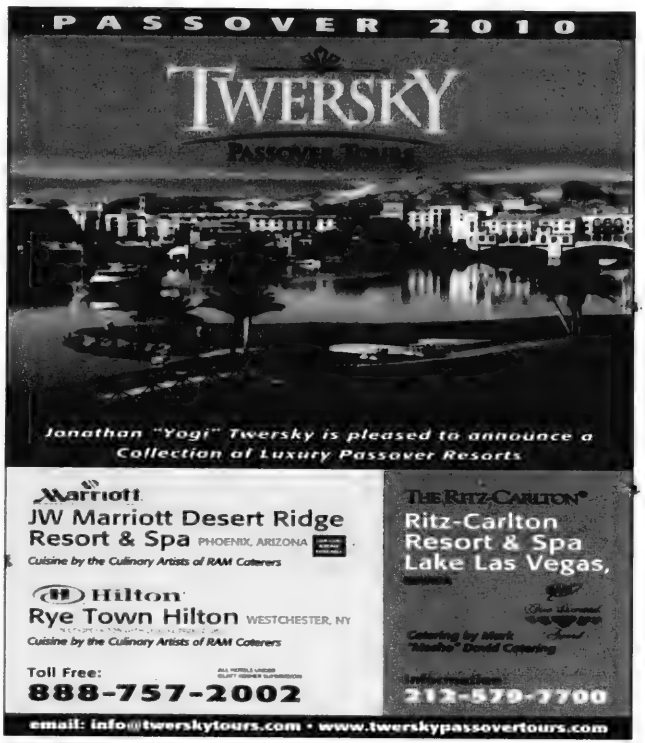
By means of geometric designs, Efrat Eyal's *Model Home* evokes a private space within a public space.

Shani Orstav's *Out of a Wall a Stone will Cry* connects building materials with the human experience, while Orit Ben Arie's *Structures* links geometric forms with an urban environment.

Ethel Pisareff's *Protected Space* is about the relationship between inner space and outer layers.

"Each artist and each piece tells a different story," said Alexandra Montgomery, the museum's executive director. "Some are witty, while others are more poignant."

Overall, however, two overpowering themes, identity and architecture, sum up the essence of "From the Melting Pot into the Fire."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Arts & Travel

Former Facts of Life *star sounds simply glorious in operatic play*

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Mindy Cohn, best known for playing Natalie on the hit TV show *The Facts of Life*, is starring in the Peter Quilter comedy *Glorious!*, at Mississauga's Stage West.

Glorious!, which runs from Feb. 11 to April 16, is based on the true story of Florence Foster Jenkins (1868-1944), a New York socialite with a passion for opera. She was a terrible singer, who performed unbelievably bad recitals to a sold-out Carnegie Hall, leaving her audiences crying with laughter.

"She was the world's worst singer, but *Glorious!* is really a love story of her friends and her accompanist, Cosme McMoon [played by Justin Stadnyk]," says Cohn. "Florence was this amazing, independent spirit, beautiful woman, and with the support of her friends put on these recitals and performed.

"She thought she sounded glorious, and people just loved her because she had such a joy of life about her. It was infectious and contagious. People just wanted to be around her."

Cohn says that Foster Jenkins' contemporaries and friends included actor Tallulah Bankhead and songwriters Cole Porter and Harold Arlen. Famous musicians and actors appreciated her spirit, her spunk and her tenacity. She was such an incredible life force, and the fact that she couldn't sing didn't seem to matter.

"The play opens when she meets her new accompanist, Cosme McMoon, and basically Cosme kind of mirrors the audience," says Cohn. "As Cosme first hears her voice – it's like 'the Emperor's New Clothes' – like do we all know this woman can't sing? But the play takes the audience on a journey, and as he falls in love with Florence, so does the audience. Cosme is the hub of the piece, although it is about Florence."

Cohn, unlike Foster Jenkins, can sing, but opera is a whole different animal for her. To learn the songs in the show in only two weeks of rehearsal has been incredibly challenging for her, she says.

Glorious! is a "feel-good play," Cohn says. "No matter what kind of mood you will come to the theatre with, an hour and a half with Florence, Cosme, her friend Dorothy, and her beau, St. Clair... it is just a joy of life.

"I think people will be humming her songs. This play really puts a smile on your face. She's enchanting, and the play is enchanting."

Mindy Cohn plays Florence Foster Jenkins

The Los Angeles-based actor made her acting debut as the witty, outspoken Eastland Academy student Natalie Green on *The Facts of Life*. Cohn played Rose Jenko in Fox's *21 Jump Street* and made appearances on *Diff'rent Strokes*, *Charles in Charge* and other shows.

She went on to star on stage and in several films, including *Alone with a Stranger* and *Sex & Death 101*. She also co-hosted the radio show *Talkzone* with Alan Thicke, on which teens discussed issues with their parents.

For the past 12 years, Cohn has been the voice of Velma in the animated series *What's New Scooby Doo?* She will be appearing in the upcoming film *Violet Tendencies*.

Her volunteer activities include working for the United Nations.

Cohn was raised Jewish and had a bat mitzvah. "I am very proud to be Jewish, but it is more a cultural thing than a religious thing for me and my family, and always has been," she says.

" It is more about who we are as a people, but it is not the religious path that I follow. It is a slippery slope in the States – a lot of people don't want to say they are Jewish because they are not religious, but I think they are two different things."

For tickets to *Glorious!*, visit www.stagewest.com or call the box office at 905-238-0042.

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Correction

The phone number for information about the Gems of the Danube cruise in "Travel Talk" (Jan. 28) was incorrect. It should be 416-928-3113. *The CJN* regrets the error.

Actor faces 18 to Life on CBC sitcom

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Toronto actor Stacey Farber is back on weekly television. The former *Degrassi: The Next Generation* alumnus is starring in CBC's newest sitcom, *18 to Life*. She plays 18-year-old Jessie Hill who marries the boy next door, Tom Bellow (Michael Seater), on a dare!

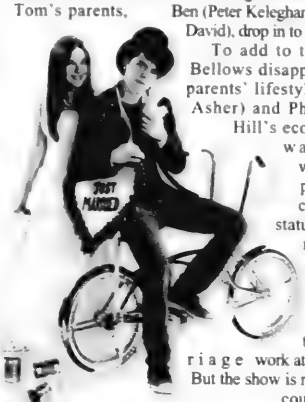
"I absolutely loved the script – that was the first thing that attracted me to the show," Farber said. "The dialogue was hilarious, really original, and I loved the character. Jessie is very different from Ellie Nash, the character I played on *Degrassi*. I was very happy to have the opportunity to do something different and to do comedy in particular. It's a lot harder than I expected."

Farber grew up on the hit Canadian teen drama series, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. At 14, she was cast as Ellie, a teen battling depression, and continued in the role until she turned 21 when she starred in the television movie – *Degrassi Goes Hollywood*.

Farber, 22, earned a Gemini nomination last year for her performance on the series, but as chance had it, she lost to Seater, her co-star on *18 to Life*.

"We were actually in the same category," she recalled. "Michael won for his role on *Life with Derek*, but that's OK. We went out to celebrate together afterward and it was cool," she recalled.

In *18 to Life*, it's not always marital bliss for the newlyweds. Once Jessie and Tom say "I do," they transform the Bellows' attic into a cool loft for two. But it gets crowded up there when Tom's parents, Ben (Peter Keleghan) and Judith (Ellen David), drop in to offer advice.



Stacey Farber plays Jessie Hill alongside co-star Michael Seater, playing Tom.

To add to the humour, the Bellows disapprove of Jessie's parents' lifestyle. Tara (Angela Asher) and Phil (Al Goulem) Hill's eco-friendly, hippy ways don't sit well with Tom's parents who are concerned with status and what other neighbours think.

"Most episodes, Tom and Jessie try to figure out how to make their marriage work at such a young age. But the show is mainly about three couples because the parents have a large role, so it's a mix and match, [depending on] who the episode is about," Farber explained.

In one show, Jessie has issues with her mother-in-law when she finds out that Judith has thrown away invitations to Jessie's stagette because she's embarrassed about the upcoming marriage. In another, Tom's father keeps his conversion to Judaism a secret from his wife, leading to mayhem when their rabbi comes to dinner.

Growing up in Toronto, Farber attended Claude Watson School for the Arts, Branksome Hall and York University, before attending The New School, a college in New York, for three years and interning at trendy New York fashion magazines *Nylon* and *allure*, and becoming a blogger at *Teen Vogue*.

"It was really interesting and fun. I wanted to learn everything I could about that industry and how women's magazines were put together," Farber said. "It was amazing that I could intern for a credit at my school."

Since Farber graduated in May with a BA in creative writing, her plans include travelling, interning and acting. Recently, she was cast in a television movie filmed in Hamilton for MTV, and had a small role on the Season 3 premiere of the police drama *Flashpoint*, airing in the fall.

"It was very cool to be surrounded by pretend cops who were pointing their guns at me and to work on one of CTV's biggest hits."

18 to Life airs on CBC TV Mondays at 8 p.m. Visit www.cbc.ca to view past episodes.

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How Jews fared under Islam and Christianity

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The state of Jewish-Muslim relations has been a contentious topic for a long time now.

Nineteenth-century historians, particularly Jewish ones, claimed that the relationship between Jews and Arabs in the Middle East was more harmonious than the relationship between Jews and Christians in Europe.

Arabs hostile to Zionism and Israel adopted this view in the 20th century.

Writing in the 1930s, George Antonius, a Christian Arab, commented that Arab history remained "remarkably free from instances of deliberate persecution," and that in spite of the Palestine problem, the treatment of Jews in Arab countries "continues to be not less friendly and humane than in England or the United States."

Reacting to such rose-coloured assessments, some Jewish writers in recent times have argued that Jews did not fare well under Islam and that Muslims treated Jews almost as badly as medieval Christianity.

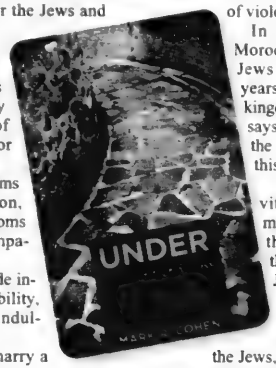
Mark Cohen, a professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton University, has weighed these diametrically opposing interpretations and, in the second edition of *Under Crescent & Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, (Princeton University Press), he reaches a middle-of-the-road conclusion

As he puts it, "When all is said and done, the historical evidence indicates that the Jews of Islam, especially during the formative and classical centuries (up to the 13th century), experienced much less persecution than did the Jews of Christendom."

Cohen validates his theory by quoting Bernard Lewis, whose book, *Jews of Islam*, he rates as "the most balanced assessment of the position of the Jews under Islamic rule in the Middle Ages."

According to Lewis, Jews were generally treated better under Islam than under Christianity, with hostility to Jews in Islamic society being non-ideological.

Taking this as as his starting point, Cohen writes: "Whereas the Christian vocabulary for the Jews and Judaism reflects animosity, Islamic parlance betrays recognition of mutually held religious concepts and values."



Essentially, Jews and non-Muslims in Islamic Arab societies, popularly known as *dhimmis*, agreed to a host of discriminatory limitations in return for protection.

Cohen maintains that Jews and Muslims enjoyed "easygoing" social interaction, despite friction owing to divergent customs and mores, but that xenophobia accompanied Jewish-Christian relations.

Judaism and Christianity both forbade intermarriage, the ultimate form of sociability, but Islam handled the matter "more indulgently," he adds.

A Muslim man was permitted to marry a *dhimmi* woman on the presumption that he, as master in the relationship, would not be susceptible to the lure of his wife's religion. Further, Islamic law required the husband to permit his non-Muslim wife to observe her religious rituals and to pray inside their house.

Cohen points out that Jews in Islamic realms did not experience "physical violence on a scale remotely approaching Jewish suffering in western Christendom." As an example, he cites Muslim and Christian reactions to the Black Death.

In Europe, where the Crusades had already ravaged Jewish communities, the Black Death triggered massive pogroms, but in the Islamic world, Jews were not blamed for the plague and pogroms did not occur.

Jews, however, were the target of Muslim outbursts of violence.

In 1032, the Jewish quarter of Fez, Morocco, was sacked by Berbers and 6,000 Jews are said to have been slain. Just 32 years later, the Jews of the Spanish-Berber kingdom of Grenada were massacred. Cohen says that the Berber Almohads perpetrated the most serious crimes against Jews during this period.

Under Christianity, Jews performed vital commercial functions, notably as moneylender and tax collectors. But as the need for their services waned with the rise of a Christian commercial class, Jews were subjected to the whims of local rulers, often with tragic results.

As Cohen observes, "When the time came that rulers saw no further use for the Jews, they confiscated whatever remained of their wealth and expelled them."

Rabbinical attitudes to money lending varied. In ancient Babylonia, Jews were discouraged from charging interest to gentiles. Yet in Europe, from the 12th century onward, rabbis justified usury for a variety of reasons: hard times, the exclusion of Jews from landed occupations, the heavy tax burden, and the need to amass funds to bribe Christians when Jews came under the threat of persecution.

Although Jews were usually worse off under Christianity, they encountered a much more hospitable environment in the southern Mediterranean region of France than in the northern part of Europe.

"Jewish communities in the south experienced much less persecution and over all lived in more placid, integrated fashion with their surroundings than their northern European brethren," Cohen notes. "They were less segregated from Christians, and their economic activities varied."

The Jewish response to persecution differed markedly in Christian and Muslim lands.

Ashkenazi Jews preferred martyrdom to conversion, since they considered Christians theologically idolatrous and were bound by the mishnaic ruling that Jews must die rather than succumb to idolatry. Sephardi Jews, when threatened with death unless they converted, typically accepted Islam rather than martyrdom, Cohen points out.

In summing up, he says that Jews in Islamic areas regularly crossed boundaries to participate, if only temporarily and tenuously, as virtual equals with Muslims. He adds, "Though always at risk of incurring Muslim wrath and even persecution, Jews, nonetheless, enjoyed substantial security during the formative and classical periods of Islam."

Practically speaking, Jews and Muslims in Islamic societies were equal in economic matters. Islamic law demanded that *dhimmis* remain subordinate in partnerships formed with Muslims, but this edict was often ignored.

As well, Jews did not suffer restrictions on their freedom of movement under Islam.

The situation was different in Europe.

Jewish merchants and traders intensified Christianity's animus toward Jews, while deeply ingrained theological hatred of Jews had a profoundly negative impact on law and policy that only escalated over time.

Under Crescent & Cross, in short, is a useful volume about an extremely sensitive issue.

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By BEN HARRIS
JTA

NEW YORK — When the phone call from Germany arrived at the Spector family home in Lenox, Mass., last month, the voice on the other end betrayed little of the excitement one would expect from a newly minted Olympic athlete.

Laura Spector, 22, had qualified for the U.S. biathlon team that will compete in Vancouver. The Games run Feb. 12 to 28.

"It was a very quiet voice, and it was just, 'Daddy, Hi it's Laura. I made the team,'" her father, Jesse, recalled. "It was just like that. It was that quiet, from this five-foot, 100-pound kid. It was probably a very emotional three to five seconds because her voice sounded as though, 'Dad, I didn't make the team.' But she was so composed."

Spector will be the youngest American woman in the biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing with target shooting. She is also one of five athletes measuring in at five-feet tall – the shortest members of the 2010 U.S. Olympic team.

A student of genetics and Jewish studies at Dartmouth College, Spector is among a handful of American Jewish Olympians headed to Vancouver for the 21st Winter Olympics. Chicago native Ben Agosto, a 2006 Olympic silver medalist, is returning to compete in the ice-dancing pairs. Steve Mesler, a bobsledder from Buffalo, N.Y., is back for his third Olympics.

Israel will have a team of three in Vancouver: Mikail Renzhin, an alpine skier originally from Latvia, and the brother-sister duo Alexandra and Roman Zaretsky, born in Belarus, who compete in ice dancing.

The pair finished seventh in the 2010 European Championships, which earned them an Olympic berth. They are scheduled to skate to *Hava Nagila* and music from *Schindler's List*. It's their second Olympics. Renzhin will compete in the slalom and giant slalom events. It's also his second Olympics.

Agosto, 28, who nearly missed the 2006 Olympics because his partner, the Canadian-born skater Tanith Belbin, was not yet a naturalized U.S. citizen, said he was looking forward to soaking in the atmosphere of what will almost certainly be his last Olympics. A last-minute act of Congress granted Belbin expedited citizenship and she was able to represent the United States at the Games in Turin, Italy.

"When that came through, it was really a big surprise, but we really didn't have that time to build up and kind of think of what to expect," Agosto told JTA by phone from his training rink in Pennsylvania. "We were just kind of thrown into it. There's a lot that I don't remember because it was such a whirlwind."

Spector grew up on a farm in Lenox where her family keeps llamas, alpacas, goats, horses, sheep, turkeys and chickens. She does her academic work during the spring and summer to free up the fall and winter for training and competition.

In high school, she would wake before the sun to make tracks on her skis in a field behind the family home. She discovered biathlon at a camp for the sport in Lake Placid, N.Y., when she was 14.

"It was my first experience with shooting a gun, but I loved combining two sports – cross-country skiing (in this case running because it was summer time) and marksmanship – to make each a little more challenging," Spector wrote in an e-mail. "Therefore, the greater the reward when you do well."

Her parents describe her as an unusually precocious and passionate kid who, from a young age, was adept at meeting challenges.

"She's not a frivolous kid," said Spector's mother, Patty, herself a national champion in marathon canoe racing. "Even when she's on the road and travelling, she reads books that most people her age would never go near or pick up. She just finished *The Gulag Archipelago*."

When she became a bat mitzvah at the Conservative Congregation Knesset Israel Synagogue in nearby Pittsfield, where her family has been members for 30 years, Spector conducted the entire Shabbat service in keeping with the shul's tradition of lay-led services. Spector also attended the synagogue's Hebrew school.

"For me, being Jewish is a lot about family and community, and the continuity of tradition," Spector said. "There is an entire congregation at home responsible for the shaping of my religious and cultural identity. There is comfort in knowing that these are people who have known me since I was born and have instilled in me thousands of years of tradition in ethical behavior."

Though generally considered a minor sport by Americans, biathlon is wildly popular in Europe and is said to be the continent's top-rated televised winter sport. Patty Spector compares it to NASCAR racing in the United States.

The Spectors have watched their daughter perform in stadiums packed with thousands of fans in Europe, and they will be in Vancouver to cheer on Laura and the other U.S. athletes. "What Jewish mother would not go see their daughter?" Patty said.

Only three athletes make Israeli team

Riefenstahl footage from Berlin withdrawn

JTA

VANCOUVER — The organizers of the Vancouver Winter Olympics have withdrawn an official video of archival footage from Leni Riefenstahl's film of the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.

It was withdrawn after Canadian Jewish Congress and others reportedly complained about the doctored footage.

The four-minute video, *Lights Will Guide You Home*, has been screened for months to participants in the Olympic torch relay after they boarded shuttle buses to their positions along its route. The video was also posted on the Vancouver organizing committee's website.

The *Globe and Mail* reported recently what had long been noted on YouTube: That the archival footage is from *Olympia*, Riefenstahl's controversial film of the Olympic flame being lit in Greece and carried to Berlin.

Reports noted that the segment was edited to avoid, among other things, the runners passing between two Nazi flags. A shot of the torch bearer entering the Olympic stadium in Berlin was digitally altered to remove a number of silhouetted arms in Nazi salutes.

Riefenstahl made propaganda films for Adolf Hitler, most notably *Triumph of the Will*.

"Couldn't they find another 22 seconds of footage to use? To many members of our community, the entire 1936 Games – and all related images are rooted in hate," Romy Ritter, Congress' Pacific region director told the *New York Times*.

Jim Richards, program director for the torch relay, said the video was being replaced with new footage of highlights from the current torch relay. But he defended the use of footage from *Olympia*, saying its producers considered three options: not using the footage, altering it or using it in its original form.

"We chose the middle ground, in order to respect the relay's history, while not highlighting the political environment of the day," he said in a statement quoted in the *Times*. "We weighed the decision carefully, as even though the Berlin 1936 Games footage lasts only a few seconds, we wanted to try to do the right thing to reflect the relay's past."

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New kids' soccer league unveiled

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It never rains but it pours, at least when it comes to sports leagues for Jewish children.

Last fall, the Prosserman JCC and its partner JCC Chai Sports launched a series of sports leagues to involve elementary-aged kids in extra-curricular athletic activities. Hockey, soccer, baseball and basketball are among the JCC's offerings.

Now, a pair of soccer aficionados are announcing the start of a new non-profit soccer league to kick off in May that is aimed primarily at children attending Jewish day schools.

The Maccabi Toronto Academy will trade on the success of the adult soccer team bearing the same Maccabi name, employ its coaches and players, and add training clinics, kosher food, family activities, pick-up games and a venue at a north Toronto day school as selling points as it enters the market.

Capping it off is the opportunity for some of the players to exhibit their skills during halftime at an Ontario Soccer League game at Esther Shiner Stadium, said Jason Mausberg, one of the principals behind Maccabi Toronto's new Jewish day school program, along with Martin Scott.

Maccabi Toronto hosted 100 youngsters last summer at a 'free soccer clinic day'. Back row are club personnel, including Boris Krimus, far left, and Jason Mausberg, fourth from left.

Mausberg said he got the idea for a Jewish soccer league while accompanying his seven-year-old son, who attends the Toronto Heschel School, to local house league games. It turned out, many of the other parents also had children in day schools.

At the same time, Mausberg realized he could leverage his association with the Maccabi Toronto soccer team, where he serves as a player and coach. He saw there was room for some sort of sporting synthesis that would see creation of a Jewish house league under the guidance of Maccabi personnel, who would coach and run clinics.

Adding value to the enterprise are plans for various activities to keep younger and older siblings busy while their brothers and sisters are playing league games.

His dream is to have kids play for their school teams, although the league won't turn away Jewish children from public schools.

"Our hope is to create greater identification with sport within the Jewish day school environment, to provide a warmer environment for children to participate where they will come to the field already knowing their classmates, to enable friendships and acquaintances to flourish… and to create pride within the Jewish community in our accomplishments by introducing our children to elite Jewish athletes and coaches who compete at the highest levels," said Scott.

The spring league will kick off on May 1 at the fields at Heschel school and run for eight weeks. Cost per player is $180. Grades 1 and 2 will play on Tuesday evenings from 6:15 to 7:45, and grades 3 and 4 will play on Thursdays from 6:15 to 7:45. In addition, the academy is offering pick-up soccer on Sundays (9:30 to 11:30), which includes games for kids, parents and even games involving parents and kids at the same time.

There is room for 120 kids on 12 teams, six per age group. So far, more than 35 people have registered.

Mausberg said the Maccabi Toronto soccer club includes skilled players from Israel, Peru, Mexico, England, India, Russia and Morocco, among others. The team's technical director, Boris Krimus, played professionally in Israel and Moldova, and has a National "B" license certification.

The team formed the nucleus of the master's and open (adult) teams that participated in the Maccabiah Games in Israel last summer. The open team advanced to the quarterfinals before bowing out.

On the domestic scene, Maccabi Toronto has won the Division I indoor soccer title at the Hangar Indoor Recreational Facility for six of the past seven years.

This year they are slated to enter the highly competitive Ontario Soccer League, but under the banner – for the first year, at least – of the North York Hearts.

The move allows them to offer some of the kids the opportunity to show their stuff during halftime of OSL games, Mausberg said.

For more information, contact Martin Scott at 905-771-6465, e-mail him at martinemilscott@hotmail.com or visit www.maccabitoronto.com.

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Inside Back

I'll be right over

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

When you invite me over, I'll be the first guest to say my goodbyes. It's not that I don't love you or don't appreciate visiting your home, it's just that I'm afraid to breathe someone else's air – and no, my friends, it wouldn't help to assure me that I'm more than welcome. It's got to do with my miserable childhood. I promise we'll talk about it some other time.

Anyway, the world is populated by a number of different types of houseguests.

The guest who came to sleep: By the horrible moniker, you can imagine the type. In his defence, I must mention that he arrives late, but that's why he feels the need to stay the latest. He watches from the sofa as the almost-last-guest leaves, while you, with a frozen smile, stand at the open door.

You might even mumble "My, my, how time flies when you're having fun, it's after midnight…"

Your guest will stretch his legs and say, "It is late. I'm falling asleep myself!"

Just when you start feeling the joy of life again, you notice he's making your couch comfortable by rearranging the pillows.

Well, things aren't as bad as they seem. They're worse.

When you're done washing the dishes, vacuuming and showering, he looks at you in your pyjamas and suggests: "So, how about another round of coffee?"

The "I brought my own food" guest: He doesn't want to intrude. He came because you forced him to. He sits on the edge of the couch the whole evening and hardly touches the food (let alone takes seconds).

Sometimes, he even brings most of his dinner with him. Not to offend you, God forbid, but just to chip in.

When, for some mysterious reason, no one talks around the dinner table – people just quietly chew their food – he gets up in a hurry to leave. If you'd like him to stay, be extremely careful when scratching your hands or just lifting them up. He may think you're looking at your watch and want him out, or (in extreme cases) want to hit him for coming.

The "open up my present now!" guest: When you open the door to greet him, you see a present first, and only after a couple of minutes do you get to see him. He's all smiles and making a great fuss about his gift. You want to introduce him to the other guests? Forget about it. You ask him to join the others? Not interested.

Look, he bought you a present, and you and the rest of the world should look at it now! (And it's almost always a nothing-to-write-home-about gift.) Throughout the evening, he returns to the scene of crime (the gift zone), fumbles it and dances around it over and over.

Mind you, he's better than the "I didn't know what to get you, so I got you nothing" guest. You might as well say, "I didn't know what to cook for you, so I cooked you nothing."

The best guest, ever: He calls you up the day before and says in a very sorry voice: "Would you mind changing plans? I'd simply love for you to come over, instead of me coming to your place. I want you to taste my new posh recipes, and please don't bring anything. Your company is the greatest gift!"

And for those of you readers who know me, please, *do* take it personally.

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

CHOCOLATE HEAVEN TRUFFLE COOKIES FOR PURIM

1/3 c butter
1 c sugar
3 eggs
4 sq unsweetened chocolate
2 c semisweet chocolate chips, divided
1/4 tsp baking powder and 1/4 tsp salt
1/2 c flour
2 tblsp cocoa
1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
Confectioner's Sugar

Melt chocolate, 1 c. chocolate chips, butter; cool. Beat sugar & eggs in mixer. Add vanilla and chocolate mixture. In a bowl, combine flour, cocoa, baking powder, salt; beat into chocolate mixture. Stir in remaining chocolate chips. Cover and chill 3 hrs. Remove dough and with lightly floured hands, roll into 1" balls. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° 10-12 min until puffed. Cool 3-4 min before removing to wire rack to cool completely. Repeat with remaining dough. Dust with confectioner's sugar.

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By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

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Genetics plays a small part in the health and wellness of our minds as we age. Our environment and lifestyle choices are essential in maintaining a healthy body and sharp mind. Resistance training twice a week improved attention spans and conflict resolution skills in woman over 60, while lowering the risk of chronic diseases. Cardio-based exercises such as brisk walking, aerobics, ballroom dancing and swimming lowers your risk of cognitive and mental impairment up to 39 per cent. Ballroom dancing has the largest effect on the brain, lowering the risk of developing dementia by 63 per cent later in life, as it takes a lot of mental effort to dance.

Regular aerobic activity has been shown to improve the ability to multitask and process information efficiently, even in people with mild cognitive and mental impairment. A separate study out of Israel found that even starting an exercise program in your 80s will extend your life and your ability to live independently. This study found that seniors who were active in their 70s were more likely to remain independent when they reached 85.

Seniors who keep fit have fewer memory problems and lose less brain volume than their sedentary counterparts. As little as four hours a week – that's 30 minutes a day – can make a significant difference to the quantity and quality of life.

To learn more, contact me at felycesfitness.ca.

Haitian kids on Bathurst Street?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

Since last month's earthquake in Haiti, there's been much discussion about the importance of adopting children from that devastated country. Within this dialogue, a debate rages about the sensibility and ethics of adopting a black child from a dramatically different culture, and whether it's too soon.

Regardless, the fact is that many people around the world are clamouring to adopt a Haitian child.

The strange thing is that this isn't happening among Diaspora Jews.

Google "Christians" or "Muslims" and "adopting Haitian," and you'll find lots of information. Google "Jews" and "adopting Haitian," and you'll only find links to Israel.

(According to JTA, early on in this crisis, Israel's social affairs minister, Isaac Herzog, asked his staff to look into the feasibility of Israelis adopting Haitian children who lost their parents in the devastating earthquake on Jan. 12. "We are proud Israel aided the horrible distress in Haiti, and we have a moral obligation, as human beings, to aid these children," Herzog said.)

Jews do adopt children. Certainly there are families up and down the Bathurst Street corridor who have adopted children via long and arduous processes – according to findlaw.com, Jews generally adopt children from such places as China and Colombia. When a Jewish family can't have a child, adoption is clearly an option, if not a spontaneous reaction.

But I think Diaspora Jewry has developed a safe approach to tikkun olam (repairing the world), especially when called upon to react personally and sometimes immediately. Few people truly open up their homes and extend themselves in a way that costs them time, money, space and an emotional investment when an unexpected soul taps on their door.

Case in point: Jewish Family & Child has struggled for years to find enough foster parents for Jewish kids who can't live at home. Why?

Astonishingly, our community has never built a Jewish shelter for the dozens upon dozens of children who have gone homeless, or are unable to deal with their home life or the pressures of being a Jew. While this may be more of an example of outreach, it does reflect a certain fear of dealing with people in need in a hands-on way.

Unlike Israelis, who work to survive every day (and, therefore, are prepared for discomfort), we in the Diaspora are in a comfort zone that holds little room for "indigent" guests.

In November, actor and activist Mia Farrow came to town and spoke about the courageous few who put their lives on the line for others by leaving their comfort zone and investing heavily in "the other." Perhaps we have, after decades of community-building, decided it's just easier to write a cheque than be bothered by the immense challenges that come with bravely sharing our lives with an orphan or troubled teen.

Maybe we have begun to believe that money will fix all of our ills and don't have the time to bring "the other" into our homes?

It would be prudent and Jewish if we all rolled up our sleeves and responded to the calls of Haitian orphans, just as our Christian and Muslim brothers are doing so well. Even if you had not been thinking about increasing your family size, the spontaneous crisis in Haiti is a compelling reason to give it a shot.

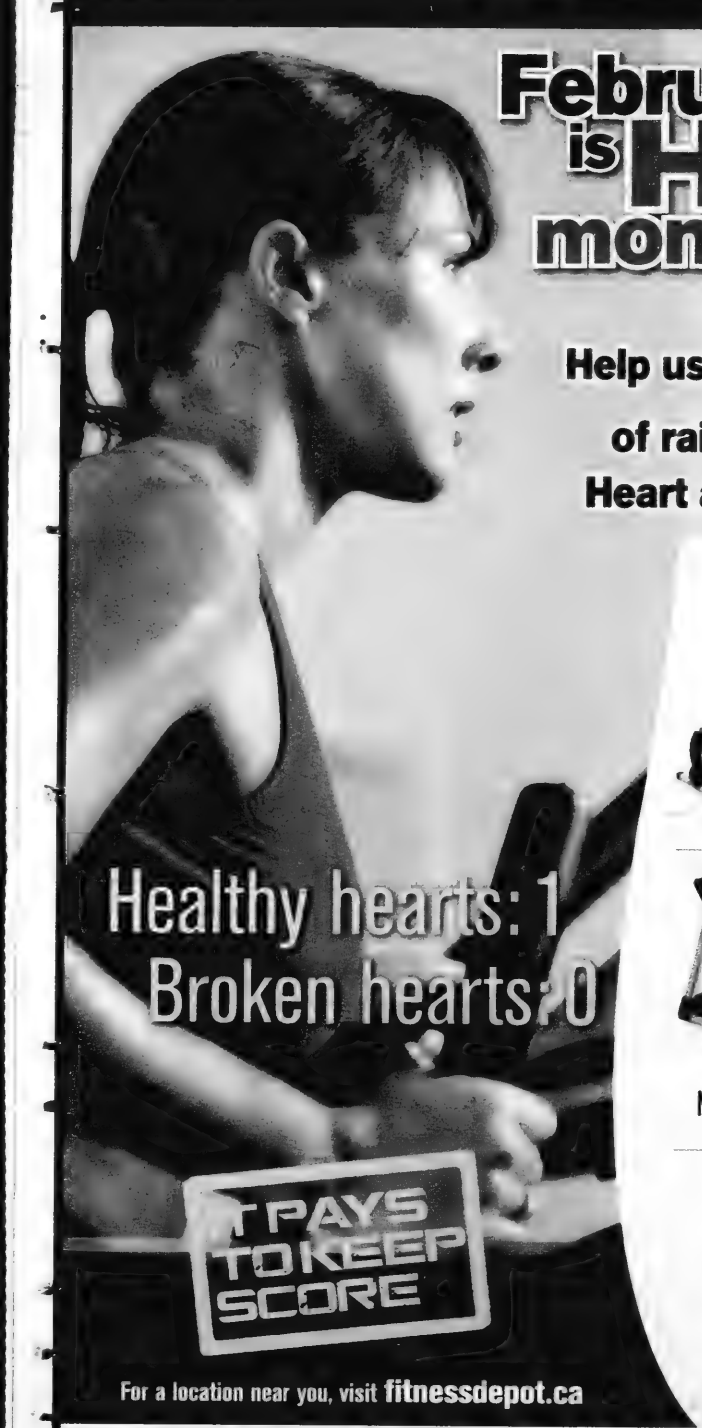
Let's not forget how blessed we are, and recognize our ability to protect and nurture children at Jane and Finch, Regent Park, Bathurst Street and Port-au-Prince.

Let me know if you've considered adopting or have tried to adopt a Haitian child.

I'm interested in being proven wrong.

To comment go to http://avrum.net.

February is Heart month



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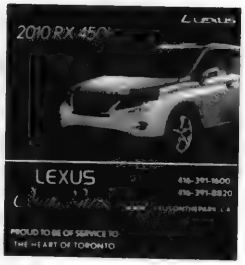

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Israeli finance minister brings economic message to Ottawa. *Page 22*

Bridal

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From left are Saul Bronfeld, chairman of the board of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE); Jon Allen, ambassador of Canada in Israel; Ester Levanon, CEO of the TASE; Ungad Chadda, senior vice-president of the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX); and Raymond King, senior manager of Global Diversified Industrials at the TSX.

Stock exchanges make a 'shidduch'

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — An agreement signed in Israel last Wednesday between the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) and the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) was cause for celebration by representatives of both exchanges.

After more than two years of negotiations, executives from the exchanges signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), which signifies mutual understanding between the exchanges.

The MoU declares the exchanges' intention to develop channels of communication and share information. It is hoped that the agreement will pave the way for the creation of a mutual recognition agreement between the regulatory authorities of each country, which would in turn enable the exchanges to develop a cross-listing agreement.

Although the TSX does have some Israel-connected listings, which are U.S. subsidiaries of companies that started in Israel, it has yet to list any direct ones.

"Over the last 2-1/2 years, I have witnessed the hard work and unequivocal commitment of the TASE and of the TSX in their efforts to make a 'shidduch,' a meeting of the hearts and of the minds," said Jon Allen, Canada's ambassador to Israel. "The signing of this MoU between the two exchanges is a truly fitting culmination of those efforts, of goodwill, and of really... hard work. I really believe this will be mutually beneficial."

Both Ester Levanon, TASE's CEO, and Ungad Chadda, the senior vice-president of the TSX, agreed.

"This is a really exciting moment… We are all very happy we have come to this moment. I think it's going to be a great success for both exchanges," Levanon said.

Continued on page 36

Anti-Semitic incidents at U of T condemned

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The dean of the University of Toronto's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work has condemned two anti-Semitic incidents that occurred on campus late last year.

Faye Mishna's condemnation was contained in two separate letters on official university letterhead addressed to colleagues, students and friends. She wrote the letters when she was interim dean.

In the first letter on Dec. 7, 2009, she wrote, "Let me be clear: There is no place in this faculty – or anywhere else at the University of Toronto – for anti-Semitism, discrimination or exclusion of any sort whatsoever. This faculty is unwavering in our commitment to inclusiveness and diversity."

Rupaleem Bhuyan

She acknowledged that the incidents, which occurred in a classroom discussion last November and in a subsequent students' meeting with faculty members, were "profoundly hurtful to Jewish colleagues and students."

Mishna, who maintains a private practice in psychotherapy, said that the incidents created "a rift" among students and faculty.

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UN set to tighten Iran sanctions - please see page 35

The News in Brief

Canada

Diab Hearing In June

OTTAWA — An extradition hearing for a Lebanese Canadian man accused in the 1980 bombing of a Paris shul will take place in June, Agence France-Presse reported. Hassan Diab, 56, a sociology lecturer at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, was arrested in November 2008 in Ottawa at the request of French officials, who want him extradited to face charges in the bombing of the Rue Copernic synagogue, which killed four people and injured 40. Diab, whose bail conditions include wearing an electronic ankle monitor, says he's a victim of mistaken identity. The Crown had sought time to let France gather more evidence, but the judge in the case said he "would not be very receptive" to more delays beyond June.

Video Shown Again

VANCOUVER — Olympic torchbearers in Whistler and Langley, B.C., were still being shown a video with footage from Leni Riefenstahl's Nazi propaganda film *Olympia* last week, despite assurances from Olympic organizers the video had been withdrawn. Footage of torchbearers for the 1936 Berlin Olympics had been altered to remove Nazi salutes, but the entire video, which was being shown on shuttle buses used by torchbearers, was pulled after complaints from Canadian Jewish Congress. A Games spokesperson told the *Globe and Mail* that torch relay organizers would be reminded not to use it.

Football Team Sold

TORONTO — David Cynamon and Howard Sokolowski sold the Toronto Argonauts last week to David Braley, who also owns the CFL's B.C. Lions. Cynamon and Sokolowski, noted Jewish philanthropists, saved the money-losing franchise from bankruptcy in 2003.

Two Aspers Resign

WINNIPEG — David and Gail Asper resigned last week from the board of directors of Canwest Global Communications, the struggling media firm founded by their late father, Israel Asper. Gail Asper, a lawyer who heads the family's Asper Foundation, and David Asper, a businessman and lawyer, had been on the board since 1992 and 1997, respectively. The moves were part of Canwest's restructuring. Their brother, Leonard, remains CEO.

NY Times Won't Reassign Reporter

NEW YORK — The *New York Times*' public editor recommended that the paper's Jerusalem bureau chief, a U.S. Jew, be reassigned because his son joined the Israeli army.

Clark Hoyt, the paper's independent ombudsman, wrote about the issue in a Feb. 6 column, weighing whether bureau chief Ethan Bronner can be objective, and whether the *Times*' reporting can be seen as fair, given that Bronner's son is serving in the Israel Defence Forces after enlisting in December for 1-1/2 years of service.

"The *Times* sent a reporter overseas to provide disinterested coverage of one of the world's most intense and potentially explosive conflicts, and now his son has taken up arms for one side," Hoyt wrote. "Even the most sympathetic reader could reasonably wonder how that would affect the father, especially if shooting broke out."

Hoyt said that he has "enormous respect for Bronner and his work, and he has done nothing wrong," but urged he be transferred for the duration of his son's service.

Bronner has been posted in Israel four times in the past two years. He was the *Times*' deputy foreign editor for four years. He's married to an Israeli psychologist.

The issue was raised by the pro-Palestinian website Electronic Intifada. In a response also published Feb. 6, *Times* executive editor Bill Keller said Bronner would stay in his post, adding that his family ties "supply a measure of sophistication about Israel and its adversaries that someone with no connections would lack."

World

Jew Elected VP

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica — Luis Lieberman, a Jewish ex-banker, became vice-president of Costa Rica after Laura Chinchilla was elected as the Central American nation's first female president last week. His parents came to Costa Rica from Poland before World War II. Some 3,000 Jews live in Costa Rica.

He told Ynet Jews have been active in Costa Rican politics and had served in previous governments.

The Canadian Jewish news

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Vancouver welcomes Team Israel to Olympics

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — The Vancouver Jewish community welcomed Team Israel to the Olympics last Thursday night with an event that attracted some 800 people to Temple Sholom.

Sponsored by the Vancouver Chapter of Magen David Adom, the event, titled The Frozen Chosen, began with a tribute to the memory of the 11 Israeli Olympic athletes and coaches who were murdered during the 1972 Munich Olympics.

"This Olympics there has been a pledge: never again, and not on our soil," said Rabbi Philip Bregman of Temple Sholom.

One of the attendees at the event was Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway Stockwell Day, who spoke of his respect and affection for Israel.

"Israel made a huge contribution to the recovery effort in Haiti, and after the tsunami," he said. "Israel has learned and continues to learn the hard way how to deal with tragedy, and instead of recoiling, it shares its knowledge with others. Whatever Israelis put their mind to, it doesn't take long before they excel."

Israel's Olympians, from left, Mikhail Renzhin, Alexandra and Roman Zaretsky. *[Lauren Kramer photo]*

Another speaker at the podium was Winnipeg native David Greaves, who holds citizenship in Canada and Israel and became a member of Israel's national bobsled team a few years ago.

He spoke of his terror at riding in the rear seat of the bobsled, and his pride at representing Israel on the team.

"You will carry the Magen David, a nation will watch and Jews all over the world will be rooting for you," he told the three Israeli athletes comprising Team Israel at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

"We may be a small nation, but we are the greatest nation in the world."

Asked how it feels to have Jews all over the world rooting for their success, Roman Zaretsky, who will figure skate with his sister Alexandra, told the crowd: "You've got our attention right now. This is amazing!"

He was joined by downhill skier Mikail Renzhin, two coaches and Israel's chef de mission Boris Chait.

"Knowing the history of Munich, we can say we're here to stay as a country and as a team," Chait said. "It's important to win, but it's more important to be ambassadors to the world. We are a small team, but we're going to be fighting for the top spots."

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Greater Toronto Area

Agricultural research flourishes at Hebrew U

Second of a series.

"Our mission is service to the Jewish people and service to the world," Hebrew University president Menahem Ben-Sasson recently told *The CJN*. Over the course of a week, *The CJN* observed how certain members of the university's staff dedicate their work and themselves to the fulfilment of the president's mission.

• • •

Some 41 kilometers north and west of Jerusalem, in the lushly verdant town of Rehovot, rich with fruits and flowers of all kind and a multicolored human tapestry from all parts of the globe, is the university's faculty of agriculture. Its formal name is The Robert H. Smith Faculty of Agriculture, Food and Environment.

From the editor's desk...

The dean of the faculty, Aharon (Ronnie) Friedman is a gregarious, teddy bear of a man, who greets his visitors with a warm smile and a generous handshake.

He spoke to us earnestly and almost emotionally about the faculty of agriculture and its mission.

Like the university itself, the faculty is older than the state of which it is part. It opened in 1942 with 21 students. Today there are approximately 2,200 students. The teaching and research at the faculty stream into four distinct yet clearly related scientific areas: animal, plant, environmental and nutrigenomic sciences.

"We have a firm commitment to feeding the world and alleviating world hunger. Whatever we can do is significant," Friedman said.

And there can be no doubt that the faculty's scientists are doing a great deal. They are at the front in virtually every known agricultural and agronomic battle, Friedman elaborated.

"We have a group of scientists who work on an interdisciplinary basis" to try to solve major problems related to fostering sustainable (safe and efficient) agriculture while protecting, enhancing or rehabilitating the environment.

We met with two scientists who exemplarize this interdisciplinary approach from the starting point of environmental sciences.

Prof. Benny Chefetz is a leading international expert on recapturing, recycling and reusing waste water for the safe use in our agricultural systems. In former times, Chefetz said, the main contaminant in the water that went back to the field was pesticides. Today, they are the spent pharmaceuticals that are transferred into the water systems.

Prof. Yitzhak Hadar is known internationally for his leading work on recycling, re-using and finding some benefit from the large masses of waste that are the unused portion of the crops that grow in the field.

Ronnie Friedman

"We must try to find useful purposes for the byproducts of the vegetables that we grow," Hadar explains.

One of Hadar's current projects, in collaboration with scientists from Italy and Tunisia, is to seek out the potential benefits in the waste that results in the production of olive oil.

Given the ever increasing popularity of olive oil and the scale of the oil producing industry, especially throughout the Mediterranean basin, Hadar's findings may one day have far-reaching significance.

Friedman told us of another faculty member, Prof. Bertha Sivan-Levavi, who was spearheading a vital project in east central Africa to restore and reclaim Lake Victoria as a source of food for the surrounding villagers whose children had over the years become severly malnourished due to the virtual disappearance of stocks of edible fish from the lake.

Three days after our conversation with Friedman, a story about Sivan-Levavi appeared in *Ha'aretz*. The headline read: "Israeli prof. helps solve food crisis spawned by Nile perch."

The sub-headline in the story was: "Fish pond culture relocates from Emek Hefer to Ugandan communities on shores of Lake Victoria."

Apparently, Sivan-Levavi persuaded the Lake Victoria communities to establish fish ponds (such as at Emek Hefer in Israel) to raise carp. The introduction of the carp was instrumental in saving the children.

Friedman assured us, with the excitement of a proud father, that there were many more such stories of faculty members finding ways to feed the world.

As a further example, to combat the horrific morbidity and mortality rates among infants and young children in certain sectors of East Africa, Prof. Shahal Abbo, introduced a high nutrition, simple-to-store chickpea (humus, in Israeli parlance) for local cultivation by the farmers there. That simple chickpea will significantly enhance the wellbeing and health of all the children in the area.

For the scientists at the Hebrew University's faculty of agriculture, feeding the world's hungry is no mere slogan. It is an imperative call to duty.

–MBD

To commemorate the 85th anniversary of the opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, The CJN was recently invited by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University to travel to Jerusalem, visit the university, meet and engage with some of its scholars, researchers and teachers.

See JN

MCGUINTY HEADING TO ISRAEL

Premier Dalton McGuinty; Minister of Economic Development and Trade Sandra Pupatello; and Monte Kwinter, MPP for York Centre and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, visit Quanser Inc., a leader in the innovation and development of advanced control systems for industry. The premier announced he will lead a trade mission to Israel and the West Bank in May to boost trade and investment and build opportunity for Ontario businesses. **Please see story, page 24**

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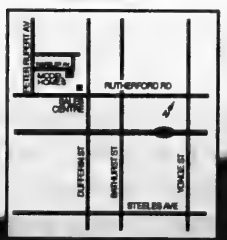

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Greater Toronto Area

Students get ready to counter 'apartheid lie'

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

Jewish university students are dreading the annual ritual known as Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), slated to take place on campuses across the country March 1 to 7.

But this year, they'll get a one-week head start on the anti-Israel informational campaign.

Starting the last week of February, Canadian university and college students will begin a pre-emptive, national initiative aimed at bolstering Israel's image and countering negative propaganda. "Size Doesn't Matter" will stress that for a small country, Israel has achieved global renown in science, medicine, technology, business, humanitarian aid and even on cultural fronts.

"We're starting a week before [the IAW kick-off] on all campuses," says Shirin Ezekiel, director of Israel affairs for Hillel of Greater Toronto. "Each day will highlight a different achievement and contribution from Israel."

The second national push, to run concurrently with IAW, will be called "The Truth Campaign," and will feature toy building block-themed posters with the messages, "Don't Twist the Truth" and "Don't Play With the Truth."

They're intended to counter the five central themes of this year's anti-Israel IAW programming: the ongoing boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) drive against the Jewish state; fallout from the United Nations' Goldstone report on Israel's incursion into Gaza in last winter; the attack on Gaza itself, known as Operation Cast Lead; Israel's security barrier, often tagged by opponents as the "Apartheid Wall"; and the central accusation that Israel practises apartheid against Arabs and Palestinians, which the counter-measures will term "the apartheid lie."

A third, undisclosed campaign involving "social media" will be "a surprise," Ezekiel said.

Several pro-Israel speakers are scheduled to appear. "We're trying to target the 80 per cent of students who just walk by and don't really care."

Among the "endorsers" of this year's Israeli Apartheid Week, according to the IAW's website, is "Holy Land Awareness and Action – United Church of Canada."

The Holy Land awareness and action committee, a subcommittee of the Church's Toronto conference's South West Presbytery, was one of the forces behind calls for a comprehensive boycott of Israel last August at the church's General Council meeting in Kelowna, B.C.

All the anti-Israel measures were voted down after delegates heard impassioned speeches from Canadian Jewish Congress.

Still, that episode and others strained relations between the church and many Jews. A Feb. 1 meeting between representatives of the Church and the CJC sought to patch up differences.

A major irritant for CJC had been that the United Church, Canada's largest Protestant denomination, helped fund the creation of Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), a small anti-Israel group that supports the BDS movement. The church has conceded that it "regretted" its prior relationship with the group.

IJV is among the supporters of this year's IAW.

Nora Saunders, general secretary of the church's General Council, said the involvement of the Holy Land awareness and action committee in IAW doesn't mean the national church is onside.

"There has been no endorsement [of IAW] by the United Church of Canada as a whole. This is something that's being dealt with locally as people feel moved to take steps," she told *The CJN*.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber said Saunders' remarks "follow exactly the discussion" Congress had with the church earlier this month.

"However," Farber added, "it is incumbent on the church to ensure that in the future local affiliates are clearly identified as local."

The sixth annual IAW will feature lectures, film screenings, cultural activities, and demonstrations aimed at "raising awareness about Israel's apartheid policies toward Palestinians and to gather support for the international boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign," a statement said. It added that the campaign takes place in 40 cities around the world.

According to the IAW website, Canadian cities slated for activity are Edmonton, Guelph, Halifax, Hamilton, Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa, Peterborough, St. Catharines, Sudbury, Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo and Winnipeg.

As of last week, schedules of activities and speakers were posted only for Toronto and Ottawa, where programs are scheduled at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa.

The annual event is always a time of high tensions for Jewish students, Ezekiel said. "It's never quiet during that time. It's not exactly the most comfortable time for students on campus."

Verbal confrontations "can get pretty intense."

IAW "causes a hateful, divisive and intolerant atmosphere" on campus for all students, said Lindsay Lustig, a graduate student in science at the University of Toronto. "It's a toxic environment and it promotes separation of students."

It also shuts down legitimate dialogue "before it can begin," she said.

Jews of all affiliations and levels of involvement "feel threatened" during IAW, said Ryerson University political science student Esther Mendelsohn. "You can't really go to class, feel calm and do your work when you're bombarded with all these events and images," she said.

In Toronto, the public is invited to hear speakers defending Israel. They will include Simon Deng, a Sudanese human rights activist and one-time child slave (Feb. 23, 7 p.m. at Ryerson University, room SCC115; Israeli-Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh (March 1, 7 p.m. Ryerson, library hall 72); and Kamal Saleem, a one-time terrorist who renounced radical Islam (March 1, 7 p.m., U of T, Innis Hall).

Colours of Comedy, which brings together comedians of diverse faiths and ethnic background, will stage a show on March 4, 7 p.m. at U of T's Robert Gill Hall.

Greater Toronto Area

Islamic radicalism called a mainstream ideology

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

An Egyptian Muslim who was once a member of a banned terrorist organization in Egypt told a synagogue audience in Toronto last week that Islamic radicalism is a mainstream ideology in contemporary Islam.

Tawfik Hamid, now a Muslim reformer, joined the Al-Gama al-Islamiyya movement when he was a medical student in Cairo in the 1980s.

Tawfiq Hamid [*Greg Tjepkema photo*]

Until it renounced bloodshed in 2003, Al-Gama al-Islamiyya called for the overthrow of the Egyptian government, tried to assassinate Egypt's president and carried out a succession of terrorist attacks culminating with the murder of 58 foreign tourists in Luxor in 1997.

Speaking at Beth Tzedec Congregation in front of a capacity crowd of about 800, the scion of a secular middle-class family related his personal story and warned of the dangers of Islamic militancy.

Considered an authority on the mindset of jihadi Muslims following the publication of his book, *Inside Jihad: Understanding and Confronting Radical Islam*, Hamid said that Islamic radicalism will remain at the centre of modern Islam until an alternative form of Islam emerges.

"Current mainstream Islamic teachings promote violence," he said.

A physician who lives in the United States, he has written that scholars in prestigious Islamic institutes and universities compare Jews to pigs and monkeys, call for the fatal stoning of adulterers and urge Muslims to spread Islam by force if necessary.

He has also written: "There is a certain schizophrenia among many Muslims who seem to believe that it is acceptable to teach hatred and violence in the name of their religion, while at the same time expecting the world to respect Islam as 'a religion of peace, love and harmony.'"

Hamid, an advocate of a peaceful Islam compatible with universal human rights and intellectual freedom, recalled that Al-Gama al-Islamiyya attempted to suppress his faculty for critical thinking, bottle up his sex drive and convince him that Islam is at war with non-Muslims.

He quit after he was asked to take part in the kidnapping of a policeman who would be buried alive and after he concluded that non-Muslims are not infidels who deserve to be killed.

Charging that religious intolerance in the Middle East has been promoted and nurtured by the Salafi brand of Islam originating in Saudi Arabia, Hamid suggested that Muslim extremists have twisted the meaning of the word jihad to denote warfare against so-called infidels.

He added that Muslim radicals have also defined jihad as a national rather than an individual responsibility, thereby sanctioning suicide bombings.

Claiming that Islamic radicalism feeds on the weak, Hamid said that its acolytes perceive concessions as a weakness.

As a rule, he said, Islamic terrorists tend to be highly educated and do not come from impoverished backgrounds.

Members in Islamic radical groups are brainwashed by rote learning and a skewed form of theology, he noted.

Hamid likened the tension between Islamic fundamentalism and the West to a war pitting civilization against barbarism and love against hate.

Turning to Israel, a topic he has addressed in articles published in daily newspapers in the United States, he slammed the perception that the Arab-Israeli conflict breeds terrorism.

And in an astonishing claim, he said the Koran promised the Land of Israel to the Children of Israel.

Briefly touching on Muslim attitudes to Jews, he said, "Anti-Semitism is rising to unbelievable levels."

Hamid's speech was presented by The Speakers Action Group and Beth Tzedec's Men's Club and sponsored by the *National Post*, Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association and the Canadian Committee for the Tel Aviv Foundation.

The moderator, Jonathan Kay, is the comment editor of the *National Post*.

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The blinding force of hatred

Earlier this month, *CJN* columnist Gil Troy asked the readers of this paper if we were "ready for Anti-Israel Week?" He pointed out that the sixth annual Israel-bashing festival would soon be upon us at the start of March and that university leaders and pro-Israel activists needed an action plan to deal with the conflicting passions that will inevitably flare and the emotions that will be strained to boiling.

Troy offered helpful, pragmatic suggestions to university administrators for upholding the rules of free speech and civil discourse on campus and to students for effectively responding to the provocations that will be unleashed against them. His advice has not come too soon.

On three major campuses last week the haters of Israel attempted to "steal" the speaker's podium. In one case they succeeded.

At a forum organized by the Oxford University Students' Union, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon was constantly heckled and nearly physically assaulted. One heckler shouted "The Jews should be slaughtered."

At the University of California-Irvine, Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Michael Oren was repeatedly shouted down, interrupted and heckled by a clearly orchestrated rotating chorus of abuse-shouters.

At Cambridge University, The Israel Society surrendered to a campaign of intimidation and harassment by the haters of Israel and cancelled a scheduled talk by Ben-Gurion University of the Negev historian Benny Morris.

These highly-charged haters of Israel are hostile both to the fundamental ground rules of a free, democratic way of life and to truth. In the distorted view they hold of the Jewish state they see it as akin to the 17th and 18th century European colonizers of non-western, non-white societies. But this, of course, is sheer utter nonsense.

In his *CJN* column Troy advised pro-Israel advocates not to let haters set the agenda.

"Far better to celebrate Israel than to get defensive," he suggested. One of the countless celebratory truths of Israel is the work its scientists perform in trying to alleviate poverty and to reduce hunger in the developing world. Specifically, for example, the international studies program at the Hebrew University's Faculty of Agriculture in Rehovot invites foreign students and researchers to study at the university to enable them to take back scientific, agriculturally based knowledge to their home countries. Since 1988, when the program was launched, through December 2007, some 1,668 individuals from 120 different countries, including from among the most needy in the world, have graduated from this unique program.

As Troy also pointed out, the Israel bashers have no interest in knowing the truth. Their hatred has blinded them to it and, alas, to the better world that might arise if only they would lend their energies to tolerance, fair play and the possibility of co-existence rather than to intolerance, intimidation and the hope of Israel's destruction.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The Rabbinical Assembly, the worldwide governing body of Conservative Judaism, agreed to allow women to become rabbis. An amendment to the assembly's constitution was approved by 636 of the 1,100 members.

Dry Bones NEWS WATCH
IN TOTALITARIAN REGIMES, THE GOVERNMENT-RUN NEWS COVERAGE
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Conversion crisis (1)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka makes some important observations about the conversion crisis currently roiling the Orthodox world in "Some observations on the conversion crisis" (Perspectives, Feb. 4). As mainstream Orthodox rabbis work out their response to haredi efforts to invalidate their conversions, they might want to consider their own attitude toward conversions supervised by Reform and Conservative rabbis who also require the three conversion "ingredients" Rabbi Bulka describes – acceptance of Jewish obligations, covenantal circumcision for males, and immersion in the mikvah. Our conversion study programs require a much lengthier and more intensive commitment than some of those described as having been acceptable in the Orthodox world 20 to 30 years ago. Our understanding of *kabbalat hamitzvot* falls somewhere within the broad spectrum described by Rabbi Bulka as being halachically acceptable. As Rabbi Bulka notes, not every convert becomes a serious, engaged Jew, but no rabbinical court of any Jewish branch can guarantee that outcome. And most of our Reform and Conservative converts do become active, learned, observant members of our congregations who raise Jewish children and contribute to the welfare of *Am Yisrael*. Rabbi Bulka says that he prefers to err on the side of welcoming rather than rejecting those who would like to join our people. How about welcoming non-Orthodox converts as well?

Rabbi Edward Elkin, Chair
Reform Rabbis of Greater Toronto

* * *

Conversion crisis (2)

The recent articles and op-eds in *The CJN* regarding the conversion "crisis" have not been sufficiently illuminating. Here are two misconceptions inferred by many from the various articles.

(1) Readers have inferred from the articles that a crass political struggle for power is being waged by the various parties. The haredim, opposed to Zionism, refuse to accept conversions performed by Mizrachi (religious Zionists). This is untrue. The rejected conversions were incompetently carried out. Some were rubber-stamped, and some individual converts were never taught fundamental principles about Judaism, including Shabbat. In other words, it is reasonable to doubt the validity of these conversions.

(2) The power to convert an individual from non-Jew to Jew is invested in the Torah. The most Orthodox rabbi, haredi or Mizrachi, may officiate a conversion, but if Jewish law is violated or if the prospective convert is insincere in his motives, the conversion has failed.

Chaim Forer
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Anti-Semitism on campus

Dear leaders of the Toronto Jewish community:

I had an unpleasant experience last week. While I was walking on the downtown campus at University of Toronto, some guy plunked a splashy leaflet into my hands and said: "Please, let me invite you to Israeli Apartheid Week." (IAW takes places in Toronto, Montreal and other cities from March 1 to 14.)

After one nanosecond, I said loudly: "You are *disgusting*!" No one joined me in my fuss, and I stood there totally alone.

Where are you, oh Jewish leaders of Toronto, as this anti-Semitic incitement occurs in our publically funded university? Surely you know that IAW is not about dialogue or discussion. It is 21st-century anti-Semitism, and it is directed at you and at me and at our community.

Where is the outrage, you guys. Where is the outrage?

Natalie Fingerhut
Toronto

* * *

Peled-Elhanan campaigns for a just peace

Your article "CJC, United Church ties remain strained" (Jan. 21) quotes Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber maligning Nurit Peled-Elhanan by comparing her to Ernst Zundel.

Nurit Peled-Elhanan is an Israeli Jew, a professor at Hebrew University and the daughter of an Israeli general who fought in several wars and was later a leader of the peace camp. She is also the mother of a 13-year-old who died in a Palestinian suicide bombing.

Yet despite, or because of, this tragedy, she co-founded, with other Israeli Jews and Palestinians who lost family members in the Israeli-Palestinan conflict, Bereaved Parents for Peace and continues to campaign for a just peace. She refuses to blame only the Palestinians, but assigns blame to Israel where it is deserved. She is a winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, awarded by the European Parliament.

Larry Haiven, Halifax
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info@cjnews.com

Fierce debate in Israel over campaign against NIF

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

A campaign against the New Israel Fund – a U.S.-based organization that funds civil society activists in Israel – has sparked a fierce debate over the limits of free speech, the financing of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the dictates of loyalty to the state, and ultimately, over the fundamental values of Israel's Zionist democracy.

The questions cut close to the bone on both sides of the ideological divide. For example: are left-wingers using Zionist money to undermine the foundations of the state? Or, are right-wingers trying to gag NGOs critical of Israeli policies and actions? And to what extent are the government and its agencies involved in trying to silence their critics?

At the centre of the storm is the Goldstone report on alleged Israeli war crimes during the fighting in Gaza last winter.

Most Israelis see the report as biased, based on flimsy evidence and false assumptions, and part of a concerted international campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state. The attack on the New Israel Fund (NIF) was part of an angry Israeli backlash against the report produced by Richard Goldstone, the judge who headed the UN fact-finding mission on the war. But was it a bona fide attack on an organization accused of undermining Israel's international standing or a premeditated onslaught against civil society?

The campaign against the NIF was conducted by an organization called Im Tirtzu, which describes itself as "an extra-parliamentary movement to strengthen Zionist values" and boasts a video endorsement from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. It claimed that 16 NIF grantees – among them Physicians for Human Rights and B'Tselem, human rights organizations active in the Palestinian territories; Breaking the Silence, a group of soldiers reporting on Israeli army violations of moral norms; and ACRI, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel – had provided Goldstone with material contributing to false charges against the Israel Defence Forces in informer-like actions that were tantamount to betrayal in a wartime situation.

"The results of these groups' activities caused significant diplomatic damage to Israel and harmed the country's capacity to defend itself militarily," Im Tirtzu said, adding that NIF was largely to blame because it had funded these "anti-Zionist" organizations.

In late January, young Im Tirtzu members dressed as Hamas fighters demonstrated outside the Jerusalem home of NIF president Naomi Chazan waving placards depicting Chazan with a horn emerging from her forehead. The text on the placard read: "Fact! Without the New Israel Fund there could be no Goldstone report and Israel would not be facing international accusations of war crimes."

The horn was a play on words, the Hebrew "keren" meaning both fund and horn, but critics say it also had obvious anti-Semitic connotations that many found offensive.

Im Tirtzu used the image as well in advertisements placed in several Israeli newspapers.

The Zionist Organization of America has seconded the criticisms of the NIF.

The New Israel Fund says it knows that many of the minority rights groups it backs in the name of empowering the disenfranchised and fighting discrimination in Israel also take positions that the NIF does not endorse, such as calling for an end to Israel's Jewish character. NIF officials say that while they do not agree with everything their grantees do or say, revoking their funding would be inimical to NIF's goal of promoting free speech and strengthening Israel's minorities.

"They're using me to attack in the most blatant way the basic principles of democracy and the values of Israel's declaration of independence – values of equality, tolerance, social justice and freedom of speech," Chazan declared.

In dismissing the Im Tirtzu case against the NIF as baseless, Chazan said the materials the groups allegedly transferred to Goldstone are mostly in the public domain. And even if they were not, it would be the duty of the groups to pass on what they know – that is their raison d'être as human rights groups.

Far from giving succor to Israel's enemies, the grantees were trying to create a better Israel, Chazan said.

The NIF and its defenders note that its work goes well beyond organizations focusing specifically on Palestinian rights. It also funds civil society groups dealing with a host of domestic Israeli issues, such as providing women's shelters, supporting Ethiopian immigrants and challenging the Orthodox monopoly on Jewish religious practice.

In early February, a group of leading Israeli academics, writers, actors, directors and political activists, including novelists Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua, placed a full-page ad in *Ha'aretz* expressing "disgust at the campaign of incitement and hatred" being waged against Chazan, the NIF and the organizations it supports.

Several U.S. Jewish groups on the left side of the political spectrum issued their own statements slamming the anti-NIF campaign on similar grounds. The tenor of the anti-NIF campaign was criticized as well by Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League.

In late January, 13 of the 16 NIF grantees slammed by Im Tirtzu fired off a letter to President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin complaining that the Im Tirtzu attack on the NIF was part of a larger pattern encouraged by "senior government officials." In other words, it was more than a one-off campaign by a young, marginal group, but part of an anti-democratic trend for which the government was setting the tone.

Jewish right-wing activists dressed as Arabs demonstrate late last month against the New Israel Fund (NIF), an organization committed to democratic change within Israel. The signs say: "Thank you, Naomi Chazan, the New Fundation, Friends from Gaza." ***[Yossi Zamir/Flash 90 photo]***

They gave some examples: Interior Minister Eli Yishai backing claims that organizations which help refugees and asylum seekers "aim to destroy Israel"; Netanyahu denying the legitimacy of Breaking the Silence testimonies on the Gaza war; Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon referring to Israeli human rights organizations as "enemies from within."

Others see the spectre of an impending clampdown against civil society.

Anat Hoffman, chair of Women of the Wall and director of the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, an NIF grantee, was questioned and fingerprinted by police in early January after taking part in an all-female prayer session at the Western Wall that involved the use of a Torah. A week later, ACRI director Hagai El-Ad was arrested while monitoring a protest against Jewish settlement in the Arab neighbourhood of Sheik Jarrah in eastern Jerusalem, and released as soon as the case went to court.

Were these isolated cases of police folly, or part of a pattern dictated from above?

There is no hard evidence to suggest that the Netanyahu government is planning to curb civil society or that the police action had the prime minister's blessing. What is clear is that Netanyahu is deeply concerned by what he calls "Goldstonism" – moves in the international community aimed at delegitimizing Israel.

The prime minister says he sees three existential threats: Iran, a Palestinian state without adequate security arrangements, and rampant Goldstonism. This means that Israeli organizations the government feels contribute to delegitimization of the state could be seen as serious threats to national security. But the government does not seem to be considering operative moves against them.

Moves, however, are afoot in the Knesset.

The law committee, headed by Yisrael Beiteinu's David Rotem, whose party has proposed that Israeli citizens take loyalty oaths, has set up a subcommittee to examine the sources of funding of NGOs active in Israel. Some of the committee members aim to ban funding by foreign countries, which is seen as interfering in Israel's internal affairs. Most of that funding is from European countries for left-wing NGOs.

Otniel Schneller of the Kadima party wants to go a step further, proposing the establishment of a full-fledged parliamentary commission of inquiry to probe the conduct of the NIF and its grantees. Schneller says he is against the absurdity of Israeli civil society "paying organizations like Physicians for Human Rights to slander us," and wants to stop the NIF from supporting anti-Zionist groups.

Schneller's proposal, which he plans to submit next week, has run into stiff opposition from the left and right.

Left-wing Meretz leader Haim Oron asked who would decide who is a Zionist or what are Israel's best interests. Schneller, he suggested, should fight the left-wing organizations with counter arguments, not try to cut off their funding.

On the right, the Likud's Michael Eitan argued that parliamentary commissions of inquiry are established on non-political issues, such as corruption in soccer or water prices.

"It is unheard of for the majority in the Knesset to investigate the minority," he fumed.

Eitan's stand has the support of others in the Likud, like Rivlin and Minister without Portfolio Benny Begin, and it is not clear whether Schneller can muster a majority for his proposal.

Meanwhile, Im Tirtzu's funding has also attracted scrutiny in recent days.

Liberal organizations and bloggers have been reporting that Im Tirtzu has received money from the Central Fund of Israel, a U.S.-based non-profit that has also supported pro-settler organizations and a group that aids militant Israeli Jews accused of carrying out violence. They also note that Im Tirtzu reportedly has received $200,000 (US) over the past two years from John Hagee, an evangelical pastor in San Antonio, Texas, who is staunchly pro-Israel but came under fire for having declared in a sermon that God allowed the Holocaust to happen as part of a plan to bring Jews to Israel.

Hagee has expressed regret for the upset caused by his remarks and promised to be more sensitive in the future. A spokesperson for the pastor criticized the tenor of Im Tirtzu's campaign against NIF.

Meanwhile the debate goes on, with each side seeking to claim the mantle of preserving Israel's fundamental nature.

"Today the question is not whether Israel survives, but what kind of Israel survives," said Daniel Sokatch, the NIF's chief executive officer.

Im Tirtzu leader Ronen Shova countered that "the debate is not about left or right. The new debate is between Zionists and non-Zionists."

Opinions

Cleaning up Rights and Democracy

Created through an act of Parliament in 1988, the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development – later to be referred to as Rights and Democracy (R&D) – was created as a non-partisan organization with an international mandate. Its stated mission is to encourage and support the universal values of human rights and to promote democratic institutions and practices around the world.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

Run by a government-appointed board and support staff, R&D came under public scrutiny in 2007 when it was criticized for its perceived lack of adequate disclosure and oversight. As well, some of its policy decisions have been previously questioned. For the most part, however, the organization has managed to avoid public attention and has, for all intents and purposes, gone about its business, supposedly spreading Canadian goodwill far and wide.

But what has emerged in recent weeks sheds a whole new light on the agency. All it seems has not been squeaky clean, and serious questions are now being raised not only about the governance of R&D but also, more importantly, about how taxpayer dollars are being spent under its auspices.

What is especially troubling about all of this is that within the broader context of alleged fiscal and fiduciary missteps by the organization's bureaucrats there lurks a seamy subtext, with the Middle East at its epicentre.

At issue is the allocation by R&D of some $30,000 to organizations that are known to be hostile to Israeli interests. Two of these, Al-Haq and Al-Mezan are especially toxic, demonizing and delegitimizing the Jewish state through boycott, divestment and sanctions initiatives and actively promoting "lawfare," the process of exploiting legal channels to harass Israeli officials for their supposed violations of international law.

But as scandalous as it is that government funds have been channeled into the coffers of such groups, some of the reaction to these disbursements is what should concern us even more. Rather than applauding board members who have shown great courage and initiative in disclosing these facts (among others), there are those in the media and opposition political parties who are delighting in turning this fiasco into a partisan battleground, accusing the Harper government of loading the board with its supporters and baying for their dismissal.

Those taking most of the heat – among them political scientist Aurel Braun (who chairs the board), specialist in international law Jacques Gauthier, and human rights lawyer David Matas – have acted selflessly and in the public interest.

Nonetheless, when seeking nothing more than accountability and transparency, they have instead been subjected to a malicious smear campaign. It's deplorable that this is happening.

A beacon of light amid gov't mediocrity

On Jan. 27, a man displeased with proceedings in his divorce case in Family Court entered a chamber of Israel's Supreme Court and, with no warning, hurled a pair of shoes at Supreme Court President Dorit Beinisch. One hit her smack in the middle of the face, breaking her glasses and knocking her off her seat. Fortunately, she wasn't seriously injured and returned to the court an hour later, welcomed by very uncharacteristic applause.

Yair Lapid in Jerusalem

This episode appropriately symbolizes the bashing that Israel's public legal community has unjustifiably endured of late and the need to ensure that all is done to thwart attempts to seriously tamper with it.

Israel's judiciary and its civil service's legal establishment, headed by the attorney general, are valued for their intellect, professional skills and independence. Neither judges nor the attorney general are elected. They're appointed after committees evaluate their legal prowess, integrity and suitability.

Traditionally, the Supreme Court has been one of the country's most highly regarded institutions, but this respect has recently waned. The Israel Democracy Institute publishes an annual Democracy Index that "reviews public attitudes concerning democracy, the measure of support for it, and the level of satisfaction with [its] functioning." One of the indices it monitors is the level of trust in the Supreme Court. According to the latest study, published last year, since 2004, confidence in the Court has plummeted, from 79 per cent to 57 per cent, although it's still the second-most trusted public institution in the country, second only to the army, in which 79 per cent of Israelis still have confidence.

The decline can be attributed to public perception of the court as an institution not in synch with the populace. Its judgments overturning security-related decisions, particularly when these uphold Palestinians' human rights, don't sit well with an increasingly centre-right constituency. The court is also perceived as a nepotistic, mostly Ashkenazi, secular body, with insufficient representation from other sectors of society, a view that's been exacerbated by some legitimate complaints about court appointment procedures.

The shoe throwing incident overshadowed another important occasion. Several days later, Menachem Mazuz concluded six turbulent years as attorney general, arguably one of the country's most difficult, stressful and powerful positions. The attorney general is both the government's top legal adviser (but not its lawyer) and head of the state's criminal prosecution services. A gifted attorney who had a distinguished career in the Justice Ministry, Mazuz was replaced by a relative outsider, Yehuda Weinstein, who headed a prominent white-collar defence practice for more than 30 years.

During his tenure, Mazuz oversaw an unprecedented array of high-profile criminal proceedings against politicians. Early on, he decided not to indict then-prime minister Ariel Sharon in two celebrated cases (but indicted his son for campaign finance offences in one of them). Later, he marched prime minister Ehud Olmert, president Moshe Katzav and several ministers and MKs into court as criminal defendants, effectively forcing most of them to leave their lofty positions. Olmert's and Katzav's cases are still being adjudicated. Two former ministers are serving lengthy prison sentences for embezzling public funds.

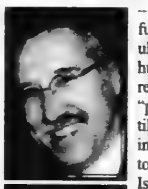
Mazuz's responsibilities weren't limited to criminal law. During his years in office, Israel was involved in several significant military operations. Aside from the military challenges, these operations have placed Israeli jurists on the cutting edge of the legal war against terrorism. They've also placed Israel Defence Forces commanders on the receiving end of legal threats and condemnations, most notably the UN's Goldstone report on the Gaza war, which accused them of war crimes.

Both Beinisch and Mazuz also found themselves sparring with politicians. Some want to limit the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to rule on certain matters, as in the present legislative initiative to curtail courts' authority to exercise judicial review over Knesset laws. Others want to politicize court appointment procedures. Yet others want to whittle away the attorney general's authority.

Our judicial system is far from perfect. Courts are understaffed and overworked, and justice is often delayed and sometimes denied. Improvements should be made. But Israel's courts and its legal civil service remain a beacon of light in a sea of governmental mediocrity, and all attempts to make substantive changes to them should be averted.

The New Israel Fund and Goldstone

Ma'ariv, one of Israel's mass-circulation dailies, recently featured a scathing condemnation of the New Israel Fund (NIF) for leading the political war to demonize Israel. The journalist who wrote the piece, Ben Caspit, is a political centrist whose tolerance snapped when he realized that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) funded by the NIF were responsible for most of the "war crimes" allegations in the UN's Goldstone report on the Gaza war.



Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

Caspit's article amplified the Israeli debate on the role of the NIF – a Diaspora-based superpower with an annual budget of around $25 million. The accusations were publicized by Im Tirtzu, a student group promoting Zionist renewal, which also placed ads on websites and in newspapers ridiculing the organization and its leader, Naomi Chazan.

Like other politicians whose power is threatened, Chazan and the NIF leadership responded furiously, denying the evidence and threatening legal action. However, having themselves used personal and crude graphics against opponents, the threats from Chazan and the NIF lacked credibility. While claiming to defend free speech, the NIF's fierce attacks on critics were themselves attempts to silence a much-needed public debate.

Israeli anger toward the NIF also reflects the discovery of a hidden agenda, in contrast to Im Tirtzu and other openly more right-wing organizations. In its advertising and fundraising, the NIF claims to provide broad support for different groups in Israel, but many of its actions promote a very narrow and radical agenda.

The most politicized NGOs – including B'Tselem, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel – receive about 20 per cent of NIF funds. They use the money to manipulate Israeli politics, while exploiting human rights rhetoric to demonize responses to terror. These NGOs also "partner" with some of the most hostile foreign groups, using their clout in the media and the United Nations to promote the political assault on Israel's legitimacy, as seen in the Goldstone campaign.

Some of the budget for the NIF's funding of these radical NGOs comes from the Ford Foundation. The fiasco of the 2001 Durban NGO Forum, which ran alongside the United Nations World Conference Against Racism and was financed in large part by the Ford Foundation, led to an investigation in the U.S. Congress. Foundation officials agreed to end direct support to these NGOs, but quietly provided large sums money ($40 million US to date) to the NIF. Similarly, the NIF's role is cited by European governments and, until recently, by Canada (via CIDA and the embattled group Rights and Democracy) in justifying the flow of taxpayer funds to the same NGOs that systematically attack Israeli policies.

As a result, for most Israelis, the NGOs nurtured by the NIF, the Ford Foundation and Europe constitute a powerful and entirely undemocratic opposition force. As head of the NIF, Chazan wields more power than she had as an MK before being rejected by Israeli voters. She and other NGO officials, funded from the outside are very visible in the media, in lobbying the Knesset and in bombarding the courts to try to impose their ideology. The very controversial decision to re-open route 443 between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to Palestinian vehicles was largely the result of pressure from these NGOs. When the first Israeli is attacked due to this decision, NIF officials and donors will be blamed.

For all these reasons, the NIF is in deep trouble, and its officials would be well advised to join in developing funding guidelines (rather than attacking different voices) and ending patronizing attempts to impose their private agendas on the rest of us. Among the NIF's more than 300 grants, many go to schools and other worthy projects, but many Israelis view this as a cover for a more sinister political agenda.

As the fierce debate demonstrates, with so much money and influence, outside power brokers from across the ideological spectrum have the obligation to provide far more transparency, accountability and diversity. Israelis have lost patience with campaigns to manipulate their critical choices and promote Goldstone-type demonization. If NIF officials don't make these changes voluntarily, Israel's elected officials will exercise their right and their obligation to impose democratic control.

The Kirshner File

The 'forgotten' war is back in the news

The bitter war in Iraq has been supplanted by the "forgotten" war in Afghanistan.

Until quite recently, the raging insurgency in Iraq, with its incessant suicide bombings and endemic sectarian violence, preoccupied the foreign policy establishment in Washington.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The United States, having deposed Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime after its 2003 invasion of Iraq, found itself enmeshed in a seemingly endless and costly war, amid failed attempts to uncover Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, many Americans began questioning the rationale, if not the assumptions, of this protracted war.

As the situation in Iraq worsened, the war in Afghanistan faded from view, despite Afghanistan's notoriety as the former base of Al Qaeda – the radical Islamist movement headed by Osama bin Laden – and the incubator of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the financial and military symbols of American power, the World Trade Center in Manhattan and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

Lashing out at its Islamic fundamentalist tormentors, the United States bombed Afghanistan, unseated the Islamist Taliban government that had sheltered and encouraged Al Qaeda, installed a pro-western government in Kabul and launched a war against the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

All eyes were on the Afghanistan front until Iraq displaced it from the daily news cycle. But as violence in Iraq has dimmed and hopes have risen that Iraq can be reconstructed, the focus has shifted to Afghanistan, where the insurgency has escalated to worrisome levels.

Hard, cold statistics tell the story.

In 2001 and 2002, there was not a single suicide attack in Afghanistan, and American and allied casualties were negligible.

But as the western military presence has grown and the Taliban has regrouped, thanks to its sanctuaries in neighbouring Pakistan, the bloodshed has increased substantially, spreading from the volatile south to the once tranquil north.

In 2008, the number of annual suicide bombings reached a new plateau of 148, while roadside bombings – the bane of western and Afghan troops on patrol – shot up to about 3,200. These blasts killed 520 American and allied soldiers last year, far more than in Iraq in 2009.

All in all, 1,520 foreign troops, including almost 1,000 Americans and 139 Canadians, as well as thousands of Afghan civilians, have been killed in Afghanistan thus far.

The Taliban, having replenished its coffers through extortion, taxation and the opium trade, has redoubled its efforts to drive home the point that the American-backed government of President Hamid Karzai is vulnerable.

In an audacious operation in Kabul on Jan. 18, Taliban fighters detonated bombs close to the presidential palace, the ministry of justice and the central bank, killing five Afghans and wounding 70.

The attack underscored the fact that Afghanistan, far from pacified and stabilized, is on a dangerous "downward spiral," as the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, has commented. Recognizing that a more aggressive and innovative approach was urgently required, U.S. President Barack Obama replaced the American commander in Afghanistan and rushed still more troops there.

After replacing Gen. David McKiernan with Gen. Stanley McChrystal – whose forces captured Saddam Hussein and killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq – Obama dispatched an additional 51,000 troops to Afghanistan, 21,000 early in 2009 and 30,000 some months later.

With this infusion of manpower, the United States now has approximately 100,000 soldiers in Afghanistan, the better to protect civilians, build infrastructure, improve governance and hunt the Taliban.

In sending reinforcements to Afghanistan, Obama found himself between a rock and a hard place.

While McChrystal warned that the United States risked losing the war unless considerably more forces were sent, the American ambassador in Kabul, Karl Eikenberry, formerly the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, expressed grave reservations about McChrystal's strategy.

Saying he wanted to reverse Taliban gains and bring the war to "a successful conclusion" without an open-ended commitment, Obama chose a middle course, agreeing to send fresh troops to Afghanistan while vowing to bring them home by mid 2011.

Like his predecessor, George W. Bush, Obama is convinced that the United States has vital interests in Afghanistan. Last March, he said his goal was to "disrupt, dismantle and defeat" Al Qaeda so that Afghanistan and Pakistan cannot be used as platforms from which to attack the United States and its allies.

In August, Obama called the United States' involvement in Afghanistan "a war of necessity" rather than "a war of choice." In December, he declared, "If I did not think that the security of the United States… (was) at stake in Afghanistan, I would gladly order every single one of our troops home tomorrow."

Hamid Karzai

Stanley McChrystal

Richard Holbrooke

It is doubtful whether Obama will be able to disengage from Afghanistan next year, judging by the frank comments of Afghanistan's president and senior officials in the Obama administration.

Karzai has speculated that five to 10 years will be needed to build an effective Afghan army and police force to provide security once the Americans withdraw. Robert Gates, the U.S. secretary of defence, has referred to the war in Afghanistan as "our greatest military challenge" and pointedly said he is not bound by deadlines. James Jones, Obama's national security advisor, has observed, "We're going to be in the region for a long time." Gen. David Petraeus, the U.S. commander in Asia, has warned that Afghanistan will tax American resources for years to come. Richard Holbrooke, Obama's special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, has said that the war in Afghanistan will be "much tougher" than in Iraq, and will be "a long, difficult struggle."

One of the reasons the United States will likely remain in Afghanistan far beyond Obama's artificial and politically motivated deadline is Karzai's dysfunctional and corrupt government, which is kept afloat by billions of dollars in U.S. aid, but which cannot deliver the most basic services and security, much less honest and transparent national elections, to the Afghan people.

Such is the rampant corruption in Kabul that Karzai – whose brother and defence ministers have been accused of being drug traffickers – is perceived as a potential liability and an impediment to American objectives. "The government we have been supporting in Afghanistan is a fetid hothouse of corruption, a government of gangsters and weasels whose customary salute is the upturned palm," charges Bob Herbert, a *New York Times* columnist.

Indeed, Karzai's lame government reminds observers of the weak, ineffectual pro-American South Vietnamese regime of the 1960s and 1970s.

The war has lasted so long, in part, because of Pakistan's insufficient resolve to root out the Taliban and Al Qaeda in its northeast frontier region. The Pakistani army has mounted campaigns in the Swat Valley and South Waziristan, but not in North Waziristan or Baluchistan, where the Taliban's senior leaders and military commanders reside. In an attempt to fill the gap, the United States has stepped up drone missile attacks in Pakistan, much to Pakistan's public annoyance.

A military solution, however, is not attainable, as Gen. McChrystal has acknowledged. The ultimate path to peace in Afghanistan, he has said, is through a pragmatic arrangement in which power is shared with less radical members of the Taliban after they lay down their arms and repudiate violence. In the meantime, though, the fighting goes on.

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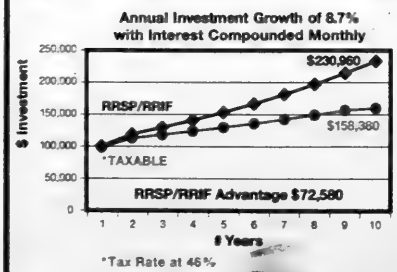

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The Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Chair in Holocaust Studies at the University of Toronto presents

Genocide in a Multiethnic Town: Event, Origins, Aftermath

Professor Omer Bartov
John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History, Brown University

This lecture traces the complex relations among Poles, Jews and Ukrainians in the Galician town of Buczacz; their impact on the events of 1941 to 1944, when murder of Jews and ethnic cleansing of Poles took place during the German occupation and in its wake; and how these events have been remembered and commemorated in the postwar period.

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Jewish Life

Adar – the month of happiness

By RABBI ZUSHE SILBERSTEIN

Our Sages teach us: "When Adar enters, we increase our happiness." How? What will enable us to reach greater – and more genuine – happiness?

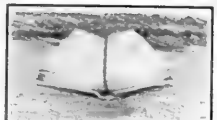
The most elemental answers are given by TV and radio. Buy this or eat that.

Give yourself a high and you'll feel good. You'll be happy.

Chassidic thought teaches: "Happiness breaks down barriers." On a basic level, this means that when a person is happy, he feels freer to break through the restraints of social norms and even the constraints of his own character. He will let loose and act with natural ease, reaching out to people and into himself without worrying about whether it's socially proper or even whether it fits his own self-image.

It's not only as a result of being happy that a person bursts through such restraints. Happiness itself is the force and the dynamic through which these restraints are broken. Unless a person knows how to step beyond who he thinks he is and what he thinks he wants, he'll never be more than momentarily happy. He'll always have concerns and anxieties that inhibit him.

The buy-it-and-have-a-good-time happiness of modern society isn't genuine, because it leaves a person within himself and his prior conceptions. It doesn't challenge the person or make him grow.


Rabbinic Reflections

Genuine happiness has to do with being able to let go, to spontaneously flow without worry or concern.

We can recognize such innate, natural happiness in certain people, but it appears to be precisely that: something you either have or you don't, not something that you can work for and achieve.

Judaism explains that happiness comes from accepting the yoke of God's service and, therefore, can be achieved through a person's efforts. Such a person does not live for himself. His or her own wants and desires are not the be all and end all of this person's existence. His or her life has purpose and direction and a heritage of more than 3,500 years that demonstrates the meaning and depth of the lifestyle that he or she has accepted.

Significantly, this approach also empowers a person to appreciate the happiness granted by everyday life with more energy. As long as a person is concerned with his own gratification, he will never be able to sit back and really enjoy his life. He's concerned with: am I getting enough? Is this what I'm supposed to feel? But when a person isn't looking for happiness as an independent goal, he will be able to appreciate it in every experience he encounters. He will taste food, watch a sunset and enjoy the people he meets, appreciating all these experiences for what they are.

The ultimate experience of such happiness will come in the era of the Redemption, when "crowned with eternal joy," we will proceed with Mashiach to Eretz Yisrael. Since in that era, "the occupation of the world will be solely to know God." We will not be possessed by self-concern. That in turn will grant us this all-encompassing joy. Against the backdrop of peace and prosperity, we will experience the ultimate self-fulfilment that stems from the connection to God and His will.

The knowledge that we are at the threshold of this moment endows us with the potential to perceive a foretaste of this happiness in the present time. And the appreciation of this foretaste will anticipate the full realization of this prophecy, hastening the time when "a voice of happiness and a voice of rejoicing" will fill the streets of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein is spiritual leader of Chabad Chabanel in Montreal.

A difficult question

Several weeks ago, I spoke at an Anglican church about the major tenets and teachings of Judaism. During the question period that followed, a university student asked a familiar but difficult question: "Why did God who personifies love, mercy, justice and truth allow the Holocaust to happen?" Why did God allow the Germans to murder six million innocent men, women and children?

Some years ago, an Orthodox rabbi visiting Hamilton suggested that the Holocaust was God's way of punishing wicked and sinful Jews. Indignant and outraged, community members protested that surely the Jews of North America were no more pious and religious, or less sinful. It was blasphemous to declare that the slaughtered Jews deserved cruel punishment. As a matter of fact, many of them were piously observant to the most minute detail. Moreover, Jewish belief rejects vicarious suffering.

Jews who believe that the miracles reported in the Bible did indeed occur must confront the question, why did not God create a miracle to save millions of innocent lives? If God suspended the laws of nature so that the Israelites might cross safely to dry land; if He made the sun stop for Joshua to win a battle – then why did He not save a million and a half innocent children? Certainly they were deserving of a miracle! How can true believers explain this "hiding" of God? It will not do to argue about God's gift of free will to human beings. The omnipotent God who thwarted the evil plans of Pharoah could have set aside the evil intentions of Hitler.

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

Harold Kushner, author of the widely read book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, proposed the idea of a limited God. He writes that the "many forms of evil are not the will of God, but represent that aspect of reality which stands independent of his will and which angers and saddens God as it must anger and sadden us."

Martin Buber expressed doubt as to whether, after the Holocaust, he could address God as kind and merciful. At the same time, however, he never surrendered his faith in the human potential to redeem evil and sanctify the world.

Rabbi Richard Rubenstein asserts that, in the light of the Holocaust, God is no longer a reasonable source of belief. His relationship to the covenant and to Jewish history must be redefined. He said: "An infinitely sadistic or capricious God might exist; a less than omnipotent God might exist; a God who is indifferent to the actors in human history might exist, but the just, righteous and all-powerful God, as understood within Jewish tradition, could not exist. Thus, one would have to conclude that the experience of Auschwitz presents a most serious challenge to the understanding of both God's nature and his relationship to the Jewish people."

How did I answer the young man's question? I began by acknowledging that I was ignorant of the ways and intentions of God, and that apart from the usual inadequate explanations, I could offer no convincing arguments or original ideas.

I did point out, however, that, although many who suffered in Nazi death camps abandoned their religious faith, others found their way back to affirming faith in both God and Judaism. How could they place either confidence or hope in human beings, capable of creating the horrors of the Holocaust?

I suggested, perhaps the proper question to be asked is not, "Where was God," but rather, "When was God?" And to answer that God was there in the minds and hearts of those who, at the risk of their lives, shielded and saved those in distress and, despite the enveloping dread around them, showed concern, mercy and love for others.

Jewish Life

Does God use nature to punish? Discuss

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

Did God cause the recent earthquake in Haiti? This question, and many similar inquiries about God's involvement in human affairs, can be understood in various ways and almost always provides a Rorschach-type window into the respondent's theological priorities and emotional sensibilities.

For those who wish to emphasize God's connection to Creation without placing the Creator in an unflattering light, the answer might be that the nature of geological realities beneath our feet means that yes, ultimately, the Earth that God made is subject to great volatility.

But such an answer avoids a direct confrontation with the divine role and now begs a rewording of the question: "Does God cause earthquakes for a specific and predetermined reason?" Others will want to point to the human responsibility in these tragedies, such as faulty building construction and shoddy materials, as though to shield the original "Builder" from all liability.

But for many people, such "answers" often appear as evasions of the central theological quandary of innocent suffering. Their real desire is to fathom the unfathomable – why do vast numbers of ordinary men, women and children die horribly and without warning, as they are simply trying to live their lives as best they can? Even the Holocaust – the central, but by no means exclusive, template in our time for this anguished question – really does not serve as an accurate analogy for what philosophers call natural evil, those events which have relatively little to do with human action and more properly fall under the domain of "forces of nature," or what the insurance industry is wont to still call "acts of God."

What is striking is the public uproar when any religious figure even attempts to put forward any version of a retribution theodicy – the idea that people are being punished by God for sin. Deemed as far more than just politically incorrect or insensitive, these "explanations" are castigated in all quarters, including those of many devout Jews and their coreligionists in other faiths, as scandalous and obscene, an arrogant presumptiveness regarding divine motives.

The outrage over this kind of talk, no matter how speculative, marks one of the central shifts from ancient to modern religion, as such retributive theologies were the stock in trade of many Jewish and Christian texts down through the ages.

The avoidance of talk of retribution, while perfectly logical, does, however, place the relationship between God and the world in an interesting straitjacket. Do we say that God is completely uninvolved, having simply unleashed the potential for forces that annihilate the human body and spirit and then stepped out of the way? Do we prefer to say that divine intervention is historically time-bound, leading to the odd spectre that the very active biblical God has now dropped out of sight? What do we make of previous Jewish texts that were not at all hesitant to ascribe blame to the Jews for their historical fate? (One only need think of the yearly Tisha b'Av ritual and its accompanying literature.)

I fully concur with those who resist any attempt at explanation, but good educational practice would demand that we examine what this refusal to explain tells us about our modern situation as believing Jews, and our uneasy truce with God.

New approaches to Megillat Esther

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

For many of us, the story found in Megillat Esther is fodder for children's plays and satirical skits. But if you've never taken a second look at the story of Esther, Mordechai and the other familiar characters, you may be surprised how textured this story of court intrigue, attempted genocide and ultimate deliverance can be. Before Purim starts, take a read or two and bring new meaning to the Megillah ceremony.

Chabad.org's Megillah page is a great one-stop resource where you'll find an English translation, a printable English/Hebrew Megillah, a Megillah with commentary and a rhyming version of the story. You can even listen to the entire Book of Esther delivered in just more than 42 minutes but as the page says, "One fulfils the obligation of listening to the Megillah on Purim only by listening to a live reading." **[bit.ly/megil1]**

In "The Upside-Down World of Megillat Esther," Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun asks some difficult questions. Why was a story "devoid of any sacred material," one that doesn't even mention God, included among the holy books of the Tanach? Rabbi Bin-Nun suggests that having a story in which God does not overtly appear actually teaches us an important lesson. Even when it seemed as if God is out of the picture, He still facilitated the Jewish victory. Rabbi Bin-Nun then asks another question: how could Esther, a daughter of Israel, enter the Royal Chambers? Why isn't "her coerced participation in the contest of beauty and sexual appeal… described as a tragedy and a horrifying nightmare?" You'll have to read the article for the answer to that one. **[bit.ly/megil2]**

"Feminist Aspects of Megillat Esther" examines the actions of the strong female characters of the story ,such as Esther and Vashti. We see how Mordechai considered Esther a full partner in saving the Jews and convinced her to accept her mission despite the risks. "Esther responds to Mordechai's appeal, and from that moment forth, the initiative passes to her – and she alone plans and implements all the steps that lead ultimately to the salvation of Israel." **[bit.ly/megil3]**

In addition to being an important religious document, megillot can also be beautiful works of art. Illustrated and illuminated with scenes from the Purim story, they often reflect their country of origin rather than traditional Persia. An Italian Megillah on view at the Library of Congress has the historic characters in 18th-century dress. **[bit.ly/megil4]** And if you have $3,995 to spare, you could do worse than to pick up a facsimile of an 18th-century illuminated manuscript of the Book of Esther reproduced on fine parchment in a hand-tooled silver case. If you'd prefer to save the four grand, visit this website for an education into how a piece of religious art is shaped into existence. **[bit.ly/megil6]**

If you don't mind the occasional groaner, then take a listen to a "modern" interpretation of the story of Purim. Here's a sample: "This attempted political coup which became known in the Persian press as 'Palace-gate'… After years of legal deliberations, the two assassins were found guilty. And since the jury was not hung, the assassins were." **[http://bit.ly/megil10]**

All these sites are great when you're sitting at your computer but what about Purim night? That's when you need the marvelous Megillat Esther app for your iPhone or iPod Touch. As you scroll down the um, scroll, you are presented with the full Hebrew text of the Megillah. But what makes this really fun are the buttons that deliver sounds, including air horn, machine gun, crowd booing, firecrackers and of course, the classic gragger. Just shake for a random noisemaker. Best of all, the Megillah app is free. **[bit.ly/megil9]**

Many of the mitzvahs associated with Purim mentioned in Megillat Esther are discussed at length in the Talmud's Tractate Megillah. Now, hold that thought. Years ago, a certain alcoholic drink commissioned a series of ads that features the beverage's uniquely shaped bottle. In honour of Purim, some very creative typesetters have transformed a genuine page of Talmud to include the outline of that distinctive bottle containing "100 Spoof Vodka from Shushan." **[bit.ly/ megil8]**

Enjoy. Drink moderately. And have a wonderful Purim. Absolut-ly!

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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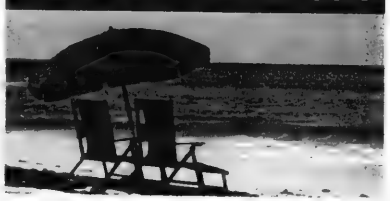

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Law prof fights discrimination against Sephardim

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

An Orthodox girls school in a small Israeli town put up a wall to divide its students some two years ago. Yifat Bitton spent the next two years working to tear it down.

Bitton, who spoke Feb. 4 at Adath Israel Congregation as the guest of the New Israel Fund of Canada, is a lawyer and co-chair of the Tmura Center, an Israeli civil rights group.

Last summer, the centre gained a legal victory against the Beit Yaakov school in Immanuel, Israel, which segregated Ashkenazi and Sephardi students, built a wall to divide the two groups and used a separate educational curriculum.

Bitton was involved in taking the case to Israel's Supreme Court, which ruled in her favour and ordered the abolition of any segregation. But this legal victory may not translate into a tangible one, she said.

"This is too early to celebrate. This [decision] is irrelevant to the [students]. They go tomorrow to school the same way they went to school for two years," she said, adding that the only change the school made was to dismantle the wall.

"Practically nothing substantial has happened... The classes miraculously were still structured in the same way. Ashkenazi on one side, Sephardi on the other."

Bitton, an associate professor at the School of Management Law School in Israel, works to raise awareness about discrimination against Mizrahi (Sephardi) Jews in Israel. Mizrahi Jews are those who originated in the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and the Caucasus, which include Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Yifat Bitton

"This Immanuel case is representative of what's going on in Israel," she said.

Bitton said this can be seen in employment statistics. About 7.5 per cent of the Mizrahi population in Israel are unemployed, compared to the 1.5 per cent of Ashkenazi Jews who are unemployed. In Israeli universities, about nine per cent of the faculty are Mizrahi Jews, while 90 per cent are Ashkenazi Jews and one per cent of the faculty are Arabs.

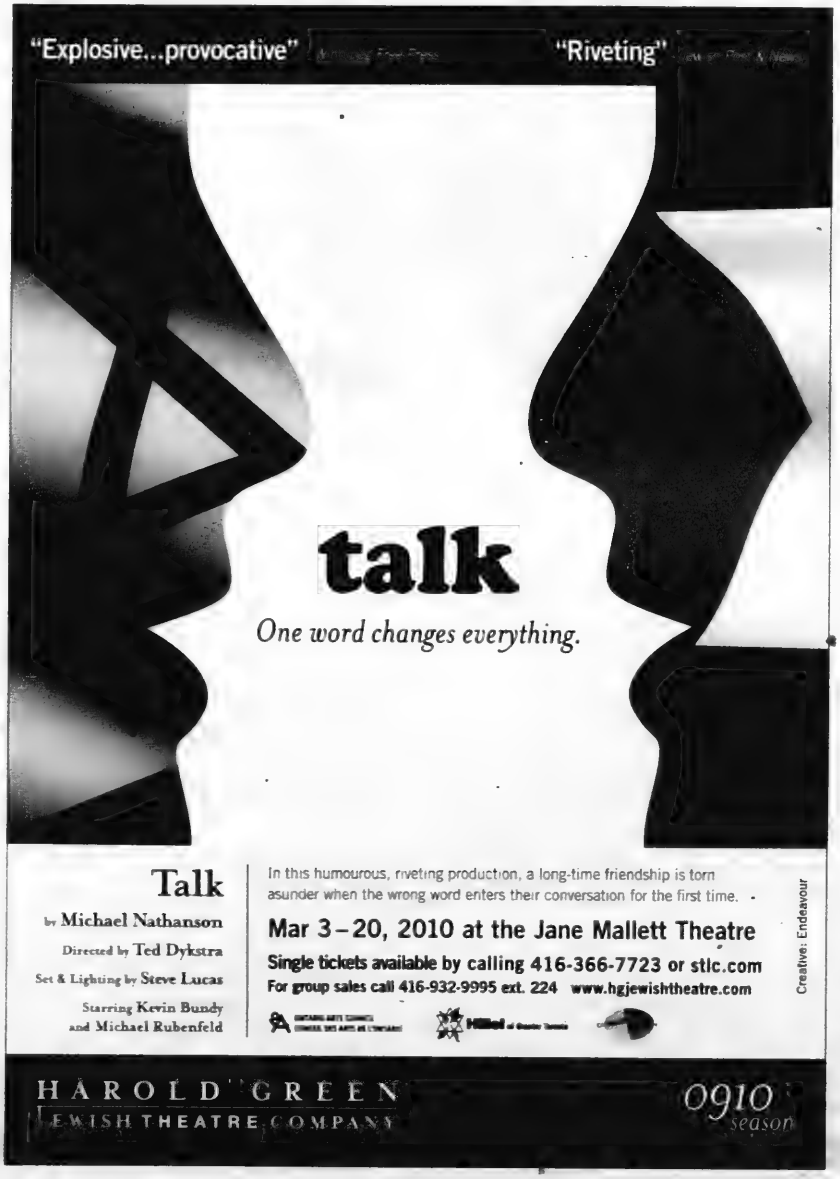
This discrimination isn't limited to social institutions, Bitton said, adding that it's difficult for Mizrahi youth to get into night clubs in Israel.

"They're simply not allowed into night clubs," she said. "These are guys that won't even categorize themselves as Mizrahi Jews. They'll say, 'We're Israeli.'"

Bitton added that there is little awareness of any discrimination against Sephardi Jews in Israel.

"Jewish society thinks of itself as an egalitarian one. It's a homeland for all Jews," she said.

"When you're not told that something is a result of discrimination... you'd rather not see it as discrimination," she said. "You have to know what the disease is in order to treat it."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Yaldeinu leaders heading to Cuba

Compiled by CJN Staff

Yaldeinu, a charitable organization that provides Jewish education to Jewish children and young adults in Israel and developing countries, recently announced its first overseas volunteer mission.

Yaldeinu's emerging leaders development mission to Cuba, from April 11 to 18, will be made up of young leaders, largely from Toronto's Jewish community.

"This mission is being held to show our solidarity with the Cuban Jewish community's young leaders," said Michael Ettedgui, the organization's founder and executive director.

"Canadian participants will volunteer their services, taking part in hands-on projects to help their Cuban brothers and sisters. Mission participants and their Cuban peers will also partake in joint educational and recreational programming."

The mission, which costs $2,000, including flights, meals and accommodations, is being subsidized by Ve'ahavta: The Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee.

"We want to support young people who are willing to give of themselves and learn about Jewish life in countries like Cuba," said Avrum Rosensweig, president of Ve'ahavta. "We are happy to provide a $500 sponsorship to the first 12 registrants of this mission."

For more information and registration application, call 905-482-3374 or e-mail: admin@yaldeinu.org. Website address is www.yaldeinu.org.

Family gift to Tomorrow Campaign honours memory of art lover

Sylvia Dzialoszynski Waks Rotunda will be gateway to new Koffler Centre

Sylvia Dzialoszynski Waks z"l enjoys Venice's Piazza San Marco, during a 2007 trip to Italy.

By Daniel Horowitz

While most typical Jewish mothers would be perfectly satisfied to spend the winter months poolside in Florida, Sylvia Dzialoszynski Waks z"l preferred whiling away the hours studying Renaissance art at the University of Toronto.

But then again, as anyone who had the great good fortune to know Sylvia would tell you, she was anything but typical.

Sylvia, who passed away on December 20, 2009 surrounded by her loving family, was an elegant, intelligent and passionate woman with a deep and abiding love for art.

A Holocaust survivor who was hidden by a non-Jewish Polish family outside the Warsaw Ghetto, Sylvia came to Toronto in 1949 where she quickly met the love of her life, Henry. They were married for 57 years and had two sons - Fred and Jay.

"My parents were best friends, and absolutely inseparable," said Fred. "They shared the same passion for art, Yiddishkeit and tzedakah. Because of the war, mom wasn't able to receive the education she would have liked but she always said, 'if you're passionate about something, learn everything you possibly can about it.'"

And she clearly practiced what she preached. "My mom spent the last thirty years of her life studying art at the University of Toronto," explained Fred. "Despite the lack of a formal education, she was extremely intelligent, well-read, and could take on anyone when it came to questions about art."

"She would stay up until all hours of the night reviewing, rereading and studying; feeding her insatiable appetite for art history," said Jay. "She loved to learn about all forms of art. She wanted to learn about modern art just in case she felt obligated to correct one of her art history professors during a lecture."

So, when Henry, Fred and Jay were looking for a special way to honour the family's matriarch by combining her love of Yiddishkeit, tzedakah and art, they looked to UJA Federation's Tomorrow Campaign and the future Koffler Centre of the Arts, and, after making a $1.5 million gift, The Sylvia Dzialoszynski Waks Rotunda was born.

The Rotunda bearing Sylvia's name will be an area of high prominence within the new Centre. With visibility from both the external areas of the Sherman Campus as well as from the Ellen Prosserman Atrium, the uniquely designed Rotunda will welcome visitors to the rich array of programming offered at the Koffler.

"Outside of the Basilica in Rome, this space at the new Koffler Centre would have been mom's favourite place on which to have her name attached," explained Fred, chair of the Koffler Centre of the Arts Foundation and an art major. "While spiritually speaking Israel was her favourite place, intellectually and architecturally speaking, it was Italy. The opportunity given to us through the Tomorrow Campaign at the new Koffler Centre provided the perfect recipe to honour mom's memory whiling respecting her love for tzedakah, Yiddishkeit and art, and creating something that was as unique as she was. It was the perfect fit."

"The Sylvia Dzialoszynski Waks Rotunda will be a beautiful, inspiring and welcoming space at the heart of the new Koffler Centre of the Arts," said Murray Koffler. "We share the Waks family's love of the arts and Jewish culture and are thrilled they have made this important gift to the Tomorrow Campaign."

Sylvia, who was involved with Hadassah-WIZO, Hebrew University and was a Lion of Judah through UJA Federation adored, and was adored, by her seven grandchildren and her great-granddaughter, Emily.

"The night before mom died, she was surrounded by her entire family," said Fred. "Emily was in bed with her and we all talked with her about anything and everything we could. She was completely lucid right to the end. At two in the morning, I sent everyone home while dad, Jay and I stayed with her until she passed way at 8:00 a.m. the next morning."

"My mother enriched and touched all of the lives of the people that she met, and we will always carry the reminders of her passion, her generosity and the love that she bestowed upon us," said Jay.

Iranian actions make need for sanctions more urgent

Last week, Iran once again dominated foreign news coverage, this time with its announcement that it was pushing ahead with higher-grade nuclear fuel enrichment for "medical" research and was planning to start construction of 10 nuclear sites this year.

Tehran's declaration came against a background of continuing domestic unrest despite the regime's brutal crackdown on political protests, including the recent hangings of two young dissidents. (As the Feb. 11 date marking the 30th anniversary of Iran's "Islamic Revolution" approached, Tehran indicated that it wouldn't tolerate further anti-government protests.)

Its declaration also prompted western governments to threaten tougher economic sanctions to try to thwart Iran's nuclear plans that, they fear, are aimed at developing nuclear weapons.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Anne Gearan of the Associated Press reported on Feb. 9 that at an impromptu news conference held that afternoon, U.S. President Barack Obama said that, since it appears Iran has "spurned" his offer of negotiations, the United States is developing a "significant regime of sanctions" for consideration at the UN Security Council.

However, as Canwest's UN correspondent Steve Edwards noted (in "Iran negotiation led 'to nothing,'" *National Post*, Feb. 9), "while Russia has begun to reverse its hard-line opposition to more sanctions, China, whose economic expansion relies in part on continued supplies of Iranian oil, remained uncommitted. New evidence China has overtaken the EU to become Iran's largest trading partner underscores the economic tie." As one of the permanent five members of the Security Council, China has a veto, and many analysts believe Beijing would use it to block another round of sanctions.

In a followup story on Feb. 10, Edwards wrote that Obama is prepared to take action against Iran even if that means working around the Security Council – such is the urgency of the Iranian threat for the United States.

Adding a note of skepticism about what Iran can achieve in the near future in its nuclear program, Sam Segev (in "Iran playing its hand" *Winnipeg Free Press*, Feb. 9), said that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's "announcement that his country will begin enriching its stockpile of low-grade uranium to 20 per cent grade is not being taken very seriously in Israel.

"Israeli scientists and scholars see the announcement as part of the gamesmanship that Ahmadinejad is playing with President Barack Obama and with other western leaders. They say this is not the first time that Ahmadinejad is making such a threat. It's part of the bargaining in the Persian Bazaar at which Ahmadinejad has been such a good player."

Segev didn't name these scientists and scholars, but mentioned an unnamed "former Israeli Mossad operative" who's followed Iran's nuclear program and claims that Iran currently lacks the capacity to produce 20 per cent enriched uranium, adding that it would take "many more years" to achieve this.

This analysis came as a surprise to Hershell Ezrin, CEO of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, who recently spoke with a range of Israeli and foreign experts about Iran at the Herzliya conference (as reported in last week's *CJN*, "Iran hijacks Herzliya Conference agenda"). Even though no one can say with absolute certainty what Iran is technically capable of, "the consensus view," Ezrin wrote, "is that Iran has been accelerating its efforts to produce nuclear weapons. Expectations are that Iran will achieve the nuclear bomb threshold including critical ignition testing in the months ahead."

In "Nuclear Iran must be stopped, Israel says" (*Globe and Mail*, Feb. 10), Patrick Martin indicated that Iran's 20 per cent enrichment claim was indeed being taken very seriously in Israel, prompting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to call for immediate "crippling sanctions." Martin wrote that "While weapons-grade uranium is enriched to contain at least 90 per cent of the fissile isotope U-235, Iran's intention to move to 20 per cent enrichment from the current 3.5 per cent is considered an ominous development. It is the low level of enrichment, experts say, that is the most laborious and time- consuming part of the process." And he cited one of these experts urging that action against Iran be taken soon, since the move to 90 per cent enrichment, for weapons, is the relatively easy part.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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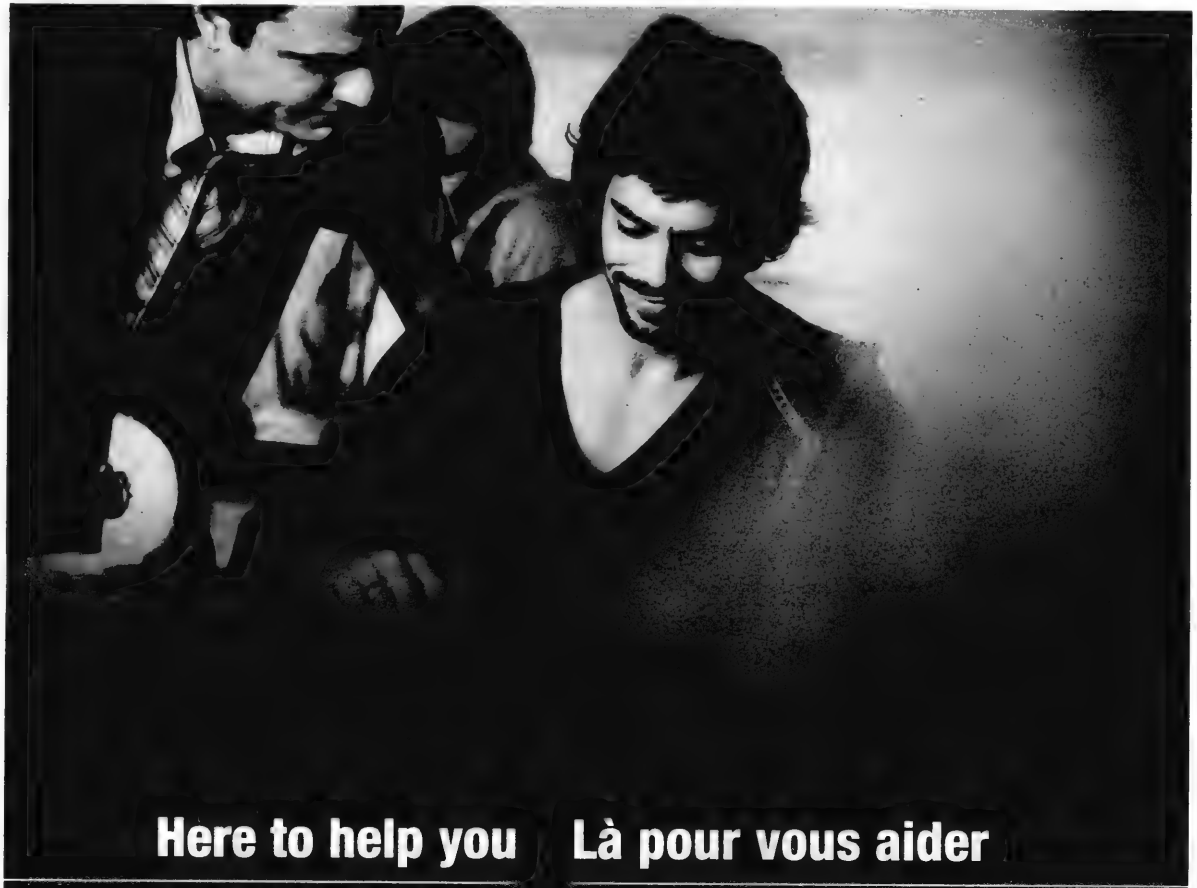

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Bands get set to battle for education

Compiled by CJN Staff

Local teens have planned a benefit concert for Free the Children, with proceeds directly supporting the building of schools in developing countries through the organization's Brick by Brick campaign. The concert will be from 7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. March 6 at Dufferin Clark Community Centre, 1441 Clark Ave. W., Thornhill.

Founded in 1995 by then 12-year-old Toronto-area child rights activist Craig Kielburger, Free the Children is the world's largest network of children helping children through education.

"The Brick by Brick program is great because it empowers us to promote the importance of education while also raising money to build much-needed schools in places like Haiti, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, among others," said 17-year old Eli Krapivnik, one of four teens involved in planning the event.

Hosted by two of the Toronto-area's leading Jewish teen movements – B'nai Brith Youth Organization (BBYO) and Canadian Young Judaea (CYJ) – the show will feature five local teen bands, said Kevin Goodman, program director at BBYO.

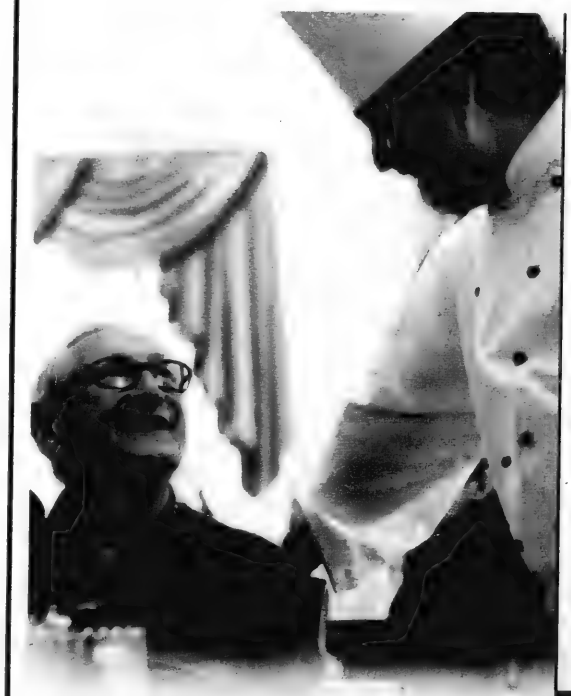
"The bands competing are all young local groups – Pursuit of Reality, Suburban Addiction and Vybe Tribe have so far been confirmed. Demand for auditions was high, and with only five spots, we're expecting an evening of phenomenal talent, while raising awareness as teens for a cause we're passionate about," said Simon Axelrod, representing CYJ on the event's planning committee.

Axelrod expects a crowd of about 200 teens. Each band will play a 40 minute set, with the top bands set to receive prizes that include gift certificates to stores and attractions as well as recording time courtesy of Soundhouse Studio.

The concert is an example of tikkun olam, organizers said, adding that helping to give every child an education is an important step in breaking the cycle of poverty for future generations.

Tickets to the show are available for $12 from participating bands or by contacting BBYO at 416-398-2004 or info@bbyo.ca.

JEWISH STUDENTS MEET: Students from Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Saskatoon were in Edmonton last month for the annual Canadian Federation of Jewish Students' conference. Some 50 students attended the conference, which was held Jan. 15 to 17 and focused on the importance of Israel advocacy on campus. The weekend included speakers such as David Tal, chair of Israel studies at the University of Calgary and a student-led panel discussion on topics such as the recent UN Goldstone report on last year's Gaza war.
[National Jewish Campus Life photo]



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Rabbi re-examines Ten Commandments

By MICHELLE BITRAN
Special to The CJN

Following the Ten Commandments is not as simple as it seems, said Rabbi David Levin-Kruss at a lecture last week.

Speaking at The House, a Jewish social meeting place, Rabbi Levin-Kruss of the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, encouraged his audience to challenge the fundamental rules of Orthodox Judaism.

Rabbi David Levin-Kruss

"I think piety is the enemy of good Torah learning," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss, 44, during his speech, called "In Praise of Envy, Adultery and Disobeying One's Parents: The Ten Commandments Revisited."

The rabbi added that challenging traditional Jewish law helps students to better understand it.

In that spirit, Rabbi Levin-Kruss asked his audience to identify some of the benefits of disobeying one's parents, of jealousy and of adultery.

"I'd say a lot of progress in history has come from people disobeying their parents," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss.

He went on to explain that people should use the law carefully to grow as individuals, and not as an excuse to remain forever reliant on their parents.

According to Rabbi Levin-Kruss, in Western law, parents are indebted to their children, but if children give the same sort of "unearned love" they receive, the relationship between parent and child will grow stronger.

Rabbi Levin-Kruss also made it clear that the Torah stipulates that honouring one's parents should not come at the expense of maintaining a strong value system. For example, he said, if a child's parents ask them to break the Sabbath, the child can decide to respectfully disobey their parents.

Rabbi Levin-Kruss argued that this same type of mindful approach should apply with respect to envy. "The jealousy of scholars increases wisdom," he said, explaining that a little bit of envy can help a person advance his or herself. However, balance is key. When a little bit of jealousy becomes an obsession with getting what someone else has, "that will drive you crazy," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss.

"It's when I want my neighbour's actual wife that it's a problem." He added that focusing on getting what belongs to others speaks to an "inherent lack of self-esteem."

Rabbi Levin-Kruss also talked about the strict rules governing intimacy and marital relations in Orthodox Judaism.

According to the rabbi, the laws about the relationship between husband and wife are designed to combine sex and love in order to achieve a stable marital life, and through that, a stable home.

If a couple finds that following the intimacy laws doesn't strengthen their bond, Rabbi Levin-Kruss said that finding a workable balance can be a better way for couples to benefit from the intent behind the laws.

"You can keep the letter of the law, but sometimes be destroying the spirit," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss.

According to him, the thoughts surrounding observance can matter as much as the actions themselves.

The goal is "to make Halachah [a way to] enrich life instead of a way to cord-off parts of it," said Rabbi Levin-Kruss. "Slavishly keeping the system can be very, very harmful."

PURIM PREP

The children at the Miles Nadal JCC Nursery School practise their Purim songs wearing costumes that they made themselves. Children will march in a building-wide parade to celebrate the holiday. From left, William Greer, Abby Blumberger, Alex Rose, Lylah Adler, Bodhi Freedman, and Ellie Murray.

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Class Acts

BEAUHEART BALL: Teens from several local BBYO chapters attended the annual Beauheart Ball at Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel on Jan. 30. Pictured are members of the regional executive along with Bailey Bernknopf of Chapter Chaverot and Ori Kelner of Chapter Exodus, elected as this year's regional Sweetheart & Beau at the Las Vegas-themed ball. From left are Russell Bahar, Kelly Indarjit, Maya Feldberg, Bernknopf, Eli Krapivnik, Kelner, Alissa Malina, Mike Gallowitz, Michelle Efrosman and Michelle Covant.

ECRUSY HOLDS CLASSES AT HOGWARTS: Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry recently became a reality for participants in the Winter Mifgash of Eastern Canadian Region United Synagogue Youth. Hosted by Beit Rayim in Thornhill, Ont., at the Reena Battle Centre, USYers participated in a full Harry Potter schedule. Beit Rayim congregants also got a taste of Hogwarts and ECRUSY. Seen here are the ECRUSY wizards who took part in the program. For more on the ECRUSY weekend, go to *The CJN*'s website at http://bit.ly/avllSL

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READING MONTH FUN: Bialik Hebrew Day School students – from left, Annika Zarek, Daniel Charkow, Alexa Wagman, Jessica Bensky, Holden Mlynarski, Eden Manly, Jessica Fisher – celebrated Reading Month with Dress Up as a Character in Your Favourite Story/Novel Day. All elementary students came to school in costumes depicting their favourite characters and brought their favourite books with them.

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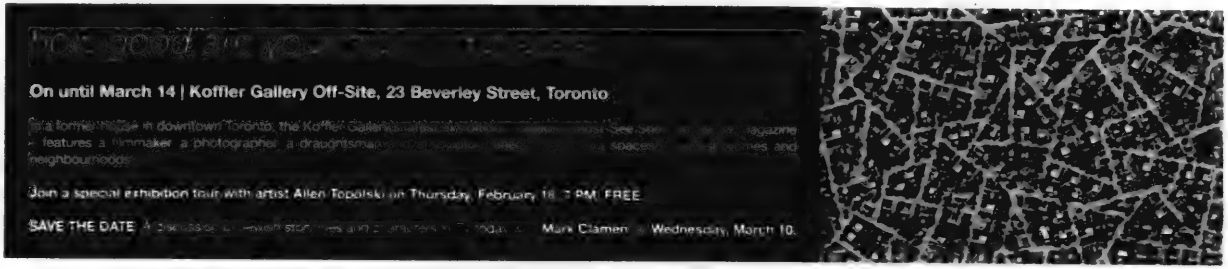
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Israeli finance minister spreads economic message

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Israel's Minister of Finance Yuval Steinitz recently had an opportunity to spread Israel's economic message to Canadian government and business leaders.

In Ottawa earlier this month during a North American tour, Steinitz, who had previously met Canada's Finance Minister Jim Flaherty in Israel, met with other government ministers as well as Opposition Leader Michael Ignatieff.

Steinitz "was astounded by the pro-Israel voices amongst the ministers he met with," said Jacques Shore, national vice-president of the Canada-Israel Chamber of Commerce, who was among the business and community leaders at a reception for Steinitz held at the residence of Israel's ambassador to Canada, Miriam Ziv.

Steinitz was "able to convey the message of a strong and vibrant economy against a backdrop of living in a difficult neighbourhood," Shore said. "He did extremely well in sharing information about the buoyancy in Israel's economy... His mission here was to be able to express this message, to extol the virtues of doing business in Israel and to seek new partners in Israel."

In addition to Flaherty and Ignatieff, Steinitz met with Rona Ambrose, minister of public works; Treasury Board head Stockwell Day; Peter Kent, minister of state for foreign affairs (Americas); Jason Kenney, minister of immigration; and Vic Toews, minister of public safety. He shared with them details of how Israel has fared during the global economic slowdown and the country's optimistic outlook as its economy is improving. Israel's well-known successes in the high-tech and biotechnology industries were also topics of discussion.

At a press conference following his meetings, Steinitz outlined some of the measures Israel has instituted to help weather the recent economic storms.

"The crisis is not yet over, but we feel we will cross the economic crisis without too much damage. We came out with a... taxation plan. We raised taxes, but made a seven-year commitment to reduce taxes. This will give us some kind of an advantage, as we did the opposite of most countries," he said.

"We think we are on the eve of significant economic growth, focused mainly on promoting high-tech industries and biotechnology, advanced agriculture devices, satellites and many other things. We think we should promote co-operation with Canadian companies."

Yuval Steinitz, left, and Jim Flaherty
[Peter Waiser photo]

At an earlier business roundtable, Steinitz met with representatives of various companies including MDS Nordian, which specializes in molecular medicine; wireless solutions company Belair Networks; and management-consulting firm Cyrus Echo.

Steinitz was pleased by the warmth and intensity of friendship demonstrated by government ministers, said Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee.

On his return to Israel, "he carried that message back to his colleagues at a cabinet meeting. I think it will be a catalyst for a real exponential increase in bilateral partnerships," Fogel said.

Orthodox shuls can't sustain daily minyans

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg's largest Orthodox synagogue, Herzlia-Adas Yeshurun Synagogue in the south end of the city, no longer has a stable minyan, and neither does the south end Chabad-Lubavitch.

Haskel Greenfield, who lost his father this past December, said there were quite a number of days where he went to Herzlia to say *Kaddish*, but it didn't have the 10 men required for a minyan.

Greenfield told *The CJN* that "some days we can get a minyan, and other days we can't. When my mother died six years ago, there was a minyan at Herzlia every day. But that is no longer the case now."

According to Rabbi Ari Ellis, spiritual leader of Herzlia, which has a membership "of between 80 to 100 units, families and singles," there are days when the shul doesn't get a daily morning or evening minyan.

"The minyan is not stable enough. Especially in the winter when people go out of town, we are not able to keep a daily minyan," Rabbi Ellis said "We are generally able to get a minyan two to three days a week, in addition to Shabbat. It varies. Some days we get one, some days we don't."

He added that this has been the situation for the "last year and a half" since he came to Winnipeg.

"I have considered whether we ought to go to a three-day-a-week minyan, instead of a daily one. We would have it on Sunday, and Monday and Thursday, days when we read from the Torah, in addition, of course, to Shabbat... But I have been hesitant to do this, as once we were to go to a three-day-a-week minyan, it would be pretty hard to ever go back to a daily minyan," he said.

He also said that he tries to " encourage an interested person to make a commitment to do one thing a week, and at times, I'd like them to consider coming to a Shabbat service or attending a class I lead, and if they'd rather do either of those things, attending a minyan won't be their first priority."

Rabbi Avrohom Altein of Chabad-Lubavitch, said that Chabad also doesn't have a daily minyan in the south end.

"We have one every Shabbes and Sunday morning," Altein told *The CJN*.

When he arrived in the city 18 months ago, Rabbi Ellis said he explored the idea of having members of his synagogue join Chabad daveners in the south end to make a daily Orthodox minyan viable.

"I have tried to work with Chabad in the south end to see if we could join together to ensure a daily minyan in the south end, which sometimes could be held at Herzlia and sometimes at Chabad, but it hasn't happened. It's been difficult to co-ordinate," he said.

According to Rabbi Altein, in the north end of the city, the Ashkenazi Congregation, the Talmud Torah Beth Jacob Synagogue and Chabad North have joined together in a "sharing" arrangement to ensure a daily minyan.

"The Ashkenazi has minyans on weekday mornings, but not on Shabbes. Talmud Torah has no minyans during the week, but has on Shabbes. Chabad North has minyans in the evening and on Shabbes," Rabbi Altein said.

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Watered-down 'divestment' resolution passed at McGill

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Opponents of a motion denouncing companies that allegedly profit from Israel's "unlawful occupation" of Palestinian territory succeeded in having the offending clauses removed before it was passed by the Students Society of McGill University (SSMU) General Assembly last week.

After a couple of hours of at times heated debate, an amendment was adopted that withdrew from the motion's preamble, which stated: "Whereas McGill University continues to have ties with organizations that engage in and profit from unethical practices including, but not limited to, profiting from the unlawful occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the occupation of which has been declared illegal by the following organizations: the United Nations Security Council, United Nations General Assembly, International Court of Justice, and the International Committee of the Red Cross."

A second clause listing UN resolutions and international covenants said to have declared the illegality of the occupation was also dropped.

No other country was condemned in the original motion.

The amended motion was passed by a wide margin.

The SSMU is the official representative of all McGill undergraduates.

The motion, titled the defense of human rights, social justice and environmental protection, had been proposed by the campus group Solidarity for Palestininian Human Rights (SPHR), which is an active proponent of the international boycott campaign against Israel.

The adopted motion does, however, call for greater scrutiny of the "ethical practices" of any corporations which McGill does business with or invests in, and urges the SSMU to advise the administration to avoid companies it thinks are not respecting human rights.

Hillel Montreal criticized the original motion as a "hijacking and mockery of the human rights agenda" and urged all students to vote against it.

Hillel advocacy director Jason Portnoy warned in an e-mailed alert: "The human rights agenda is once again being hijacked for the sole purpose of advancing the narrow and petty political agenda of demonizing Israel."

A capacity crowd of over 600 students attended the semi-annual GA held Feb. 10 in the Shatner building cafeteria under tight security. Everyone entering had to show their undegraduate identity card, and no online voting was permitted.

Sebastian Ronderos-Morgan, the SSMU vice-president of external affairs, said that no actual count of the vote, by show of cards, on the contentious motion was recorded because the SSMU's rules permit motions to pass if support can be visually determined.

Ronderos-Morgan underlined that only the "be it resolved" clauses of motions adopted become SSMU policy. Therefore, if this motion had passed as originally submitted the statements referring to illegal occupation and profiteering in the Palestinian territories would not have become the position of the SSMU.

The SSMU considers motions signed by at least 100 students (as in this case) or that are proposed by four members of its legislative council, he explained.

The two speakers of that council have the discretion over whether to place motions on the GA agenda, he said. One of those speakers is Hillel Montreal president Zach Newburgh.

Critics of the inclusion of this motion and one brought forward also by SPHR at the GA one year ago condemning Israel for its alleged bombing of educational institutions during the Gaza war of December 2008-January 2009 say they are contrary to the spirit of the SSMU constitution, which states that "the SSMU Council will not take a position on external political issues that Council deems to be extremely divisive among students at McGill University."

Ronderos-Morgan said that the clauses were , "I would venture to guess that one of the considerations the speakers [made in letting the SPHR motion through] was that the 'resolved' clauses, which become actual policy, are not extremely divisive."

The binding clauses call for the SSMU to affirm its commitment to human rights and to either expand the mandate of its Financial Ethics Review Committee or create a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee that would investigate companies' negative ethical practices and call upon the university administration "to divest from companies that do not meet specified criteria for ethical investment."

Last year's motion on Gaza was shelved by a recorded 436 to 263 vote during a stormy GA. Opponents said the SSMU GA was not the appropriate forum for debate over the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

SPHR's latest motion avoided any specific mention of Israel.

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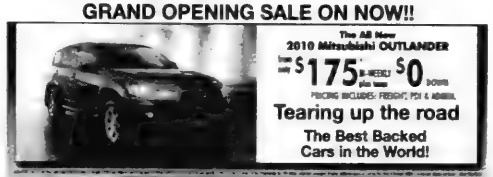
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Reconcile or find a good shoulder to cry on

Family Matters

by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 28 years

Question: When a three-year common law relationship breaks up, how do the assets and earnings get divided? We live in a house that my partner owned before we met. My partner looks after our son, which is a far larger matter, but I think I understand how the law of custody relates to my child in these circumstances.

Answer: You may be considerably screwed. Unless you can prove that you contributed financially or indirectly to the acquisition or improvement of your partner's house, you have no right whatsoever to any share of it since you are not married to him. In fact, unless you have a court order confirming that you are entitled to share in the equity of the home because you directly or indirectly contributed to its improvement, then he could legally kick you out of the house tomorrow without any notice.

The most common way of proving such a contribution is if you paid for part of a monthly mortgage commitment, utilities or realty taxes. The sole exception to this rule might be in those cases where you could prove that you were his tenant through a record of consistent monthly payments or lease agreement, or if you have signed a cohabitation agreement with him giving you "rights of possession."

In common law relationships, in the absence of such a court order acknowledging proof of such contributions or in the absence of a cohabitation agreement, whatever is in your name is yours and whatever is in his name is his. There is no "sharing" in the values of your assets (or debts). Jointly owned assets are divided equally.

In your particular case it gets worse. Since he's currently unemployed and you are working, then you may have to pay him spousal support until he finds a job, even though you are not married. For the purposes of spousal support, he becomes a "spouse" (married or not) who is entitled to receive such support (but not property division) after cohabiting for more than one year if you share a child, or after cohabiting for three years if you don't.

If that isn't bad enough, since your partner has been the one primarily looking after your son, in the event of a court challenge he is in a better legal position than you to get custody or at least primary care of him. Moreover, you may also be stuck paying child support according to a table geared to your yearly gross income, not his. So either reconcile or find a shoulder to cry on.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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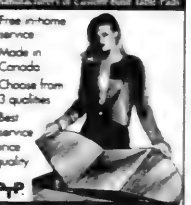

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on the loss of his father
Irving Naiberg ז"ל
Member of our Board of Govenors
His devotion to Jewish education and Associated Hebrew Schools will always be remembered
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Coast to Coast

Federal minister defends government's stance on Israel

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The Harper government's with-us-or-against-us stance on Israel may lead to an anti-Semitic backlash, said Liberal MP Anita Neville last week.

Neville was one of several opposition MPs to question Immigration, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Minister Jason Kenney about the Conservative government's "black and white" position on Israel at a Feb. 8 hearing held by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism.

"I've had people who are traditionally supporters of Israel [say] they don't like what this government is doing in terms of turning Israel into a... black and white issue... and for stifling criticism of Israel," Neville, a Winnipeg MP and the co-chair of Liberal Parliamentarians for Israel, said in an interview after the hearing.

"I don't like the government using Israeli politics... as a wedge issue... That's not the way one does politics."

In response to similar comments at the hearing, Kenney said that he has been commended for Canada's stance on Israel and anti-Semitism.

"All I get is praise for Canada's effort to deal with these sometimes difficult issues and not to sweep them under the carpet," he said. "In terms of accusations that the government is inciting people to anti-Semitism, I just don't understand that."

Kenney acknowledged that some of the government's positions have been controversial, but said that "sometimes it's necessary to be controversial.

"Sometimes you have to say, 'I'm sorry, if someone is out there defending terrorist organizations or using implicitly anti-Semitic language, we're going to name them and if that ruffles some feathers, so be it,'" he said.

Opposition MPs brought up the de-funding of KAIROS, a Canadian church-based aid organization, as an example of the government's hardline stance on Israel.

While on a trip to Jerusalem late last year, Kenney said that KAIROS lost its government funding as an example of Canada's "zero-tolerance approach to anti-Semitism" and that it was "taking a leadership role in the boycott [of Israel]," which KAIROS denied.

Kenney and International Cooperation Minister Bev Oda later said that KAIROS was "defunded" because its goals didn't meet with Canada's new aid priorities.

"The perceptions of [the KAIROS situation] is not a good one. It's viewed as being muzzled," Neville said in an interview.

In response to criticism, Kenney denied calling KAIROS anti-Semitic, but acknowledged that he accused the group of being involved in a boycott campaign.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, said Neville's accusation that the government stance on Israel can lead to anti-Semitism is a "big statement.

"Pretty much anything could contribute to increased anti-Semitism. From the government's perspective, I think it has been consistent in identifying and acting on agencies, NGOs and programs that don't conform to its overall vision of where taxpayers' money should be directed," he said.

Jason Kenney

The Feb. 8 CPCCA hearing, which was the last of 10 hearings held to discuss the issue of anti-Semitism in Canada, included speeches from members of the RCMP and police forces from around the country.

Steve Sullivan, the federal ombudsman for victims of crime, said that victims of hate crimes report higher levels of fear, depression and anxiety than victims of other crimes.

"At the community level, the impact of hate crimes reaches far beyond the individual or the institution that's been attacked," he said. "Hate crimes can create fear among other members of the community."

Sullivan added that less than 10 per cent of victims of any crime in Canada access any victim services offered by the government, and that most victims of hate crimes turn to their family, friends and religious institutions for comfort.

Sullivan went on to say that because a hate crime affects whole communities, these support systems are often damaged due to fear.

During his speech, Kenney said that Canada's zero-tolerance approach to anti-Semitism and hate crimes includes supporting Holocaust education in Canada, working to collect hate-crime data from police forces throughout the country, and denying citizenship or permanent residence to anyone charged with, convicted of or under investigation for a war crime or a crime against humanity.

McGuinty set to visit Israel

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty has announced that he will lead a trade mission to Israel and the West Bank in May.

The trip, from May 24 to 27, will include stops in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Bethlehem. A press release said the mission would expand the province's research cooperation with Israel and build more economic partnerships in health care, as well as enabling Ontario to tap into Israel's "expertise in turning good high-tech ideas into good high-tech jobs."

In 2008, two-way goods traded between Ontario and Israel totalled almost $1.1 billion, an increase of 86 per cent from 2004, according to the release. Ontario's exports to Israel have grown by more than 70 per cent since 2004, it stated.

At a press conference last Thursday at Quanser Consulting Inc. – a Markham robotic and mechatronic systems manufacturing company that was involved in a recent project with a company from Israel in the medical sector – McGuinty said he looks forward "to visiting Israel and the West Bank and promoting Ontario's world-class medical research and development.

"This is an important market for Ontario and this trade mission will strengthen cultural and commercial ties while creating jobs for Ontarians."

As part of a question-and-answer session, McGuinty said he believes "we have a special responsibility as Ontarians and Canadians to always maintain linkages and build on community values.

"It's my first trip to the Middle East. I think it's high time... and I'm very much looking forward to it."

The premier noted that this mission and previous ones to countries like India, China and Japan serve to "enhance trade ties and seek more investment here in Ontario."

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

To send in digital photos, please visit

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and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Mazel tov to Miriam Fishbein who, on January 29, 2010, in good health and spirits, with family and friends, celebrated her 100th birthday.

Mazel tov to Sofi & Albert Cohen on your 60th anniversary! With love from your children, grandchildren, great-grandson, and the entire family.

Shirley (Rotman) & Aaron Horwitz celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary. Parents of Tamara Kunder & Larry (Dana) Horwitz. Grandparents of Joshua, Benjamin, Adam, Daniel, Noah, Aiden and Molly.

David & Jodi are engaged! Delighted parents are Marilyn & Terry Lazarus and Faye & Murray Major. Grandparents Milton Berger and Molly & Isadore Lazarus.

Mazel tov to Yetta Lean on her 90th birthday. Love, your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and family.

Ethan is a brother to Aiden, born Dec. 17. Parents Sharon Naymark & Marc Rose. Grandparents, Elaine & Arnie Rose, Sima & Len Naymark. Great-grandmother Clara Tobias.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation

What's New deadlines: Deadline for the March 4 issue is Feb 22, and deadline for the March 11 issue is March 1. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Saturday, Feb. 20

BETH SHOLOM

Join **Cantor Eric Moses** for *Havdalah*, a light dinner, ice cream sundae buffet and Sports with Jay, 5:45 p.m. Perfect for families with children under 6. No Cost. RSVP andrea@bethsholom.net.

YIDDISH FILM NIGHT

Kehillat Shaarei Torah Synagogue is showing *The Cantor's Son*, filmed in 1937 (English subtitles), 7:45 p.m. Suggested contribution $5.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah's Torah class, 10-11 a.m., Trumah with **Henry Alkin**. Everyone welcome.

B'NAI SHALOM

Monthly Shabbat service at a Conservative egalitarian congregation in Oakville. Kiddush follows services. bnaishalom.ca or info@bnaishalom.ca.

Sunday, Feb. 21

HEALING SERVICE

Rabbi Cory Weiss and cantorial soloist **Tara Abrams** are facilitating a healing service, 3-4 p.m., Temple Har Zion. Sponsored by Jewish Family & Child. Wheelchair accessible, 416-638-7800, ext. 287.

BREAKFAST LECTURE

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Brotherhood presents a breakfast lecture by **Michael Rubin**, "Minorities in Israel – Living as a Non-Jew in a Jewish State." Open to the public, $5 includes breakfast, 416-633-5500 or www.bethdavid.com.

FILM SCREENING

Screening of the documentary *Home Safe Toronto* with producer/director **Laura Sky**, 7:15 p.m., Darchei Noam Congregation, 864 Sheppard Ave. W.

Monday, Feb. 22

SIT YOUR TUCHUS DOWN 2

The Jerusalem Foundation of Canada's New Leaders presents "Sit Your Tuchus Down 2," a night of Israeli cinematography as seen through the eyes of Israeli filmmakers, 7-9 p.m., Varsity VIP Theatre, 55 Bloor St. W., $20, 416-635-5491, brownpapertickets.com/event/9621, or jfnewleaders@gmail.com

JEWISH HEALING

Temple Har Zion's Jewish Healing gathering "Meditating Mondays" takes place on the final Monday of each month, 8:15 p.m. 905-889-2252.

Tuesday, Feb. 23

TUESDAY AT THE MOVIES

Beth Tikvah Synagogue is screening *Beaufort*, nominated for a best foreign film Oscar in 2008, 2 p.m. $5 at at the door.

IRON CHEF RABBIS

Temple Har Zion sisterhood presents "Iron Chef Rabbis: Pesach Cooking with **Rabbi Cory Weiss** and **Rabbi Sharon Sobel**." Members $5, non-members, $8. rabbiweiss@templeharzion.com, sharon.sobel@gmail.com or 905-889-2252.

ORGANIZE YOUR HOME

Discover tips on how to organize your home and life, Beth Emeth Sisterhood, 7:30 p.m. Members $8, guests $10.

MEN'S CLUB MEETING

Beth Tikvah Men's Club hosts a meeting for family or friends of inter-dating or inter-married couples. No charge, non-members are welcome. **Moe Horenfeldt** (in confidence) 647-282-0277 or mhorenf@idirect.com

Wednesday, Feb. 24

GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Karen Lasky, a child of Holocaust survivors, will talk on "Ancestral Mission: Unexpected Discoveries," Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada, Toronto, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim. $5, non-members.

Continued on page 27

Bialik Hebrew Day School
Information Session:
Wednesday, March 10th, 7:00-9:00 pm
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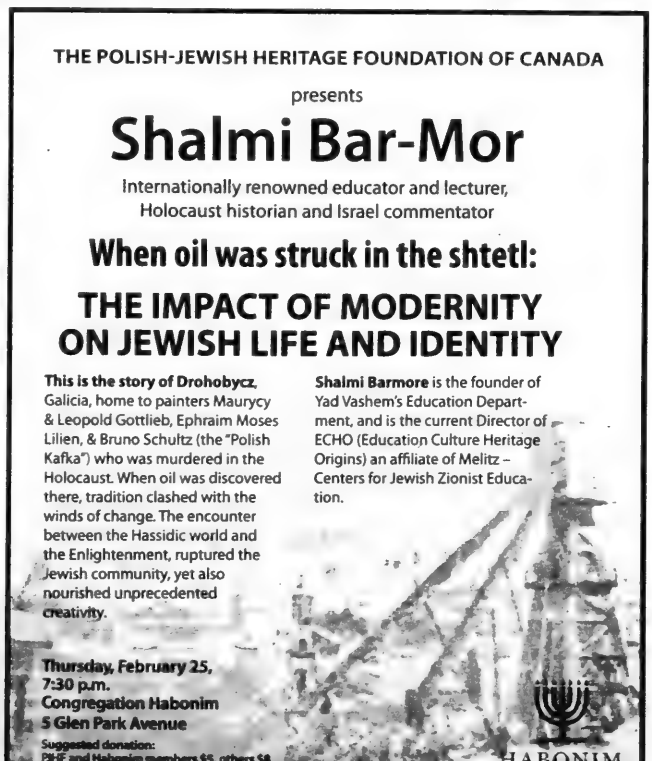
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presents
Shalmi Bar-Mor
Internationally renowned educator and lecturer,
Holocaust historian and Israel commentator
When oil was struck in the shtetl:
THE IMPACT OF MODERNITY ON JEWISH LIFE AND IDENTITY
This is the story of Drohobycz, Galicia, home to painters Maurycy & Leopold Gottlieb, Ephraim Moses Lilien, & Bruno Schultz (the "Polish Kafka") who was murdered in the Holocaust. When oil was discovered there, tradition clashed with the winds of change. The encounter between the Hassidic world and the Enlightenment, ruptured the Jewish community, yet also nourished unprecedented creativity.
Shalmi Barmore is the founder of Yad Vashem's Education Department, and is the current Director of ECHO (Education Culture Heritage Origins) an affiliate of Melitz – Centers for Jewish Zionist Education.
Thursday, February 25, 7:30 p.m.
Congregation Habonim
5 Glen Park Avenue
Suggested donation:
PJHF and Habonim members $5, others $8
HABONIM

Continued from page 26

Thursday, Feb. 25

WHO IS IN CHARGE?

Parents will learn ways to move from a win-lose conflict situation to one of problem solving. Skills will be introduced, 7.30 p.m., Temple Sinai. $15 in advance; $20 at the door. 416-487.3281 or education@templesinai.net.

OTHER NEWS

PURIM CELEBRATIONS

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation is hosting a children's celebration following the Megillah reading, which begins at 7:15 p.m., Feb. 27.

Adath Israel Congregation, Purim concert with **Kayla**, Feb. 28, 9:30 a.m. in main sanctuary, followed by carnival, 10:30 a.m. in the Alex Tobias Hall. $10 concert and carnival; $7 concert only; $3 carnival only. Prize given with each ticket purchased in advance, 416-635-5340.

Winchevsky Centre's family Purim carnival, Feb. 27, 11 a.m., 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Activities include costume parade, performance by Clay & Paper Theatre. www.winchevskycentre.org, 416-789-5502.

JF&CS GROUPS

One Family Two Homes, 3-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Children participate in separate groups. Topics include: tips for keeping the kids out of the conflict, trends in family law and the impact of separation and divorce. Feb. 23, 4600 Bathurst St., 6th floor, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com.

VOLUNTEERS

Baycrest needs volunteers to assist clients with a web visiting project. If you are friendly and have an understanding of computers, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572.

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors. **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

BIKUR CHOLIM

Bikur Cholim luncheon, March 3, recognizes gynecologist **Dr. Paul Bernstein**, *rofeh* of the year. The Ahavas Chesed Award will be presented to **Esther Anisfeld**. Kehilat Shomrei Shabbos Congregation. bikurcholimtor@rogers.com.

JWI

JWI has lots of yarn and invites knitters to pick some up and start knitting. No matter how many hats and mittens we donate, the need is greater than our supply.

Are you a survivor of abuse who is willing and able to speak about your experiences? JWIC has a speaker's bureau on the issue of abuse against women. The goal is to educate men and women about the issue of abuse and its effects. Training will be provided.

Call 416-630-9313.

50-YEAR REUNION

Northmount High School, Montreal, is holding its 50th reunion, Oct. 22 weekend. Call **Joyce Ostroff**, 514-486-8141 or joycemjo@gmail.com.

DISABLED VETERANS

Aid to Disabled Veterans of Israel – Beit Halochem Canada seeks 10 families to host a disabled Israeli veteran for two weeks this June. Also needed, co-host families to assist with transportation and attend activities. Call 905-695-0611.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. "Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity" begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m. followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m. followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

FOR SENIORS

Baycrest: Specialist in pain management will discuss the different kinds of pain that affects us as we age and the strategies for managing pain. Feb. 22, Wortsman Hall, Baycrest Hospital, 1:30-3 p.m. lkamenitz@baycrest.org or 416-785-2500, ext. 3374.

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 3, 10 a.m. departure. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Circle of Care, 530 Wilson Ave., presents Creating Healthy Relationships, an education and support group for women 55 and over who have experienced abuse. Meets Wednesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., **Marisa Di Nardo**, 416-635-2900, ext. 418.

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group Purim program, Feb. 18, 2-4 p.m. Speaker is **Rabbi Jarrod Grover**, assistant rabbi, Beth Tikvah. $5.

Beth Sholom Synagogue Chai Society Group pre-Purim program, noon, Feb. 24. Dress in your Shabbos best. $10. **Rivy**, 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

Active Seniors, Purim musical celebration, Feb. 18, 12:15 p.m. with singer Mickey Lewin. Reserve by Feb 15: 416-924-6211 x 155.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Wellness lecture, "Explore your Creativity" with **Judy Weiss**, personal growth coach, Feb. 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m., free.

Hearing clinic, Feb. 22, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Ext. 126 for appointment.

"Hollywood and Society: Hollywood Looks at Crime," with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, 10-11:30 a.m., Feb. 23. $3 members, $6 non-members.

Russian Samovar Day with vendors, market and entertainers, 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Feb. 24. Free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Kolel presents "Unveiling Esther," a Purim workshop exploring the depths of Megillat Esther, with **Rabbi Rena Arshinoff**, Feb. 24, 7:30-9 p.m. Pre-register: ext. 4235.

Culinary Arts Studio: "Have Your Cake and Great Health, Too!" with **Ricki Heller**, holistic nutritionist, Feb. 22, 7:00-9 p.m.; "The Healthy Hamenstashen" with **Aviva Allen**, Feb. 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m. and "Keylitsh Purim Challah" with chef **Ellen Grossman**, Feb. 25, 9 a.m.-noon. Register, ext. 4235.

KOFFLER CENTRE, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, ext. 4228.

Koffler Chamber Orchestra, "From Sweden to Italy with Stops in Jerusalem," Feb. 28, 7 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Tickets, 1-888-222-6608, or ticketweb.ca. Tickets also available at the door.

Seder plate workshop: The ceramic studio and Kolel invites children, parents, bubbies and zaides to make seder plates in a two-week workshop, Mondays, 4:30-7 p.m., Feb. 22 and March 8. One adult and one child $65 + GST. Two adults and one child $80 + GST.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Sundays On Bloor, Feb. 21, 11 a.m., lecture with music on "The History of Stride Piano," with **Jordan Klapman**. $9, $5 for students with valid ID. Ext. 133.

Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Joshua Then and Now*. Two screenings: Feb. 21, 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. Rush tickets on sale at door. $15 general admission; $10 (18 to 29-year-olds, 7:30 p.m. only). Ext. 0.

Media Mondays: Hollywood and Society, with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**. Feb. 22, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Drop in: $12. Ext. 606.

Hebrew Cooking Class, Feb. 24, 7-9:30 p.m. Stir and knead, whip and fry, cook and taste... all in Hebrew! Members, $25, non-members: $30, jewishlife@mnjcc.org or register at ext. 0.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

YAD VASHEM EXHIBIT: A Canadian delegation, led by Canadian Society for Yad Vashem's national chair Fran Sonshine and executive director Yaron Ashkenazi, met with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu prior to the official opening of the new Yad Vashem exhibition, Architecture of Murder: the Auschwitz-Birkenau Blueprints at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. *[Yossi Ben David/Yad Vashem photo]*

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Larry Blake	Jan 31/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Naim Nissan	Jan 30/10	1 Clark Ave W
Edward Lazare	Jan 31/10	133 Torresdale Ave
Roza Bekritskaia	Feb 1/10	3560 Bathurst St
David Comm	Feb 1/10	214 Athabasca St
Gertrude Mills	Feb 1/10	680 Briarhill Ave
Paul Levy	Feb 2/10	900 Yonge St
Shirley Miller	Feb 2/10	65 Skymark Dr
Ethlyne Shatsky	Feb 2/10	50 Graydon Hall Dr
Nona Brown	Feb 2/10	4201 Sarazen Dr
Jack Ungerman	Feb 3/10	3000 Bathurst St

The family of the late
BECKIE SACKS ז"ל
would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the support given during our recent bereavement and for the many donations made in her memory.
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On Campus

Anti-Semitic comments called 'unacceptable'

Continued from page 1

In her second letter, dated Feb. 7, 2010, Mishna said that the anti-Semitic comments in question were "unacceptable and upsetting to many faculty and students," and reiterated that anti-Semitism has no place at the university.

Stung and embarrassed by the incidents, the university has taken steps to close the festering wounds.

Mishna and members of her leadership team have met with students and teachers close to the incidents in an attempt to understand what happened and open a dialogue.

Awareness and educational programs are being developed to address underlying issues.

An equity adviser within the faculty may be appointed to handle concerns raised by students about discrimination and any forms of exclusion.

Ernie Lightman

Robert Steiner, the university's vice-president of communications, said that Mishna has strived to "heal the injury," having labelled the incidents as anti-Semitic, met with students and faculty and hosted two "instructional events" with faculty members.

And in the near future, he noted, the faculty plans to host two educational events for its members.

A seminar titled "Understanding Anti-Semitism and Religious Discrimination: A Dialogue About Stereotypes, Silencing and Social Justice" is set for March 16. A seminar on "Civility, Respect and Engagement: What Is the Role in the Fight Against Racism" is to follow on March 22.

According to Ernie Lightman – a faculty member who pieced together the story but did not personally hear the offending comments – the first anti-Semitic incident took place when one or two students in Rupaleem Bhuyan's class said they did not want to visit the Baycrest geriatric health-care facility in Toronto.

In an undated, widely circulated letter to university president David Naylor, Lightman claimed that a student or students "did not want to visit a place full of old Jews, while another student did not want to go to a place with so many rich Jews."

Lightman, a professor of social policy, added, "One student said he did not feel comfortable visiting Baycrest after what Israel did in Gaza" during its invasion last year to end Palestinian rocket attacks on Israeli territory.

"That students would express these types of comments is not necessarily unusual," wrote Lightman, who's currently in Israel on a sabbatical and could not be reached for elaboration.

"What is surprising is that the discussion would be sanctioned – or encouraged – by Rupaleem."

Lightman said that Bhuyan – an academic of South Asian descent who was born and raised in the United States and whose background is in international studies, cultural anthropology and social welfare – could have "shut down" the discussion and turned it into "a teachable moment."

Instead, she tacitly acquiesced to, or actively promoted, the problematic discussion, thereby allowing or encouraging the students "to act out their agendas of hate and ignorance," charged Lightman, who has since decided to "accelerate" his retirement on the grounds that he does not wish to be "a part of a department where anti-Semitic discourse is an acceptable teaching tool."

Asked what transpired in the second incident, Steiner replied, "I do not know what was said in that meeting."

After the students visited Baycrest, Lightman writes, the discussion was resumed in Bhuyan's class. "At this point, [it] turned to the number of Jewish faculty in the [social work] department... Once again, Rupaleem did nothing to channel the discussion in a more constructive direction, but instead sanctioned – or actively encouraged – the promulgation of hate."

Accusing Bhuyan of trying to suppress the incidents, Lightman wrote, "Secrecy in the classroom is, of course, antithetical to everything the university stands for… " In an allusion to the Ku Klux Klan, he wrote, "We can't… hide under white sheets of secrecy – with or without burning crosses."

Further, Lightman claimed Mishna did not inform faculty of what exactly had happened before writing her letters.

In her Feb. 7 letter, Mishna expressed disappointment with Lightman's letter, saying it had unnecessarily caused "further distress in the community" and had not contributed "positively to our efforts to move forward in addressing these issues."

Asked to explain her role in the affair, Bhuyan replied, "I don't wish to make a comment. I have nothing to say."

Pressed for an explanation, she said, "This has really been hurtful to me and my family, and I don't think a comment will be useful."

Before impatiently ending the impromptu telephone interview, she lashed out at Lightman, describing him as "a destructive person."

Adrienne Chambon, Bhuyan's colleague and the director of the faculty's PhD program, suggested that the anti-Semitic comments in Bhuyan's class did not occur in a vacuum.

"It takes two to tango. These kind of conversations don't develop unless they are allowed to happen."

Chambon, who described herself as "a European Jew" of French and Romanian ancestry, said she has no idea whether Bhuyan is an anti-Semite. "I've struggled with that. It's a very difficult question."

She added, "As a Jewish person, I don't really feel safe. Nor do some of the students feel safe either. This becomes a psychological problem."

Mishna has said that the university "greatly values its partnership and collaboration" with Baycrest.

Steiner denied that the university tried to hush up the incidents.

"There has been no attempt to cover up anything," he said, adding that the university's goal is to ensure that everyone – students and faculty – feels "safe and comfortable" on campus.

Correction

The article "New anti-Semitism threatens democracy: British MP" (Feb. 11) should have read that Sir Martin Gilbert is one of the five committee members of the United Kingdom's Iraq Inquiry. The other military scholar referred to in the article is Prof. Lawrence Freedman, who is also member of the committee. *The CJN* regrets the error.

On Campus

Friends of Haifa U president aims to promote diversity

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Michael Dan's connection to the Canadian Friends of Haifa University started with a wedding gift.

A $2-million wedding gift.

In spring of 2006, just before he got married, Dan started thinking about getting his future wife a present.

"Around that time, she had made a comment to me about how, of all the Israeli universities, she was particularly sympathetic towards the University of Haifa," he said.

Dan decided to create a $2-million endowment fund in his wife's name, which funds doctoral fellowships in the humanities for underprivileged students.

Since then, he has continued to support the university, and was recently appointed as the Canadian Friends of Haifa University's new president. His official term with the organization, which helps raise funds and awareness for the University of Haifa, started last week.

Michael Dan

Apart from his new role, Dan is the president of Gemini Power Corp., a power generation company and of Regulus Investment Inc. He's also a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and a diplomate of the American Board of Neurological Surgeons.

Dan's respect for the University of Haifa has to do with its policy of inclusion and diversity. Arabs make up about 20 per cent of its student population.

"It's something I deeply believe in, the story of this university that teaches young Israelis about coexistence. About working towards higher secondary degrees [in] an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect," he said.

According to Dan, North Americans don't understand how segregated the Israeli education system is. There are about four different educational streams, Dan said, adding that Arabs and Jews are often separated through these streams.

This gets worse at the end of high school, Dan added, explaining that this is because Jews enter the military and Arabs don't.

"By the time university comes around, you have age differences between Jews and Arabs. You have a difference in military experience," he said.

"The University of Haifa brings all these people together from diverse backgrounds who, for the first times in their lives, are interacting with each other and learning with each other. I think that's amazing."

As president of the Canadian Friends of Haifa University, Dan would like to see the group's board of governors reflect the university's diversity. His goal is for 20 per cent of the board to be made up of Arabs.

"We have a wonderfully diverse Arab population in Canada... they're not very well represented at traditionally Jewish functions," he said. "We have one [Arab] woman on our board, and I think we need more."

Karen Mock, who will run as the Liberal candidate in Thornhill riding in the next federal election, stepped down as president of the Canadian Friends of Haifa University after a term of one year.

"I felt it would just be wonderful to have Michael [as president]... I was just thrilled to be able to put Michael's name forward because of his commitment and his dedication to the university," she said. "I think that... [he'll] set a wonderful tone for moving forward and strengthening the Canadian Friends of Haifa University and garnering more support in Canada."

ש'שאר פ'נ'ע

גידי קורן וחברים

היה או לא היה

בשבועיי לפניהאר אירע נס קטן בקהילה הישראלית של טורונטו. כשתיאטרון המפגש, בבימויה של יעל מיינגולד, הפלה את הצגת "היה או לא היה" של פדנה מזי"א על סיפור אהבתם של חנה רובינא והלכסנדר פן, על רקע תל אביב של שנות השלושים. למני כתבי שנה ראיתי את ההצגה הזו בתיאטרון הקאמרי, ושמנע הדברים היו לי הששות כבדים לגבי יכולתם של אנשי תיאטרון המפגש להתמודד עם הבקה מסיבכת כל כך. המשימה היתה מדהימה, כמי שיכולים להעיד המאות הרבות שבאו לשמיי הצגות והריעו לה בסוף כל ערב.

יכולתה של יעל מיינגולד המתוראלית להציג רמה כזאת מעודת הנדנה. אבל מבט יותר מעמיק מגלה שאת שני התפקידים הראשיים, של אלכסנדר פן ואנה רובינא הקדירה מיינגולד בידיהם של שני שחקנים מקסניים, דודי מרידמן ושמיאנה שטולנק, בנוני "בית צבי" עם רקורד מקנעי מרשים גם בישראל וגם בקנדה. היתה זו החלטה נבונה ביותר, כי על מתייהם הצליחו השחקנים הפחות מנוסים להבריק בתפקידיהם: דיר יעל דודו (בתפקיד בילוק), דיר דני יעקובי(שלומסקי), אריק איגנר (המבקר הייקה), קלייר וקסמן (מנהלת הבנק), ויעל בן חיים (בעלת בית הקפה) עשו עבודה מצויינת, ולצידם גם דניאל בן חיים, של רחמנינו, ששו קבישה, אביב סרנו, של כץ, רוני בראלי, וחיים טבק.

מקהלת הנצנה, שביצעה שירים של בן וברלוק, נהנתה מעיבודים יפים של אלונה יהושקין, ובה בלטה במיוחד אדרלי בדצ', לצידם של ליאורה כץ, אשתי בלשמאלצ, מיכה ושירה בדצ'.

וכל זה לא היה יוצא לשעל לולא לב הזהב ויד הברזל של המפיקה תמי ברמן עם צוות הקטה משוי ומוכשר. ואחרונה חביבה-נליה סרנו, ראש הדסק הישראלי ב UJA, שממשיכה לולא לאות למען הנשמרה של תרבות ישראלית בטורונטו.

עבורי היתה זו הנינה אמיתית, כי קהילה אמיתית נמדדת ביכולתה ליצר את הכלים של עצמה, ולא דוקא בהנהרות של טלויזיקאים ישראלים מקומיים, שהדבה מעמים רק מדברים אך עושים מעט מאוד. אבל שיאאר בינינו.

קיסה נעיסה-יהודם מירונקו

בכתבות הקודמות שיבחתי כאן הזדם אולי יליד שחין למני שעלה על אנית קרוז לאלסקה, ומה עלה בגורלו של סדם הדבקה יליד שין אשר התגלה באמתחתי בשדה התעמה אבריקאי למני סיסה. אז, כמה שבועות אחרי, השתלטו כמה טשעים בסיסה מאפסטרדם לדסרים על מחבל מושלמני ותנצת ניגריה, אשר עלה על המסוס מצדייר בתאחזנים במולי בתנה, שם שמן השהיד אבקת נפן, ובעזרת מצית ניסה למצע את עצמו יחד עם המסוס, הטעים וכמובן את פה שהפתחר בתחתוניו ועיצ למטס 72 בשלות לאחר שהשאריות תגעה בינן שאלה. לבן, מאוחו יום מר ונהדר בתג-המולד, הושיבו האמריקאים עד כמה מדדים להניחים שנקרא בדיקות-בטחן בשדה התעופה, ואנו החפים מפשע ושדוי, נאלצים לבזבז עד כמה שעות בנמל כדי לא לפספס סיסה, ולקבל בשפחה בדיקות קפדניות שחלק מהן משפילות, אם טקל אם נדצה להדדם בסיסה בלי להתעדר בגן-ילן או בהנגש. וכך בן-לאמן וארנון ה"צדקה" שהקים למען אללה והקודאן, הצליח בלי כוונה להביא ברכה לכלכלת המערב, ואה"ב בפרט, ואולי גם להניח את המיומן בשחר ימיו. שהרי בזכות הקדוש מאסטריסטן נוצרו מאות אלפי משרות חדשות לאנשי-בטחן, וניבים בשרות המלחמה בטרור ולא רק בשדות תעשה. וכל זה בלי להזכיר אנשי ייצור, מהנדסים, מכוננים ופעלים אשר בזים מוקנים לגילוי מחבת, מכשירי ורנטן משוכללים, מצלמות מעקב, ועד אבזרים מתוחכמים אשר נועדו לגלות רשע וחזון, המוטות עליהם אביטל דיל ודן לא חלם. גם מגדלי כלבים ומאלפים מתבוננים לא רע מהסרוח שמביא ברכה לכיס וחשבון בנק, בזכות האף הרגיש של כלבים בני שיחומם.

וכמובן יצרני ומפיצי מכשירי ורנטן אשר משקיעים את הנסדקים ומגלים מה מסתתר מתחת לבגדים כולל אבזרים פרטיים אשר מאז עץ הדעת הביאו ברכה למעשית הספרטוניים. אני מאחל לכולם שיסה מעיסה ולהתוראות לאחר הנחיתה.

Miles Nadal JCC

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

NOTICE is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Members will be held at 750 Spadina Avenue on the 22nd day of March, 2010 at 8:00 o'clock in the evening to:

a) Accept as Members of the Corporation those Members listed in good standing tabled and delivered by the Secretary of the Corporation;
b) Elect its Directors;
c) Approve the Financial Statements for the Corporation for the year ended August 31, 2009;
d) Appoint auditors and authorize the Directors to fix their remuneration
e) Ratify and approve all the acts, proceedings, transactions, commitments, contracts entered into, and undertakings given by or on behalf of the Corporation by the Board of Directors from the date of the last Annual General Meeting to the date hereof;
f) Transact such further and other business as may be properly brought before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

Members of the Corporation may be nominated by written petition signed by not less than twenty-five (25) persons, who are members and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. The petitions must be accompanied by the written consent of the nominee and must be received by the Chairman of the Nominations Committee at least fifteen (15) days prior to the Annual Meeting, after which time no further nominations shall be accepted.

Proxy forms for those unable to attend the meeting may be obtained from the Business Office of the Corporation during business hours.

DATED the 19th day of February, 2010
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
"Jodi Shanoff"
Secretary

UJA Federation

Principal (Judaic / Limudei Kodesh)

A Vibrant community in Western Canada is searching for a Limudei Kodesh principal for Pre through Grade 12 school. Position to commence not later than August 15, 2010. The successful candidate will posses at minimum an Orthodox Semicha and five years teaching and administrative experience. A masters degree or equivalent is preferred. The community boasts three Orthodox shuls, three mikvaos, a kosher bakery, and two kosher eateries.

Interested parties should submit their résumé including references by email to menorahacademy@gmail.com

Seniors Scene

92-year-old woman makes aliyah

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

At 92 years old, Rachel Kanner could easily sit back and relax.

Instead, she's packed up her North York apartment, where she lived alone, and made aliyah.

A widow "for at least 30 years," with no children of her own, Kanner said she's joining her "adopted" family.

In an interview Jan. 22, just prior to her departure date, Kanner said that although she had lived in Canada since 1952, her heart had always been in Israel.

She participated in UJA Federation's Walk with Israel for at least 33 years and volunteered with Sar-El Volunteers for Israel "many times.

"I was always raising money for Israel. I knocked on people's doors, and no one was safe when I came along."

A longtime member of Congregation Darchei Noam, Kanner said she went to all of the Reconstructionist synagogue's events. "If I wasn't there, nothing was happening."

She credits yoga with contributing to her long life. "I started teaching yoga in Jerusalem, and continued here at night school and private schools. It helped me maintain my great shape."

She was born in Eden, Germany, in 1917, where her father, Samuel Blum, was the chief rabbi of the province. In 1939, as a result of Kristallnacht, her parents and two younger siblings left for Palestine, but her parents sent Kanner to England with two brothers because they were only allowed to bring children under eight years old with them.

"At 17 years old, I was separated from my family and was working as a domestic for a rabbi's family. After the war, I was lucky enough to be one of the first to go to Palestine. I lived there until I left for Canada."

Rachel Kanner

Her "grandson" Doron Gechman, who came to help Kanner make the move, said his family met Kanner about eight years ago on one of her visits to Israel, and they had an "instant connection.

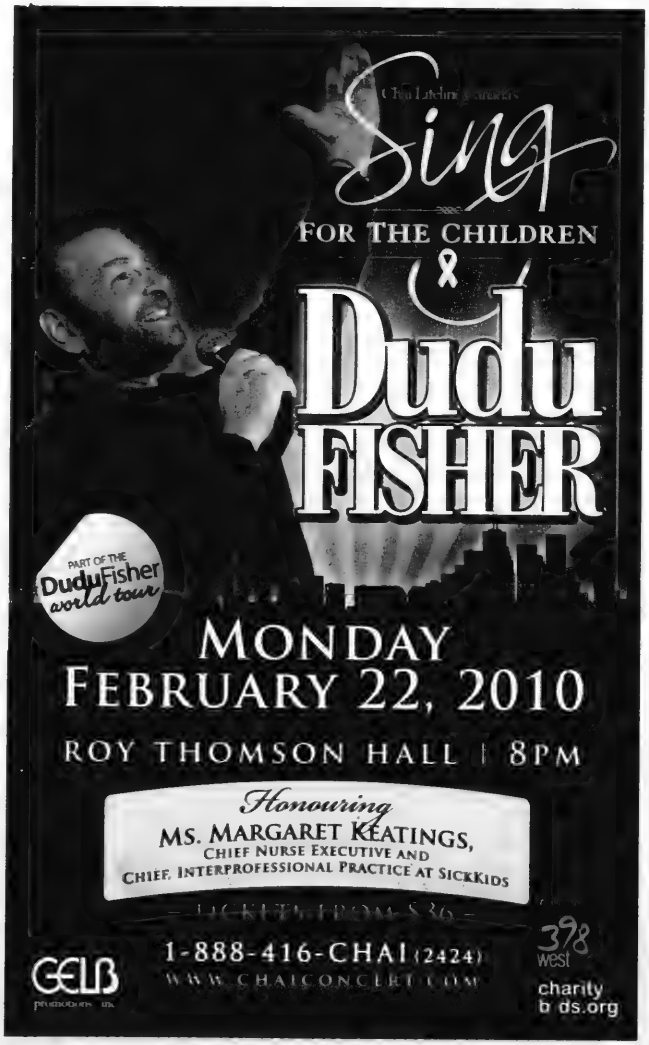
"We discovered that my grandfather and her grandfather came from the same city, and we just started talking from there. We have adopted her to our family," Gechman said.

He said it took his family a long time to convince Kanner to move to Israel. "We're thrilled that it is actually happening."

Kanner said the family was finally able to convince her because she realized that "it is important to have my family around me. I'm alone here, and I need family support."

She stresses, however, that she has rented an apartment in Ashdod, where her adopted family lives, and will continue to live on her own. "Now, we can spend Shabbat together."

"For a number of years I was '*nisht ahear and nisht ahein.*' My body was here and my soul was there. Now I'm combining my body and soul. I'll be all together."



A FAMILY TREE PROJECT: Grade 6 students at the Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus display their Generations Back project done as part of their civilization class. Students traced their family history to learn about their Jewish heritage while pondering the question: "What are my roots and how have they influenced the person I am?" From left are, back row, Jonathan Mostovoy, Jordan Moness, Samantha Steiner, Brittney Shoychet-McCully and Mark Nirenshtein; front row, teacher Shari Standil, Gillian Shoychet, Hannah Feldbloom and Andie Levine.

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School
INSPIRING CURIOSITY HONOURING DIVERSITY CREATING COMMUNITY

PRINCIPAL POSITION AVAILABLE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School is a vibrant and growing 150 student, SK to Grade 8 pluralistic, egalitarian, and diverse community day school in downtown Toronto. We provide an integrated approach to general and Judaic studies in a dynamic, creative and enriching environment.

The Principal will be accountable to the Board of Directors for all aspects of the school's academic and management functions. We are seeking an innovative and enthusiastic educator with proven leadership skills and the vision to guide the school into the future. The ideal candidate will have excellent communication and interpersonal skills, experience as a teacher, supervisor and administrator, the ability to work with a diverse population, and a demonstrated history of success.

Please send a detailed résumé to:
SearchCommittee@djds.ca
or Chair, Search Committee Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School
750 Spadina Avenue Toronto, ON, Canada M5S 2J2

Traditional Purim sweets add to the fun

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

When baking hamantashen, it doesn't matter if you fashion your favourite dough into Haman's hat, pocket or ears, these recipes will ensure that your Purim is festive, fun and delicious.

Cooking Tip

To fold dough into the shape of a hamantash (a

[The Hadassah Jewish Holiday Cookbook photo]

triangle), use both thumbs and the two first fingers on each hand. Slide two fingers from left hand under left side and two fingers from right hand under right side and two thumbs under the bottom of circle. Bring all fingers (with dough) together to form a triangle and try to pinch close. Repeat this process with remaining circles and dough.

CREAM CHEESE HAMANTASHEN

I got this recipe from an old *Gourmet* magazine in 1997 and it's fantastic!

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup sugar
1/8 tsp. salt
1/2 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into bits
1/2 cup cream cheese, cut into bits
1 large egg yolk
1 tsp. vanilla
2/3 cup filling (apricot or cherry jam, ready made poppy seed or prune filling)

In a bowl, with a pastry blender, or in a food processor, blend or pulse flour, sugar and salt to combine and add butter and cream cheese, blending or pulsing until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

In a small bowl, stir together yolk and vanilla and add to flour mixture, blending or pulsing just until mixture begins to come together (do not overmix). Gather dough into a ball and flatten into a disk. Chill dough, wrapped in plastic wrap, at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.

Preheat oven to 375. Divide the dough in half. On a lightly floured cool surface, knead half the dough (keeping other half wrapped and chilled) 2 or 3 times to make it less crumbly. Roll out dough 1/4-inch thick, and with a 3-inch cutter, cut out as many rounds as possible. Transfer rounds with a metal spatula to a large baking sheet, arranging about 1/2 inch apart. Reroll scraps and cut out more rounds. Put 1 teaspoon filling in centre of each round and fold up edges to form triangular cookies resembling a tricornered hat, pinching corners together and leaving filling exposed. (Pinch dough tightly enough so seams are no longer visible and sides are taut enough to prevent cookies from leaking the filling as they bake.)

Bake hamantashen in middle of oven 20 minutes, or until pale golden. Cool hamantashen on baking sheet 5 minutes and transfer to racks to cool completely. Make more hamantashen with remaining dough and filling in same manner. Hamantashen keep in an airtight container at room temperature for 5 days. Makes 2 dozen.

CHERRY ORANGE HAMANTASHEN

3/4 cup margarine or butter, softened
3/4 cup sugar
1 large egg
1 tsp. orange juice concentrate
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt
up to 1 tbsp. of water
1 can cherry pie filling, slightly drained of the gooey syrup
3 tbsp. breadcrumbs
2 1/4 cups flour
powdered sugar for garnish

In the bowl of an electric mixer, cream together the margarine or butter and sugar. Add the egg, orange juice concentrate and vanilla. Beat to combine. Add in the flour and salt.

Beat in the water a few drops at a time until dough starts to come away from sides of bowl (you can do this in a food processor). Place the dough on wax paper and push it into a flat disk. Place another sheet of wax paper on top and wrap the dough in foil. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or as long as overnight.

At baking time, preheat oven to 350. In a bowl, combine the slightly drained cherry pie filling and bread crumbs. Mix to combine.

On a floured surface, roll out the dough until it's about 1/4-inch thick. Using a round cookie cutter, cut out circles. Spoon 2 to 3 cherries and a little bit of filling onto the dough circles and form into triangles. Place on a cookie sheet lined with baking paper. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until just starting to turn pale golden. Remove from oven and cool on rack. When cool, dust with powdered sugar and serve. Makes 2 to 3 dozen depending on the size circle you cut out.

CHOCO BERRY HAMANTASHEN

1/2 cup margarine or butter
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cup cocoa
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1 jar raspberry preserves

Grease 2 cookie sheets. In an electric mixer, combine the margarine, sugar, egg and vanilla and beat until fluffy.

In another bowl, combine the cocoa, flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Mix to combine and then add to the margarine mixture. Do not over mix. Divide dough in half and chill for one hour.

Preheat oven to 350. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to approx. 1/4 inch thick. Cut into rounds 3- to 4-inch works best. Place approx. 1 teaspoon raspberry preserves in centre of each circle and fold into shape. Pinch the corners and place on prepared cookie sheet, two inches apart (these will expand). Bake for 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.

Submitted by Rozie Schwartzman who got it from a blog she can't remember.

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Feature

Jewish boys and girls clubs still going strong!

By KEN BORDEN
Special to The CJN

"So what are we going to do today?" This was a question I was asked just about every day.

The usual answer was: "Wait a minute, I'll call you back. I just want to check with Jerry."

This was my life as a Jewish teenager growing up in Toronto in the late '30s and early '40s, the "War years." It was a small world we lived in, with St.Clair Avenue to the north, Lake Ontario to the south, Yonge Street to the east and Dovercourt Street to the west – a small world indeed!

We rarely strayed outside these boundaries. "Outside" was uncomfortable, very uncomfortable. In those times, anti-Semitism was big and very visible, too visible. We kept to our own little world where we felt safe.

We had the benefit and protection of the YMHA at Brunswick Avenue and College Street, our home away from home, our shelter from the outside stormy blast of our adversaries. The Y gave us the athletic and social outlets that any generation requires. As well, the Y gave us club rooms, our very own "hideouts," so to speak. They were ours – they really were. We decorated them with our own original crests and logos, furnished them with sofas and chairs, organized weekly meetings, just like the Canadian Parliament, with voting on what to do, when to do it and who to do it with, things like parties with girls or dates. After all, athletics weren't everything! The Jewish boys of Toronto formed "clubs" because the Y was there with those beautiful rooms for us. All we required was a Y membership and we were "in."

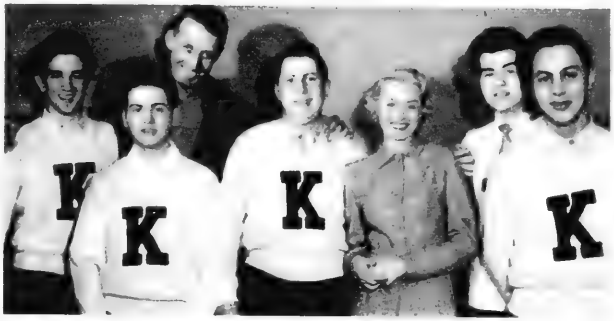
The teenaged Jewish girls of Toronto followed suit. They also had their clubs, and we often had joint meetings and joint socials. Believe me, a lot of marriages resulted, all because the YMHA gave our generation that home away from home.

Here's the best news! Those clubs of yesteryear are still alive and well and thriving in Toronto!

This may well make Toronto unique in the whole wide world: the guys and gals that grew up here are *still* here, still having meetings, still having socials, still having fun. Very few cities can make that statement. That's why this story is so beautiful.

Where else can you find a bunch of "boys" in their late 70s getting together weekly and monthly for one basic reason: we actually "love" one another? We all come from the same schools, same neighbourhoods, attended the same camps, same summer resorts, Jackson's Point, Crystal Beach, Pontypool, to name a few.

We all belong to each other, we care for each other. We all know what everybody else is doing and how they feel. We visit each other in hospitals, at shivahs, and simply drop in to visit when we feel like it. We are the luckiest bunch of guys in the world. Outsiders from Buffalo, Montreal, Hamilton, Rochester are jealous when they hear of our unique Toronto set up. You should hear them rave!



Members of Club Kenton in 1950

Two of the more famous clubs from those wonderful days of yore are Club Kenton and Club Dumaurier. They are currently organizing a joint club dinner sometime in May 2010. We'll need space for at least 30 to 45 well-behaved kibbitzers, aged 77 to 84 or so. (We are very few, if any, drinkers.)

If I gave you a complete list of their names and nicknames, you'd hear Damon Runyan roll over. How about Spider, the Mole, Gwartzer, Itch, the Apple, the Boston Bachelor, Wild Bill, Zel, Noody, the Doc, Tiler, the Shnoz, Givvie, Blackie, Le Mieux, Blondie, the Mick.

Club Kenton meets the first Thursday of the month for breakfast, with lots of guests attending the fun event, and it has a dinner-of-the-month somewhere (a different restaurant each month), with added "friends" in attendance. Sometimes it's standing room only.

Club Dumaurier meets often as well, with dinners, days at the track, nights at the track, events at the various casinos. They are definitely men of action.

So here we are in 2010. We are all in our late 70s or early 80s, all with hurts and pains, plenty of bladder problems, lots of handicap permits, tons of doctor visits, no more Palais Royal dance hall to hunt in, no more late nights, lots of forgetfulness, and on and on. But we have each other and we cherish every minute. We're still great laughers and jokers, and we major in kibbitzing.

The most important thing is we are still together and loving it! If we add the other clubs, some a year or two our senior, some a year or two our junior, and the girls clubs, you are talking about 300 or so members. After all, this began circa 1939! That's 71 years of still "playing" with our old original friends! Who else can boast of having friends this long?

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JACS helps take lid off addiction

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

David Rosenberg wants to know why the community is only whispering about one of the most prevalent diseases of the 21st century.

As development co-ordinator and fundraiser for JACS (Jewish Addiction Community Services), Rosenberg says that addiction affects 30 per cent of the population. "That means if 10 people go to a wedding and try alcohol, statistics say that three won't stop drinking.

"[Addiction] doesn't discriminate against Jews. It is independent of upbringing. Unlike cancer or heart disease, though, no one is screaming about it. People are in denial about addictions, including the addicts themselves. It's a tricky disease. Addicts need to learn that they are not responsible for having the disease, but they are responsible for arresting it."

A recovering crack cocaine addict who "owes his life to JACS," Rosenberg said that especially in an economic downturn, "people are afraid of life, and what do they do if they're in pain? They get an anesthetic."

Since last year, JACS has seen a 150 per cent increase in clients, he said, "and our donations are down. It is a real challenge."

In addition to being an information resource on the effects that addictions have on family life, JACS has a drop-in lounge, teen programs – including a Sunday group for young men – a women's group, a concerned parents' group, and a group for those who wish to explore the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-steps in a framework of traditional Jewish spiritual concepts.

JACS' 12-step groups for addicts include Cocaine Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous, and it offers a weekly Families Anonymous group and a recovery service on Shabbat that combines 12-steps and Judaism.

Rosenberg said that he gave up his anonymity to get people through the door. "I was fortunate enough to be given a second chance, and I'm here because so many other people are suffering. It is a tough sell, though because the community is in denial."

Speaking from personal experience, he said addicts have an inability to face life on their own terms. "If they don't like what is happening, they try to manipulate life."

When he came out of rehab, he said, he knew he needed a program to teach him to survive. "At first, I attended self-help groups in church basements, but they just weren't for me," he said.

"Finally, about two years ago, I ran into someone who told me to try JACS. I walked in and I was immediately comfortable. The door is open to all denominations, but it uses Jewish traditions. I started identifying with other Jews in recovery. Having a Jewish place to recover is such a gift."

He began volunteering at JACS, he said, and "I was here all the time. If this place wasn't here, I'm not sure I would have made it. People look out for me."

He began recommending JACS, he said, "and eventually I was asked if I could help raise some money, so I started telling my story. It is a small price to pay to live a good life."

Now, he said, "I watch miracles every day. People are getting their lives back. We all recover together because we see our own disease in someone else. It becomes a fellowship."

The best thing of all, he said, is the discovery that "our feelings do not have to be numbed. The 12-step approach teaches us acceptance, and helps us produce good feelings and a good self-esteem.

"I can never forget, though, that I have an illness. The minute I stop doing my work, I will go back to my old behaviour."

If he sits down with a person who has relapsed, he said, "I know that 100 per cent of the time, he was not following the program. It is work, but it is good work. You have to take one day at a time."

For more information, call JACS at 416-410-5227 or visit jacstoronto.org.

BUILD A TOY PROJECT

Student council representatives at United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tikvah campus – front, Jennifer Taras, left, and Sidney Kerzner, and, at rear, Sagi Kahane-Rapport, left, and Sidney Lichtenstein – receive a plaque honouring the participation of their branch's Grade 8 students in the Zareinu Build a Toy Project from Zareinu representatives, from left, Renat Stern, Elizabeth Makinon and Sonya Budd. Zareinu's Design a Toy Project encourages students to create a toy or game for use by children at the Zareinu Education Centre.

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And now for something completely different: **HEEBONICS**

HIP-HOP BAND DISPLAYS ISRAEL'S DIVERSITY

By EZRA GLINTER
Special to the CJN

Sha'anan Street is a familiar face on the Israeli hip-hop scene. For 14 years, the burly, 38-year-old Jerusalem rapper has been leading Hadag Nahash, arguably Israel's most popular hip-hop group.

Together, the six-member band has been turning out hit after hit, experimenting with an impressive array of musical genres and pushing the political envelope with socially conscious lyrics.

But despite having almost a decade and a half of musical innovation and commercial success behind it, the veteran hip-hop outfit isn't willing to give up its place at the forefront of Israeli culture.

In 2008, four of its songs were featured on the soundtrack to the Adam Sandler movie *You Don't Mess with the Zohan*, exposing the band to a worldwide audience.

Now, with the release of its new album, 6, and a North American tour culminating with a Feb. 28 show at the Mod Club in Toronto, Hadag Nahash is proving that they're still ahead of the game.

"I would say that we took another step with this album," said Streett, en route from his home in Jerusalem to a show at the popular Tel Aviv venue The Barbie.

"We took it to psychedelic places, we took it to reggae places. I feel that we recorded solid tunes in a bunch of different genres."

The new album also features four songs in English, something Hadag Nahash never did on any of its previous five releases.

"I speak decent English, and a lot of times when we're jamming in the studio and rehearsal room, we're going to be jamming in English, and we decided, 'Let's record this stuff,'" Streett said.

While the album's official release party won't be until March 25 in Tel Aviv, Hadag Nahash's new material will be on display when the band takes to the stage in Toronto.

"We're going to try out a whole bunch of new tunes on all you guys," Streett said. "Toronto is the last date on our tour, so we should be very much ready by then."

Sponsored by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University (CFHU) as part of its Be U Be Hebrew campaign, the concert coincides with Purim and includes a costume contest with a free summer course at Hebrew U as the top prize. Proceeds from the concert will go toward the university's Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism.

The show also takes place at the beginning of Israeli Apartheid Week, a pro-Palestinian event held each year on university campuses across North America, that advocates for a boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign against Israel.

According to Ravid Dahan, the band's North American manager and director of Motek Productions, the timing of the concert is intentional.

"Purim isn't necessarily the best time to go out on tour, but for us it's important to do it now because of Israeli Apartheid Week," she said.

Moshik Galanty, CFHU's director of student recruitment and alumni relations, agreed.

From left, Guy Mar, Shlomi Alon, Moshe Asraf, Sha'anan Streett, Yaya Cohen Harounoff and David Klemes of Hadag Nahash.

"The anti-Israel [elements] managed to make the apartheid week a national thing in Canada. Everyone knows what it is, and what we're trying to do is to create a week of pro-Jewish pride," Galanty said.

"The concert itself is a fun event. It's Purim, it's a costume party, it's going to be a very nice event that students can participate in."

Despite Hadag Nahash's de-facto role as ambassadors of Israeli culture, the band has made a name for itself – and distinguished itself from other Israeli hip-hop artists such as Subliminal – based on the left-wing, anti-establishment content of its songs.

Numbers, a track from the 2003 album *Lazooz* (Move), compares the wages of Israeli CEOs with the unemployment rates and poverty of other citizens. More controversially, the song *Gabi and Debi* contrasts the Zionist ideals taught in Israeli schools with everyday societal problems, and depicts Theodore Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement, doing drugs.

The band's most famous track, *The Sticker Song*, from its 2004 album *Homer Mekomi* (Local Material), was written by acclaimed Israeli novelist David Grossman, and takes its lyrics from the plethora of political bumper stickers plastered on cars in Israel.

According to Streett, however, while Hadag Nahash doesn't often support the policies of the Israeli government, it does illustrate the diversity of opinions within the country and the ability of different sides to have their voices heard.

"It's definitely true that there are few good things I can say about any [member of the] establishment, any prime minister or any government that's been around in this country ever since I've been born, but the fact is that Israel is a democracy and that we are allowed to sing what we believe in," Streett said.

"I had a meeting with some guy in the [prime minister's office] and I said to him, 'Have you read our lyrics? You know that we're not going to put any Israeli flags behind the stage and we're not going to change even one word in one song,'" Streett recalled. "But he said, 'Israel is a democracy and we're proud of the fact that we allow different voices to be heard in this country.'"

Hadag Nahash also uses its shows as a chance to reach out to Palestinians and fellow peace activists. At a performance in Austin, Texas, Streett talked to Palestinian activists from the stage, inviting them to put aside their differences for one night and join the party.

"Hadag Nahash is pro any peace activist in the world from any religion," Streett said.

"Anybody who's helping push this region in the direction of peace and not of war, anybody from any religion or any ethnicity who's helping push my hometown, Jerusalem, to a state where there's no more mess, is welcome at our show."

Hadag Nahash performs in Toronto on Feb. 28 at the Mod Club, located at 722 College St. For tickets and info call 647-889-0071.

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Iran declares itself a nuclear state

JTA

JERUSALEM— Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran has produced its first highly enriched uranium, a day after he said that Israel must be finished off "once and for all."

Ahmadinejad announced the successful production of Iran's first package of highly enriched uranium, two days after he ordered the processing to begin.

The president of the Islamic Republic told the country on live television Feb. 11 that Iran had become a nuclear state. He added, however, that the country is not building nuclear weapons.

"We have the capability to enrich uranium more than 20 per cent or 80 per cent, but we don't enrich [to this level] because we don't need it," he said in the speech.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

The announcement came a day after Ahmadinejad told Syrian President Bashar Assad in a phone conversation reported by Reuters citing Iran's state broadcaster that "If the Zionist regime should repeat its mistakes and initiate a military operation, then it must be resisted with full force to put an end to it once and for all."

Meanwhile, the European Jewish Congress on Feb. 9 called on European and other members of the UN Security Council to immediately move toward applying "crippling sanctions" against Iran over its refusal to scale back its nuclear program.

Canada's foreign minister, Lawrence Cannon, expressed disappointment with Iran's latest decision to further enrich unanium.

"Canada is deeply disappointed by the Iranian regime's decision to further enrich its nuclear material – in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. This regime continues to blatantly ignore its international obligations, and this threatens global security.

"Canada and the international community will not accept the regime's latest moves, which bring Iran considerably closer to possessing weapons-grade material. Iran must suspend its enrichment activity and take immediate steps toward transparency and compliance.

"Iran's regime must address the serious lack of confidence that members of the international community have in its government.

"As Prime Minister [Stephen] Harper said on Feb 11, Canada will continue to work with our allies to find strong and viable solutions, including sanctions, to hold Iran to account.

Canon also said that Canada would use its G8 presidency to continue to focus international attention and action on the Iranian regime. In this regard, he said, he would be raising the issue at the G8 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Gatineau in March.

"The Government of Canada is also seriously concerned with the Iranian regime's continued stifling of democracy, its blatant disregard of basic human rights and its irresponsible behaviour – behaviour that is threatening regional and global stability. It is completely unacceptable that the regime continues to use brute force and intimidation in responding to peaceful demonstrations."

United Nations set to pass tighter sanctions

Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

NEW YORK — Senior United Nations officials told *Ha'aretz* that a Security Council resolution tightening the sanctions on Iran is likely going to be approved.

Observers in both New York and Washington estimate that China will think twice about using its veto on a resolution after Russia recently threw its support behind a move against Iran. A veto could expose Beijing as isolated and out of touch with its fellow Security Council members.

China could also abstain from voting and allow the decision to be made by a simple majority. However, the sources told *Ha'aretz*, the United States is still trying to obtain Chinese support for the sanctions.

Ahead of its push for international sanctions at the UN, the U.S. sought on Wednesday to ratchet up pressure on Iran by imposing its own sanctions on elements of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, which western intelligence officials believe is spearheading Iran's nuclear program.

The U.S. Treasury Department said it was freezing the assets in U.S. jurisdictions of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Rostam Qasemi and four subsidiaries of a previously penalized construction firm he runs because of their alleged involvement in producing and spreading weapons of mass destruction.

U.S. officials said the measures were intended as a model for wider action at the UN.

"The United States is seeking to reach a consensus between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council on the sanctions issue," one of the sources said. "This would allow it to present the five superpowers as a united coalition, which would increase the impact of the sanctions."

Following the announcement, the Canada-Israel Committee praised Canada for taking a leadership role in highlighting Iran's dismal human rights record. However it urged the Canadian government to remain vigilant when it comes to Iran.

"The time for action is now; Canada cannot wait forever as Iran stalls for time while continuing to develop its nuclear weapons capability, which threatens not only the Middle East, but global peace and security," said Moshe Ronen, national chair of the CIC.

The CIC urged the government to join other countries more fully in confronting this global threat by including Revolutionary Guard on its list of designated terrorist entities and targeting the proliferation and terrorism activities of the Iranian regime under the Special Economic Measures Act.

According to estimates in Washington and New York, a first American draft for the new resolution will be circulated among Security Council members in early March at the latest, and the vote will take place at the end of the month.

"To be honest, nobody knows for certain at the moment what China is going to do," a senior official in New York told *Ha'aretz*. "But at the end of the day, China is sensitive about its position as a superpower, and will not be able to ignore the position of other superpowers, including Russia, who support tightening the sanctions. It's not going to go against them by undermining the resolution."

The *New York Times* on Wednesday quoted officials in the Obama administration who said the U.S. president has been applying the same persuasion tack with China he earlier successfully used with Russian president Dmitry Medvedev.

According to the *Times*, Obama has placed sanctions on Iran at the top of his priorities in recent contacts with Beijing.

Experts, however, warned that the same tactics that brought success with Russia may not work with China. A scheduled White House visit by the Dalai Lama has infuriated the Chinese, as did a recent arms deal between the U.S. and Taiwan.

The Americans had earlier planned to begin promoting the resolution in February. France, which supports a tough line on Iran, is this month's president of the Security Council.

With files from CJN Staff

Israel aid group opens child centre in Haiti

JTA

JERUSALEM — An Israeli aid agency has established a child education centre in a refugee camp in Haiti.

IsraAID partnered with local aid agencies to open the centre in the Petionville Refugee Camp, the largest refugee camp in Port-au-Prince, on the site of a former golf course.

The camp has 60,000 Haitians living under the patronage of the American ambassador. The Israeli team already has provided medical post-trauma treatment to thousands of refugees in the camp.

The child education centre is operating in tents that had been used for an Israeli field hospital donated by the Israel Defence Forces. Activities such as teaching, music, sports and earthquake readiness training will be held for 250 children at a time.

A similar centre is expected to open this week at another refugee site.

The IsraAID missions to Haiti are funded by the American Jewish Committee and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, B'nai Brith International and the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, as well as a number of other Jewish federations, including Los Angeles, Cleveland, St. Louis, San Francisco, New York and Miami.

To date, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has raised $817,742 through its Haiti Relief Fund.

Israel Briefs

Security fence moved

Israel has begun work to reroute a section of the West Bank security barrier near a Palestinian village that has been the site of weekly protests. The work began last Thursday near the Palestinian village of Bil'in, more than two years after Israel's Supreme Court ordered it moved to enable Palestinian farmers access to their land. The new route will give more than 800,000 square yards of land back to Palestinian farmers.

Israeli strike hits terrorist

Israeli air strikes hit a squad of Palestinian terrorists preparing to carry out an attack near the Karni crossing in northern Gaza last Thursday. Earlier Thursday morning, Palestinians fired a missile at an Israel Defence Forces patrol on the Israeli side of the security fence near the central Gaza Strip. The Israeli soldiers returned fire, the IDF said.

Israeli synagogue burned

A Conservative synagogue in southern Israel was burned. The fire set Monday night to the Shira Hadasha synagogue in Arad in the Negev scorched the outside of the building, but was extinguished before it damaged the inside, the Jerusalem Post reported last Wednesday. The attack comes a year after another attempt to burn down the synagogue and days after an attempted break-in there, according to the *Post*. Shira Hadasha is the only non-Orthodox synagogue in Arad, the *Post* reported. Israel has 60 Conservative synagogues. Police have no suspects in the attack, according to the newspaper.

Classroom investment

World ORT is investing $12.6 million (US) to install 400 "smart classrooms" throughout northern Israel. Through its programmatic arm in Israel, Kadima Mada, World ORT said it will begin with 72 relatively under-resourced Jewish and non-Jewish schools, which will benefit some 40,000 students a year.

Palestinians appeal to UN over museum

Palestinian families appealed to the United Nations to prevent the construction of a museum on the site of an ancient Muslim cemetery in Jerusalem. The challenge to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance, announced at a news conference Wednesday in Jerusalem and Geneva, is being led by the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights.

– Files from JTA

Tel Aviv, Toronto exchanges launch 'a great relationship'

Continued from page 1

Chadda added, "We are very pleased to start the beginning of a great relationship in signing this MoU. We couldn't have picked a better partner."

Raymond King, the senior manager of Global Diversified Industrials at the TSX, said that a cross-listing agreement "would allow each exchange to list companies from the other jurisdiction without having to duplicate efforts and costs. From the listed company's perspective, it makes the whole process easier, more cost effective, and more time efficient."

The MoU represents the culmination of more than two years of effort on the part of the TSX and the Canada-Israel Chamber of Commerce to build relationships with and educate Israeli companies about listing on the TSX, and encourage them to launch initial public offerings, or IPOs.

The TSX decided to make the effort after losing two Israeli companies that had filed IPO prospectuses on the TSX at the end of 2007, but were prevented from following through due to the onset of the global capital market collapse.

"We have gotten a very positive response from Israeli companies. The fact that we kept coming, in a down marketplace, showed a lot of Israelis that we were serious," said King, who has met with dozens of venture capital firms, private equity investors, and other decision makers over the course of his nine visits to Israel over the last few years.

If the economy stays stable and investors stay open, King estimates that the TSX will have five to seven Israeli companies on board by the end of 2010.

He said the exchange presents Israeli companies with a unique and valuable opportunity, not only because of the pool of financing available or because of the TSX's free advisory service for listed companies and their venture capitals, but because of the exchange's graduated system, ideal for earlier stage companies.

On larger exchanges such as the Nasdaq, the market capitalization ceiling for even the smallest nano cap companies, companies with a market value below $50 million (all figures US), is very high at $300 million. The TSX enables smaller companies to start out on the junior TSX Venture Exchange and then, once they are ready, to graduate to the senior TSX.

According to King, one of the major problems Israeli companies have on the Nasdaq is that, although they may meet the minimum listing requirements, they have faced a high failure rate there in terms of sustaining their listing. They are too small for the analyst and investor communities on the Nasdaq, so their liquidity drops, and in weeks they become what are called orphan companies.

The TSX offers more of a gradual, stepping-stone approach.

There are many other benefits to listing in Canada, said Alan Litwack, a lawyer with Miller Thomson LLP in Toronto, who attended the MoU ceremony. Litwack, along with colleagues from Deloitte and Mackie Research Capital, initiated a conference for Israeli companies affiliated with the MIT Enterprise Forum of Israel that followed the MoU ceremony.

"The Canadian markets haven't suffered as much as the British and U.S. markets, and we have a strong reputation for respectability, accountability, and compliance," Litwack said, adding that, relative to the United States, there is also a lot less litigation in the Canadian market.

"There is not the same spectre of legal threats in Canada as there is in the U.S," he said, adding that, in all respects, it's simply cheaper and easier to list in Canada.

The Canadian MoU is the fifth such international MoU that the TASE has signed in the past few years. It has signed others with the London Stock Exchange, Nasdaq , NYSE-Euronext (USA and Europe), and the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Yehuda Raveh, the honorary president of the Israel-Canada Chamber of Commerce and Industry, sees this alliance as an opportunity for smaller companies.

"While Israeli companies have listed on other exchanges, the potential with the Toronto Stock Exchange is enormous and we believe that for medium-sized or smaller Israeli technology companies, this is the best stock exchange to float in," he said.

For Allen, the agreement represents an important partnership between two countries.

"This [MoU] is part of growing co-operation between Canada and Israel," Allen said. "It's our 60th year of bilateral relations and this is a great cherry on the top of the cake."

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

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We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

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Deadline for submissions is March 1, 2010.
Submissions can not be returned.

Arrest made in Auschwitz sign theft

JTA

STOCKHOLM — A wanted Swedish man has been arrested in connection with the theft of the famous Auschwitz sign.

Anders Hogstrom was arrested in Stockholm, the BBC reported, a week after a Polish court issued a European-wide warrant for his arrest for allegedly ordering the theft of the metal sign reading "Arbeit Macht Frei" from the front gate of the former concentration camp, now a memorial.

Hogstrom reportedly acted as an agent for a British Nazi sympathizer who wanted the sign.

The 16-foot metal sign, which means "work makes you free," was stolen Dec. 18 and recovered across the country 72 hours later.

Experts are working to restore the sign, which had been cut into three pieces. It is not certain that the sign will be returned to its place; a copy was placed at the front gate immediately after the theft.

Some 1.1 million people, including about one million Jews, were murdered at Auschwitz.

The sign at the entrance of Auschwitz was stolen in December and recovered days later. It had been cut into three pieces.

Wage differentials common in kibbutzim: study

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The kibbutz, Israel's iconic institution, is modifying itself as it shifts away from one of its core socialistic principles.

According to a Haifa University study, more kibbutzim are paying their members differential salaries.

Shlomo Getz, director of the university's Institute for the Research of the Kibbutz and the Cooperative Idea, said that 72 per cent of kibbutzim have now adopted this model.

"The kibbutz is changing in a dramatic way," he said in an interview last week from Haifa.

Rather than compensating members equally, kibbuztim are increasingly paying them wages based on the market value of their jobs, he explained.

"Paying salaries means that the kibbutz doesn't supply all the needs of its members," he added. "Members pay for services such as food, electricity, education and transportation."

Contemporary kibbutzim can be classified by their methods of compensation, said Getz, who has been a member of a kibbutz since 1970.

On the traditional collective kibbutz, members are paid equally, regardless of the kind of work they perform.

On mixed model kibbutzim, members are given a small percentage of their salaries, plus things like free food or housing.

On renewing kibbutzim, a member's salary is exclusively based on his or her income.

There are 262 kibbutzim in Israel today, of which 72 per cent are renewing kibbutzim, three per cent are mixed model kibbutzim and the rest are collective kibbutzim.

Last year, five kibbutzim shifted to the renewing model.

"It is highly probable that by the end of 2012, the number of kibbutzim shifting to alternative models will be higher than the number of kibbutzim that did so in 2009," he said.

The population of kibbutzim has declined in recent years, from 130,000 in the 1990s to 120,000 as of 2006.

"Most of the growth in kibbutzim in recent years has come from people who were born in the city," he said.

Kibbutz compensation models began to change in 1996, when members on four kibbutzim were first permitted to keep their incomes.

Asked why compensation models on kibbutzim are changing, Getz said, "There are many reasons. Members want these changes. They want more personal freedom and less 'free riders.' And values are changing, influenced by a movement in Israeli society toward greater individualism."

Nevertheless, the kibbutz still maintains some of its old features, Getz commented.

"Major decisions are still made by members through a process of participatory democracy. And there is a sense of mutual responsibility between members, though it is more limited than it used to be."

Despite the changes it has undergone in recent years, the kibbutz still plays a stable role in the Israeli economy, accounting for about nine per cent of Israel's economic output, said Getz.

Ayalon may press charges against heckler

JTA

JERUSALEM — Israel's deputy foreign minister may press charges against a student who shouted "slaughter the Jews" during his speech at Oxford University.

"The deputy foreign minister is looking into the possibility of pressing charges against the student for what is tantamount to a call for genocide," said a statement issued Wednesday by Danny Ayalon's office.

Ayalon spoke last week to the prestigious Oxford University debating society, the Oxford Union.

"This demonstrates our new policy on hatred and racism, and we will have zero tolerance for anti-Semitism, something that should have happened a long time ago," Ayalon said.

Danny Ayalon

Another protester carrying a Palestinian flag started walking toward Ayalon before security intervened and he was ejected from the hall.

Other students shouted, inside and outside the hall, that "Palestine will be free, from the river to the sea," which calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. After the event, security prevented several students from physically assaulting Ayalon.

Ayalon entered Britain this week after receiving assurances that he would not be arrested on charges of war crimes stemming from last winter's Gaza war, as was threatened to other Israeli government officials.

A statement released Feb. 9 by the Oxford Union said the demonstrators "exceeded the principles of free speech that the Society upholds. They and their remarks are not representative of this society, nor the vast majority of the audience. The Oxford Union will not tolerate this kind of behaviour by its members."

The statement said that the union's president has launched an investigation aimed at identifying those who disrupted the event in order to take disciplinary action against them.

"The Oxford Union will be apologizing to Mr. Ayalon for the actions of its members and thank him for the professional way in which he handled the situation," the statement said.

Anti-Semitic incidents up in Britain

JTA

LONDON — Israel's Gaza operation last winter spurred a record number of anti-Semitic attacks in Britain during the past year.

The organization recording anti-Semitic incidents, the Community Security Trust, reported an increase in incidents of 55 per cent from the previous year. The 924 incidents were the most since records have been kept, according to reports.

The main rise in attacks was recorded in January and February, during and after Israel's military action in the Gaza Strip. According to the CST annual report, the 628 incidents in the first six months of 2009 were more than in any entire previous year. There were 296 incidents from July to December.

"These record figures show that anti-Semitism is an increasingly significant problem for British Jews," CST spokesman Mark Gardner said. "The trend must be reversed, and we call upon decent people to speak out against anti-Semitism in all its forms."

Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that "Anti-Semitism is one of the most ancient of hatreds – and yet it constantly adapts to modern times, requiring ever greater vigilance from all of us who are determined to stand up for tolerance and for the truth. Whether online, on campus or on the streets, there is absolutely no place for racism or discrimination of any sort, and the Community Security Trust has my wholehearted support in its work with the police and the Jewish community."

Twenty-three per cent of the incidents in 2009, or 212, included some form of reference to the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. In January, 158 of the 288 incidents made reference to Gaza.

Some 124 violent assaults occurred last year, 41 per cent more than the 88 from 2008. However, violent assaults fell to 13 per cent of the total, from a high of 21 per cent in 2007.

German Jewish film festival in danger of closing

Ha'aretz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

Germany's only Jewish film festival is in danger of closing down due to lack of funding, the event's founder and director Nicola Galliner said on Monday.

Galliner, a London native who launched the festival in 1994, said all her appeals for funding to the Berlin municipality, which had supported the festival in the past, had been rejected.

"Suddenly they rejected us, all the doors were closed. I don't understand their attitude," she told *Ha'aretz*.

Barring any change, the April 2010 festival will be held in a scaled-back format. Galliner said she has managed to raise only about 40 per cent of the festival's budget, estimated at 230,000 euros.

So far only one guest from overseas has been invited to the festival, held in the Arsenal cinema near Berlin's central Potsdamer Platz from April 25 to May 9. The number of planned film broadcasts has been reduced and the festival's promotion program was canceled.

"I hope we'll be able to hold the festival," Galliner said.

Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit, a prominent supporter of the festival in past years, was not doing enough to help it succeed this year, Galliner told Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA), the German press agency, last month. "We are getting little encouragement from his office," she said.

Galliner said political considerations were probably partly behind the Berlin municipality's refusal to support the festival this year.

"They just don't care and they don't understand that it's important. In my opinion the existence of such a festival is extremely important, because there is strong xenophobia and anti-Semitism in this country."

She said it was important to have a Jewish film festival in a city like Berlin, which has a multicultural image.

Around 100 Jewish film festivals are held worldwide each year, most of them in the United States and Canada. But the Berlin event, now in its 16th year, is unique in Germany.

"Half the films in our festival are Israeli, and we're different from the American festivals because 80 per cent of our audience is not Jewish," said Galliner.

Ted Kotcheff looks back at filming *Joshua Then and Now*

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

In preparation for a forthcoming question-and-answer session to discuss his 1985 film *Joshua Then and Now*, Canadian movie director Ted Kotcheff made a point of watching it for the first time in about 20 years.

"I found a lot of it funny," said Kotcheff, who will be the Toronto Jewish Film Society's special guest on Feb. 21 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre.

Adapted for the screen from his novel by the late Mordecai Richler, *Joshua Then and Now* is biographical, mining such perennial themes as ambition, love, romance and disillusionment.

Revolving around Joshua Shapiro, a cocky Jewish writer who climbs the greasy ladder of success, marries the "golden shikse" of his wet dreams, insinuates himself into the folds of Montreal Anglo society and finds himself embroiled in a juicy sex scandal, Kotcheff's sardonic film mainly unfolds in Montreal and London over a 30-year period.

The winner of five Genie Awards, it was Canada's entry at the Cannes Film Festival.

Kotcheff, who described Richler as his best friend, has always been drawn to his novels.

In 1974, he and Richler collaborated on *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, which became the most commercially successful Canadian movie until then, won the Golden Globe Award for best foreign film and garnered Richler and Lionel Chetwynd an Academy Award nomination for best adapted screenplay.

Kotcheff likes both films, but feels they are really quite different.

"*Duddy* had a stronger, more straightforward story line. Duddy Kravitz is a brash kid who wants to make it. He thinks he can become a man by owning land. *Joshua* is about a guy who's reassessing his life after running into trouble. *Duddy* is easier to grasp. *Joshua* is more complex and subtle."

It took four years to complete *Joshua* from conception to finish. It cost $10 million to make, compared to $800,000 for *Duddy*.

Reinhold Kramer, Richler's biographer, says that major studios in Hollywood declined Richler's script. However, up-and-coming Canadian producer Robert Lantos and his partner, Stephen Roth, were interested.

Kotcheff, a Torontonian who launched his career at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, was already a well-known figure in the film industry when he came on board, having directed *Life at the Top*, *Fun with Dick and Jane*, *North Dallas Forty* and *First Blood* (with Sylvester Stallone).

By then, Kotcheff's fee per film had risen to $1 million, but in deference to Richler he agreed to charge half price and take a percentage of the profits, Kramer says.

"I took some cash deferments," Kotcheff said.

With the project firmly on track, Kotcheff started casting. He chose James Wood as Joshua, Alan Arkin as his father Reuben and Gabrielle Lazure – the daughter of a former Quebec cabinet minister – as Pauline, Joshua's wife.

Looking back, Kotcheff has high praise for Arkin and Woods.

Arkin was "amazing" as a fast-talking petty gangster who liberally quotes from the Bible, while Woods managed to capture Richler's caustic wit.

Originally, Kotcheff hoped to cast Hollywood actress Cybill Shepherd as Pauline. But since some of the financing was provided by the federal government, Kotcheff had to abide by Canadian content rules and could hire only one non-Canadian actor.

"I wanted Cybill for the part and she wanted to do it, so I had to choose between her and Arkin."

Lazure, in her inaugural English-language role, turned out to be a problematic choice. According to Kramer, she lacked strong acting skills and a WASP accent. As a result, Kotcheff had to dub her voice and cut down her scenes.

Kotcheff claims that her "visual performance" was excellent but acknowledges that her voice was high pitched.

Joshua Then and Now was shot on location in Montreal, London, Brockville and Ottawa starting in the summer of 1984. Thanks to the intervention of a federal cabinet minister, John Roberts, Kotcheff was granted permission to shoot scenes in the Canadian Senate.

Ted Kotcheff

Although he leaves it up to viewers to judge whether *Joshua Then and Now* has held up reasonably well after 25 years, Kotcheff likes two scenes in particular.

The first one, which unfolds in the opening minutes, is a flashback to Montreal's Jewish quarter in the 1940s. "I'm pleased the way we recreated this era," he said.

Kotcheff is also fond of a tender scene in which Joshua and Pauline were reunited after a falling out.

As in the past, Kotcheff was granted final cut, which means he had the last word on content.

Lantos made suggestions, but immediately backed off when Kotcheff disagreed. "I would never have done anything to compromise the integrity of the film. Richler was my best friend."

Kotcheff, a Bulgarian Canadian whose parents arrived in Canada as immigrants in the late 1920s, met Richler in 1956 in southern France.

Later, in London, they shared a room for three years.

"We liked each other tremendously, though we were different," said Kotcheff, who was born in Cabbagetown in Toronto. "He saw me as a reflection of himself. He wanted to be the greatest Canadian writer, I wanted to be the greatest Canadian filmmaker."

He added, "I knew him for 44 years."

Kotcheff said he was considered for the newest Richler film, *Barney's Version*, which was produced by Lantos, directed by Richard Lewis, and is scheduled to be released this year.

"But I didn't push it," he said.

As he recalls, he and Richler talked about filming *St. Urbain's Horseman*. Kotcheff convinced George Segal to play the lead role, but the project fell through when financing did not pan out.

Nonetheless, he would like nothing more than to make another film based on a novel by Richler.

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Israeli sitcom *Srugim* is enormously appealing

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The newest sensation on Israeli TV, *Srugim*, is a transplanted Hebraic version of the American sitcom *Friends*.

Srugim, directed by Eliezer Shapiro, revolves around a group of five 30-something religious men and women in Jerusalem.

All of them are single and all of them seek love, marriage and personal fulfillment.

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea and A Movie series is screening the first three episodes on Feb. 21 at 5 p.m. at Silver City, Richmond Hill.

Three more episodes will be screened on Feb. 28 at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre cinemas at 5 p.m.

A hit among religious and secular Israelis, *Srugim* takes its name from the crocheted yarmulkes favoured by men from the national/religious camp.

The characters in *Srugim* are observant but not fanatic. They observe basic rituals but are not disconnected from mainstream society.

Yifat (Yael Sharoni), a graphic artist, shares an apartment with Hodaya (Tali Sharon), a university student specializing in biblical studies.

Their friend, Reut (Sharon Fauster), is an economist who holds down a lucrative job.

The males in the mix are Natti (Ohad Knoller), a surgical intern, and Amir (Amos Tamam), a divorced teacher working at a girls' religious school.

Yifat meets Natti at a speed dating session. He's cool and aloof, but she's impressed by his status as a doctor. She invites him to a Sabbath meal, but much to her annoyance, Natti gravitates toward Hodaya.

Meanwhile, Reut and Micha, a rising executive, break up after five months of dating. His half-hearted marriage proposal leaves her cold.

The plot thickens when Amir and Reut hook up, if only platonically, and when Hodaya finally melts in the presence of an archeologist at the Hebrew University.

Judging by the first three installments, *Srugim* is fun, edgy and, all together, enormously appealing.

The situations are real. The colloquial dialogue is snappy, sassy and smart. The acting is naturalistic. The cinematography reveals Jerusalem as a city on a hill blessed by its surroundings.

In short, *Srugim* is a winner.

Amos Tamam, left, and Ohad Knoller in *Srugim*.

Argentine composer at Jane Mallet Theatre

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts editor

Soundstreams Canada is presenting Argentine Jewish composer Osvaldo Golijov, along with composer Jose Evangelista and soprano Dawn Upshaw in the Ashes in the Wind program on Feb. 24 at 8 p.m. at the Jane Mallett Theatre, Toronto.

Golijov's parents were Romanian Jews who escaped the Holocaust and immigrated to Argentina.

Many of his works, especially those from the early 1990s, are shaped and informed by his Jewish identity in the aftermath of the Holocaust. His music is heavily influenced by klezmer, Sephardi and Yiddish lullaby among many other Jewish and Latin traditions. He's a recipient of the MacArthur "Genius Grant" Fellowship and the Vilcek Prize and two 2006 Grammy Awards. He composed scores for Francis Ford Coppola's *Youth without Youth* and the recently released *Tetro*.

He composed several pieces for soprano Upshaw including *Three Songs for Soprano and Orchestra*, and the opera *Ainadamar*.

Golijov's works start and end the program which will feature his 1994 composition *K'vakarat* from *The Dreams & Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. Golijov once called the composition "an epic history of Judaism."

Golijov will be present and will be introduced by Soundstream's artistic director Lawrence Cherney.

The concert is presented in collaboration with the University of Toronto and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra's New Creations Festival which runs Feb. 22 to March 3, of which Golijov is the featured composer.

Tickets for Ashes in the Wind are $40 ($15 for students, $25 for seniors) and are available through the St. Lawrence Centre Box Office at 416-366-7723 or www.stlc.com

Soundstreams is also presenting Osvaldo Golijov's *World* on Feb. 22 at 7:30 p.m. at the Gardiner Museum. A meet and greet with Golijov begins at 7 p.m.

For more information visit www.soundstreams.ca

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE "EXPLOSIVE, PROVOCATIVE" PLAY *TALK* COMING IN MARCH COURTESY OF HAROLD GREEN THEATRE COMPANY

Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presents the Toronto première of *Talk*, the play by **Michael Nathanson** that the *Winnipeg Free Press* called "explosive" and "provocative." An engrossing examination of both the power of language and the true nature of friendship, *Talk* is a funny, complex and touching look at a relationship torn apart by clashing views.

A finalist for the 2009 Governor General's Literary Award for drama, *Talk* features actors **Kevin Bunday** and **Michael Rubenfeld**, who recreates his role from the original Winnipeg production. The director is **Ted Dykstra**. Tickets $20 to $69. St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, March 3 to 20. 416-366-7723. www.stlc.co

Michael Nathanson

* * *

Film about Pride Parade: Many people were deeply troubled when some virulently anti-Israel demonstrators were permitted to march – and create a climate of anger and hatred – in last summer's Pride Parade in Toronto. *Reclaiming Our Pride* is a riveting new documentary that explores the explosive controversy surrounding the inclusion in the parade of groups that branded Israel an apartheid state. Kulanu Toronto and the Canadian Jewish Congress are jointly sponsoring a screening of this hour-long film, which has been quietly making the rounds and influencing opinions at City Hall. Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. at Huron. Sunday, Feb. 28, 2 p.m. Followed by a question and answer session. Suggested donation $10. Please RSVP by Feb. 25 to kulanutoronto @gmail.com.

* * *

Film Events

• **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "How Hollywood Looks at Sex and Sexuality, From Bogart to Clooney," as part of the Media Monday series. With outstanding film clips. Drop in, $12. Monday, Feb. 22, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• The Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Joshua Then and Now*, with director **Ted Kotcheff** in attendance. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Sunday Feb. 21, 4 and 7:30 p.m. $15, $10.

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival's Chai Tea series presents *Srugim*, an Israeli film (2008) with subtitles that presents "a smart and funny portrait of the world of religious Jewish 30-something singles" in modern Jerusalem. Parts 1, 2 and 3 of a high-quality television production. $15. Silver City Richmond Hill, Sunday, Feb. 21, tea 4 p.m., film 5 p.m. 416-967-1528, www.tjff.com. Parts 4, 5 and 6 at Sheppard Centre Cinemas, Sunday, Feb. 28, tea 4 p.m., film 5 p.m.

* * *

Recent Appointments

• **Josh Grossman**, a 33-year-old educator, producer, performer and leading figure in the local jazz scene, was recently named artistic director of Toronto Downtown Jazz as it prepares for the 24th TD Canada Trust Toronto Jazz Festival this summer. "Some of my favourite musical experiences have been at the festival, and I look forward to creating memorable experiences for the current and next generation of jazz fans," Grossman said in a prepared statement. "It's an honour to get to work closely with Toronto's jazz community and the fantastic talent in this city, this country and on the international stage." Grossman has had previous high-level involvements with the Markham Jazz Festival, High Park Choirs, the Royal Conservatory of Music and the Jazz Performance and Education Centre, and was a founder of the Toronto Jazz Orchestra.

• Canadian violinist, violist and educator **Barry Shiffman** has been appointed associate dean of the Glenn Gould School and dean of the Young Artists Performance Academy at the Royal Conservatory, beginning in September. Since 2006, Shiffman has been the Banff Centre's director of music programs and executive director of the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

• Mixed Company Theatre has chosen emerging playwright-actor **Rebecca Applebaum** to lead in the development of a program in which artists collaborate with youth who have experienced homelessness. Applebaum has an MA in English from U of T, specializing in poetry and "the drama of slavery." www.mixedcompanytheatre.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Comedian **Joan Rivers** performs in Hammerson Hall at the Living Arts Centre, Mississauga, Thursday, March 4, 8 p.m. For adults 18+ because "language may offend." $55, www.livingartscentre.ca, 905-306-6000.

• JVS Toronto is hosting a performance of *The Soul of Gershwin: The Musical Journey of an American Klezmer* as a fundraiser for its programming for women. $100. Winter Garden Theatre, May 4, 8 p.m. Melanie, 416-787-1151, ext. 292. www.jvstoronto.org *The Soul of Gershwin* is part of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's 2010 subscription series.

• Sundays on Bloor presents "The History of Stride Piano," with **Jordan Klapman**. $9. students $5. Drop in, includes refreshments. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Sunday, Feb. 21, 11 a.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 133.

• **Correction:** Israeli artist **Yael Erlichman**, whose work is on display at the Alton Mill Gallery in Alton, Ont., is not returning to the gallery for the Artists Project March 4 to 7. The Artists Project is at the Queen Elizabeth Building, Toronto.

Omission

In the article "Bringing Israeli culture to North America" (*CJN*, Feb. 4), the photo of Ravid Dahan and Ivri Lider should have been credited to Avital Zemer. We apologize for the omission.

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Comedy monologue explores weight, dieting and self-esteem

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Monica Parker describes her one-woman, comedic monologue *Sex, Pies and a Few White Lies*, as the story of every woman's love-hate relationship with dieting and about learning to love one's own body.

The Glasgow-born actress, writer and producer calls her show, playing in Stouffville, Ont., and Toronto this month, a "one woman and a half," mostly true story, and says her message is that everybody should stop worrying and being neurotic about losing weight.

"I think humour is a weapon and a medication," she says. "Humour allows you to be 100 per cent honest. Humour makes things palatable that are not palatable if you don't have a sense of humour."

She says the show is about love and losses; loss of meaning, weight, parental loss, loss of identity and self-esteem. She says it has taken 101 humiliations to become who she is now.

Parker got her start in Toronto in 1972 on *Sweet City Woman*, a show she wrote, produced and starred in for Citytv, which was in its early days then. "Ivan Reitman was the director. I wore a leotard and I was the big, fat blond with long hair, and it was the first time I got affirmations for being big," she says.

Monica Parker

"It was also the first time that I understood the validation of putting it out there. What I have really understood on this long road of being a big woman is it doesn't matter how many diets you go on, and I've been on every single one of them, ultimately you have to make peace with what you are."

Parker left Toronto and spent 25 years in sunny Los Angeles. She and her husband, fashion designer Gilles Savard, returned to Toronto two years ago to be close to family. Not used to the cold of winter, she hibernated and started writing *Sex, Pies and a Few White Lies*, her first theatrical show in 20 years.

Parker says she had talked about writing a one-person show at dinner tables for years. "In a way it's cathartic, it's entertainment. I have had amazing encouragement from friends. The genesis for this show is, I've battled my weight my whole life. There is a line in my show, 'I was born at 6-1/2 pounds and an hour later I was 62 pounds,'"she says, chuckling.

Although she doesn't advocate that people be overweight, she said that after yo-yo dieting for a time, she made a conscious decision that she was going to live large and healthy – mentally, emotionally and physically. She's an avid walker and does yoga.

While living in Hollywood, Parker acted in numerous TV shows, including *Nancy Drew*, *A Perfect Murder*, *ER*, *The X-Files*, *Murder She Wrote* and *Knots Landing*. Her writing and producing credits include *All Dogs Go to Heaven*, *Who's the Boss*, *A Kiss So Deadly*, *Hunger Point*, *Home by Christmas*, and *The Party Never Stops*.

When Parker's mother immigrated to Scotland from the Austro-Hungarian Empire sometime before World War II, her much older half-brother and half-sister remained until their mother could get settled. Caught by the escalation of the war, her brother survived three years in Auschwitz. Miraculously, all were reunited in Scotland after the war.

"I am a secular Jew, [daughter] of people that have gone through the war and either have embraced their Judaism and God, or they pushed away from it," Parker says. " My mother pushed away from it, and my father wasn't Jewish. I was raised Jewish because that is the community I lived in. Cultural Jewishness is huge in my life, I identify Jewish... I have a Jewish mouth, meaning you think and you don't hold back, and I'm proud of that," she says

Directed by Pam Brighton, *Sex, Pies and a Few White Lies* runs in Stouffville at the Lebovic Centre, (www.townofws.com/nineteen) from Feb. 17 to 20, and at Toronto's Pilot Tavern's Stealth Lounge, 22 Cumberland St., from Feb. 22 to 24. Tickets to the show at the Pilot are available by e-mailing blackwellcommunications@gmail.com or at the door.

Prodigy puts piano first

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Coral Solomon is in love.

With her piano.

Solomon, 16, is a musical prodigy. She won first place at the 2008 Toronto Sinfonietta Concerto Competition, performed at Isabel Bader Theatre in Toronto with the Sinfonietta and will be performing an hour-long solo concert in Israel later this winter.

"I really enjoy playing," she said. "You obviously practise, but when you play, it's kind of like singing. It just comes out."

Solomon has been playing the piano since she was seven, but was exposed to it long before then, her mother, Lena, said.

"She started hearing music, I think since I was pregnant with her," she said. "I would play [the piano] to her when she was inside, hoping that she will get to love it."

And she has.

Rather than shop with friends and flip through TV channels, Solomon spends her free time practising. And practising and practising.

She plays around three hours a day, sometimes more if she can get in a half-hour before school.

"I put piano first," she said. "School is a tight second, and friends come at the end. It's really hard to accommodate school. I do get behind."

Solomon is a Grade 11 student at Earl Haig Secondary School's Claude Watson arts program. While her mother first started teaching her to play the piano, Solomon, who was born in Israel, began taking formal lessons when she was eight years old. When she immigrated to Canada with her family at the age of 11, she was accepted into the Royal Conservatory of Music's Young Artist Performers Academy, where she's now at the senior level.

For Solomon's father, Emil, it was clear early on that his daughter had a connection with the piano.

"We've been told by a lot of people that she has a special musicality... [and] a great talent which is maybe bigger than others," he said. "She's feeling the music in a very special way."

But piano hasn't always been Solomon's only passion. When she started high school, the pianist wanted to be an aerospace engineer.

"Originally, at the beginning of high school, I wanted to go into aeronautics engineering. That was my dream," she said.

This dream changed in Grade 11. Now, Solomon is determined to become a professional pianist.

"I really like playing the piano. I think I do have the chance and the future [to play professionally]," she said.

Continued on page 42

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Books & Authors

Book's message still resonates with today's readers

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Nancy-Gay Rotstein's *Shattering Glass* has been recently released in a new Canadian edition by Overlook Press. Published 14 years ago, the novel addresses a timely issue faced by three women striving for success in their professional and personal lives.

"I believe it's one of the most pressing and unresolved issues facing families," said Rotstein recently from her Toronto home. "How to get a fulfilling balance between career and family life is a problem that's even more critical today because of the current environment of financial instability. The issues that the book raises are even more intensely felt by families because of the financial downturn of the economy."

Nancy Gay Rotstein

In her well-crafted novel, Rotstein creates three distinct characters – Judy, Dede and Barbara – but the common thread weaving them together is their pursuit of happiness and success.

"We each have our own personal glass ceiling when we accomplish the goals we set for ourselves in our career and jobs. My book deals with what happens when we achieve it," Rotstein said.

"Women shatter glass ceilings to become successful in their careers. Complications arise in our personal life that can shatter our happiness, and this book is about three women who struggle to achieve independence and what happens after they shatter the glass. It's about all the things we weren't warned would happen."

Rotstein, who has a law degree and mediation practice, wrote *Shattering Glass* from her personal experience and research, in order to make each woman's story one that readers can relate to. The women's stories are enhanced by Rotstein's use of vivid imagery and expressive language.

"For me, the novel seemed the best vehicle for exploring real-life situations in a way that would have the greatest emotional impact and provide an entertaining provocative read," said Rotstein, who is married and has three adult children.

Shattering Glass empowers readers with its message. "Although these women face very different life situations, they are very much alike because ultimately each woman achieves happiness and success by discovering and by relying on the strength within herself," Rotstein said.

Through her website (www.nancygayrotstein.ca), Rotstein receives feedback from readers wondering how she could have known their stories. "It's so gratifying to hear that. People are asking what happens to the characters after – they are very involved in the story and want it to continue. I'm constantly writing, so who knows, there may be another one," she said.

The novel's universal theme has been embraced by readers in diverse countries, including Poland, Russia, Czech Republic, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Australia, and it has been translated into eight languages.

Rotstein is also a poet. Her poetry collections include *China: Shockwaves* and *This Horizon and Beyond: Poems Selected and New*, for which the Canadian poet Irving Layton wrote the foreword.

Last year, to commemorate the third anniversary of Layton's death, Rotstein's tribute poem, *Eyeing the Shark: Irving Layton at Maimonides Geriatric Centre*, was published in the *Globe and Mail*, and in April, during poetry month, it appeared on the *Globe*'s website.

Rotstein stays connected to the arts by writing, as she continually explores the world around her.

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Arts & Travel

Teen pianist will perform in Israel

Continued from page 41

Gennady Gefter, one of Solomon's music teachers at Earl Haig, agrees.

"She's a good pianist. She's far above the average level. She's very musical," he said. "She loves music all together… she's very comfortable with stage performance and has a very strong stage presence."

Solomon will perform in Israel, in March 17, at the Open University of Israel in Tel Aviv, the next step in her musical career.

Solomon was invited to play at the university after her parents sent a recording of their daughter to the school.

She will be playing for a full hour, with no intermission. This isn't anything new to the teen.

"[It's] very hard to continuously play for an hour… You have to physically have enough endurance. Mentally, you have to stay focused until the end," she said.

"You get so carried away with the excitement, you [don't] feel like it was an hour. You just feel exhausted. If you played well, then it's a good kind of exhausted."

Solomon, whose favourite composers include Mozart and Liszt, has begun composing her own music. For the musician, writing music is about bursts of inspiration.

"I randomly get glimpses of whatever ideas. I go on the piano. I try to play around. I improvise. I try to collect [ideas] together… once I get that, I write it down," she said.

While the musician has played the cello and clarinet, her favourite instrument is the piano.

"It depends on your personal feel for it. [The piano] feels right," she said.

Coral Solomon

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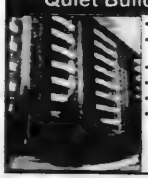

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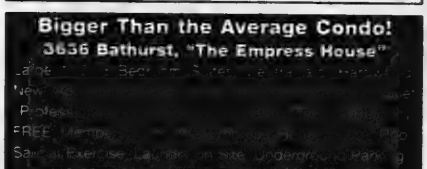

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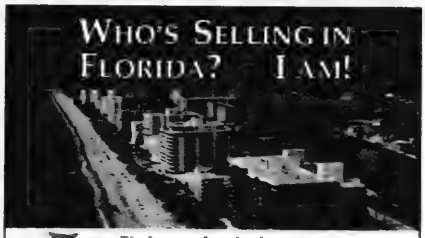

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Canadians bring medicine to Cuban Jews

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

HAVANA — A group of 20 Canadian Jews travelled to Havana recently to assist Cuba's small and relatively isolated Jewish community of about 1,500 people.

The Canadians were part of a first-ever UIA Federations Canada's Young Leadership tikkun olam mission to Cuba, Jan 26 to 31.

"We arrived in Cuba bringing duffel bags full of donations of medicines, as well as toothbrushes, soap, disposable diapers, and other essential items that are needed by Jews in Cuba," Mindy Eklove, director of National Young Leadership of UIA Federations Canada, said.

The Cuban Jewish community gives out medicine to members of the Jewish community in need weekly.

"We are very grateful for what the Canadians brought," William Miller, vice-president of the Cuban Jewish community, told *The CJN.*

Mission participants also helped divide and bag portions of powdered milk they purchased for the Cuban Jewish community. Powdered-milk rations in Cuba are only given out to children under eight.

"There is no fresh milk in Cuba, so there are many members of our community, especially those with babies and children, who rely on powdered milk," Miller said.

Prior to 1959, when Fidel Castro came into power, there was an active Jewish community of some 15,000 Jews in Havana alone, many of whose ancestors originated from Europe and Turkey. After Castro nationalized private business and property, 90 per cent of the Jewish population, many of them business owners, left the island. The remaining 10 per cent were generally not observant Jews, and over the years, many intermarried.

Jewish communal life continued to decline until 1992, after the fall of the Soviet Union, when Cuba changed its constitution, allowing for religious freedom.

Adela Dworkin, president of the Cuban Jewish community, told *The CJN* that most Cuban Jews have one child.

"In some ways I feel that it is a miracle that we have survived. For years, we didn't have enough Jewish people coming to pray in our synagogues," she said. "We would have a 'Cuban minyan,' made up of eight adults, and then we'd count the Torah, and God, to make the necessary 10."

Miller said that today, there are about 60 Cuban Jews a year "who make aliyah to Israel," but in "2010 there were 100 Cubans who married Jews and underwent Conservative conversions."

Dworkin told *The CJN* about her meeting with Castro in 1998.

"I asked him why he had never visited the Jewish community, and he answered, 'because I was never invited,'" she said.

Dworkin then invited him to an upcoming Chanukah celebration at El Patronato, the Jewish community centre, housed in the same building as Beth Shalom synagogue, a Conservative shul.

When Castro asked what Chanukah is, Dworkin replied, "The holiday celebrates a revolution," a word he likes. To Dworkin's surprise, he came to the party and addressed the congregation in a lengthy speech.

Participants of the mission were welcomed by many spirited young adults at El Patronato. The young Cuban Jews, many of whom have travelled to Israel on Birthright/Taglit programs, sang and danced in Hebrew, waving Israeli and Cuban flags.

"The Cuban government has granted travel visas to anyone who has applied to go on these programs," Dworkin said.

Shawna Goodman, campaign chair for Montreal's Federations CJA's Young Leadership Campaign, told *The CJN* that "we need to educate other Canadian Jews who travel to Cuba to take an extra day and visit the community in Havana and to pack a bag of needed medicines, shampoo, etc.

"The Cuban Jews cannot be forgotten… the highest form of tzedakah is to give them the tools to help themselves. They are the best investment ever and we have so much to learn from them."

Participants of a UIA Federations Canada's Young Leadership tikkun olam mission to Cuba gather in a restored part of old Havana.

[Rhonda Spivak photo]

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Jewish biathlete bringing passion for success to Vancouver

By BEN HARRIS
JTA

When the call from Germany arrived at the Spector family home in Lenox, Mass., last month, the voice on the other end betrayed little of the excitement one would expect from a newly minted Olympian.

Laura Spector, 22, had qualified for the U.S. Olympic biathlon team that is competing in Vancouver.

"It was a very quiet voice, and it was just, 'Daddy, Hi it's Laura. I made the team,'" her father, Jesse, recalled. "It was just like that. It was that quiet, from this 5-foot, 100-pound kid. It was probably a very emotional three to five seconds because her voice sounded as though, 'Dad, I didn't make the team.' But she was so composed. It had its own – I don't know – moment is the only way I can put it."

Spector is the youngest American woman vying in the biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing with target shooting. She is also one of five athletes measuring in at 5-feet tall – the shortest members of the 2010 U.S. Olympic team.

A student of genetics and Jewish studies at Dartmouth College, Spector is among a handful of Jewish Olympians headed to Vancouver for the 21st Winter Olympics.

Chicago native Ben Agosto, a 2006 Olympic silver medalist, is returning to compete in the ice-dancing pairs. Steve Mesler, a bobsledder from Buffalo, N.Y., is back for his third Olympics.

Israel will field a team of three in Vancouver: Mikail Renzhin, an alpine skier originally from Latvia, and the brother-sister duo Alexandra and Roman Zaretsky, born in Belarus, who compete in ice dancing.

Agosto, 28, who nearly missed the 2006 Olympics because his partner, the Canadian-born skater Tanith Belbin, was not yet a naturalized American citizen, said he was looking forward to soaking in the atmosphere of what will almost certainly be his last Olympics. A last-minute act of Congress granted Belbin expedited citizenship and she was able to represent the United States at the Games in Turin, Italy.

"When that came through it was really a big surprise, but we really didn't have that time to build up and kind of think of what to expect," Agosto told JTA by phone from his training rink in Pennsylvania. "We were just kind of thrown into it. There's a lot that I don't remember because it was such a whirlwind."

Spector grew up on a farm in Lenox where her family keeps llamas, alpacas, goats, horses, sheep, turkeys and chickens. She does her academic work during the spring and summer to free up the fall and winter for training and competition.

In high school she would wake before the sun to make tracks on her skis in a field behind the family home. She discovered biathlon at a camp for the sport in Lake Placid, N.Y., when she was 14.

"It was my first experience with shooting a gun, but I loved combining two sports -- cross-country skiing (in this case running because it was summer time) and marksmanship – to make each a little more challenging," Spector wrote in an e-mail. "Therefore, the greater the reward when you do well."

Her parents describe her as an unusually precocious and passionate kid who, from a young age, was adept at meeting challenges.

"She's not a frivolous kid," said Spector's mother, Patty, herself a national champion in marathon canoe racing. "Even when she's on the road and travelling, she reads books that most people her age would never go near or pick up. She just finished *The Gulag Archipelago*. "

When she became a bat mitzvah at the Conservative Congregation Knesset Israel Synagogue in nearby Pittsfield, where her family has been members for 30 years, Spector conducted the entire Shabbat service in keeping with the synagogue's tradition of lay-led services. Spector also attended the synagogue's Hebrew school.

"For me, being Jewish is a lot about family and community, and the continuity of tradition," Spector said. "There is an entire congregation at home responsible for the shaping of my religious and cultural identity. There is comfort in knowing that these are people who have known me since I was born and have instilled in me thousands of years of tradiution in ethical behavior."

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Israeli wows New York crowd

JTA

NEW YORK — The first Israeli player in the NBA received boisterous support at Madison Square Garden.

Omri Casspi, who is having a strong rookie season for the Sacramento Kings, heard loud cheers and chants on what was billed as Jewish Heritage Night.

Casspi, playing 45 minutes, contributed 18 points and 9 rebounds as the Kings rallied for a 118-114 overtime victory.

"This is not a regular game for me and it was important for me to start strong... show the coach and everybody that I am here to play and focus on basketball," Casspi said in reports.

Several hours before the game, the Israeli Consulate in New York hosted a reception for Casspi, a first-round draft pick.

At a question-and-answer session and shootaround before the game, Casspi reportedly said that the Kings' players look out for him.

Casspi was chosen to play in the Rookie Challenge against the top second-year players during All-Star Weekend. He is averaging 12 points and 5 rebounds per game.

Euro 2012 draw made

Compiled by CJN Staff

Israel has drawn a relatively easy qualifying group for soccer's Euro 2012 tournament.

Israel was drawn in Group 6 against Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Georgia and Malta. They do not have to play against Europe's cream of the crop that includes Germany, Italy, Spain and England.

Now all Israel needs is a coach. The fact that Israel stands a decent chance of qualifying may help them lure a quality coach.

Israel plays a friendly against Romania in two weeks, and the Israel Football Association hopes to have a coach in place by then.

Helping needy is 'real eye-opener' for teen

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Daniel Navy, 17, has combined his strong muscles with his kind heart in order to give people in need an emotional lift.

The son of Jewish Women International of Canada's national office secretary Miriam Navy, Daniel offered his help after learning about a predicament that the organization had found itself in.

Penny Krowitz, JWI/C executive director, explained that at JWI/C, they know of a lot of people who could use furniture, and they also know a lot of people who have furniture to donate.

Project gives people in need an emotional lift

"The problem, however, is connecting these people. We need trucks, a warehouse and strong men. It is a huge undertaking, and it hurts me deeply when we can't help."

Their policy, she said, is to accept only brand-new furniture for ASTEH (Alternate Short-Term Emergency Housing), their apartment for abused women, which they co-sponsor with Jewish Family and Child. "The community has been very generous, but we have no storage or pickup ability."

They chose to step aside from their policy, Krowitz said, when they learned that ASTEH's television was not working. "We knew that a lot of people were upgrading their televisions, even though their old televisions were in good shape. Miriam sent out an e-mail to Toronto members, and within five minutes, she had 12 responses. We were overwhelmed."

She said that one of the responses was from a former resident of the shelter who was prepared to give up her own TV because she knew how important television is to the residents.

"This is when Daniel offered to pick up a television and set it up in the ASTEH apartment. We then called Jewish Family and Child and asked them if they had clients who could use the 11 other televisions. We made the 'shidduchs,' and Miriam and Daniel offered to be the delivery people."

Miriam Navy said that the whole process has been "a real eye-opener for Daniel. We drove downtown, and he saw people at the other end of the spectrum. A lot of people in the community live in a bubble. They don't realize that not all Jews live in ideal circumstances."

"We spoke to Daniel about the need for discretion and the importance of maintaining the people's dignity, and he did his work quietly and [respectfully]," Navy said.

Krowitz said that the project "just happened. We hadn't planned it, and it is not ongoing.

"It made our hearts feel good. The recipients were appreciative, and the social worker said it it was a mitzvah."

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4 tbls fresh parsley, minced
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2 tsp oregano
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Cut into 1/2" strips:
3 zucchini
2 yellow squash
2 red peppers
2 yellow peppers
2 green peppers

Place onions, squash, zucchini, peppers and garlic in a bowl; toss well. Combine parsley, vinegar, oil, oregano, salt and pepper in a jar. Cover tightly and shake well. Pour over vegetables and toss. Spoon vegetable mixture into an ungreased roasting pan
Bake at 425° 20 min., stirring often. Serve warm or at room temperature

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About Life

I received this letter last week from a little girl in Grade 3.

Dear Ella,

There is a girl named Ashley at school. She bullies me all the time. She also bullies my friends. I don't know what to do. She makes me cry all the time. I told my teacher but she said, "You guys can handle your own problems." I also asked my parents, but they say, "Tell the teacher and stand up for yourself," but it doesn't work. How can I make someone stop bullying?

Being Bullied

Dear Being Bullied

A bully tries to gain control by making other kids feel sad or afraid. It makes Ashley feel powerful to bully you. It's a way for her to cover up her own insecurities.

There are things you can try to do to stop her. You must stand up to her. You could start by ignoring her behaviour, but that's not always possible. If you can't just walk away, try letting her say whatever she wants while you just listen quietly. When she's finished, in a very calm voice say, "Are you finished now?" then walk away with no emotion. No laughing, no crying, no yelling, just like you couldn't care less. I know this is very hard to do, but if she sees her bullying isn't having an effect on you, she will move on to someone else. You may not be able to change Ashley's bullying behaviour, but you can try to change how you react to it.

But you shouldn't be dealing with this alone. Your teacher needs to help you solve this problem.

For parents: Bullying is a form of repeated aggression used to create the illusion of power. It can be physical, verbal or social. Ontario's Education Amendment Act, Keeping Our Kids Safe at School, amends the section of the Education Act dealing with behaviour, discipline and safety, effective Feb. 1, 2010. Here is an excerpt:

"Board employees who work directly with students are required to respond to incidents that may have a negative impact on the school climate. The goal of the policy is to support a safe learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach his or her full potential." You can read it in more detail at http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/145.pdf.

Kids should never feel alone at school, and now this amendment eliminates the option for teachers to say, "You guys can handle your own problems."

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CN., *e-mail: eb@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

Acting 'as if' can make it real

Acting "as if" is a powerful coaching tool I often suggest to clients.

"If you want a quality, act as if you already have it," philosopher William James said.

Before Barack Obama was president of the United States, he acted as if he already was. He signed letters as the president of the United States, he visualized and stepped into the role, acting as if he were president before he was actually living and working in the White House.

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

This has long been a coaching tool used in method acting – you imagine how the character would speak, walk, talk and dress, and then act as if you were that person.

I'll never forget when I used to work as a producer on a national television show. It was a frenetic environment with incredibly high stress levels, as each producer was required to produce a national television show weekly.

As a senior producer, I worked with an associate producer who was very relaxed and calm. When everyone was racing around looking for guests and experts, she would calmly come over to my desk and ask in a pleasant, slow and relaxed voice, "What seems to be the problem?"

I would listen to her speak on the telephone in a calm monotone, and noticed that when I got on the phone, I would start to emulate her style. It was fabulous. I got better guests, and whenever things got heated, I would step into her shoes, talk the way she talked, and feel immediately relaxed.

I often suggest to clients that if they want to feel more confident, calmer, happier, more free, more organized, or whatever they are searching for, they should step into the shoes of someone who is already like that. So, if being calmer is something you aspire to, imagine a friend or relative, or even a celebrity who appears to be really calm. Then when you are in a difficult situation, imagine how this person would react, what they would say, how their tone of voice would convey what they want it to, and imagine stepping into their shoes.

Author Wayne Dyer talks about the concept of acting "as if" in his book *Real Magic, Creating Miracles in Everyday Life*. "The more you see yourself as what you'd like to become, and act as if what you want is already there, the more you'll activate those dormant forces that will collaborate to transform your dreams into your reality," he writes.

So, do you want to lose that 20 pounds once and for all, clear out the clutter and be done with it, achieve something you have always wanted to do and dreamed of but never done? Acting "as if" is a perfect place to start. Don't reinvent the wheel. If you want to be like Barbara Walters, read everything about her. Where did she start? What were the steps she took to become one of the best-known and most beloved television interviewers in the world?

Acting "as if" can make many of your goals and dreams come to life, and acting the way you want to feel can transform your mood, your outlook and your disposition in a very happy way. And, of course, the greatest part of all of this is that when you really act "as if," soon you will not be acting anymore and you will become or have that very thing you wished for all along!

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The honeymoon: the first draft of your life together

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

Wedding albums are a one-way ticket in time travel. Open one and instantly, the decade, if not the year, reveals itself: bride wearing peau de soie? Sideburned ushers in pastel blue tuxes? Jello moulds headlining the sweet table? What screams 1964 like women with helmet hair?

But one thing that doesn't go out of style is a honeymoon—often to a place that's sunny and sandy. Beaches are the perfect metaphor for a good marriage: warm and nurturing, with waters occasionally ruffled but mostly calm.

Two regrets about my wedding, or shall we say, its aftermath: the photographer never did put my bridal portrait in his front window. Maybe some faces aren't so good for business.

Dorothy Lipovenko and her husband, Henry Mietkiewicz.

The other regret, more sentiment than vanity: not having a honeymoon.

Married on a Wednesday, back at work Monday, with two nights ticking on the *Sheva Brachot* meter. Translated as "seven blessings" (initially recited under the chupah), the *Sheva Brachot* prayers are also a reason for a week of lively post-wedding meals – usually dinner – hosted by family and friends for the new couple.

The upside? Your bridal gown may be packed away, but you still feel a little "on" with the attendant fuss. The downside? Returning home nightly like two beached whales from all that food.

Sheva Brachot celebration is a nice tradition, a clever but subtle way of easing a young couple's transition from parental home to marital home. They didn't know from honeymoons (or much privacy) in the shtetl, and besides, one can honeymoon later, right?

Indeed, we did plan a trip, a scenic drive to the Poconos, but work got in the way. Disappointment was rationalized with "God must have wanted to keep us off the I-95 for a reason." We still cling to that, 34 years later.

But it bothers me, from time to time, my honeymoonless union. True, there have been numerous trips to the beach, but that's when we needed "down time" from the business of living. Decompressing is not the same as taking your first baby steps in the sand as a married couple.

When did honeymoons start? The scenic getaway is fairly new, about 150 years or so, as travel broadened. The possible origins of the word "honeymoon" are varied, dating back several centuries, but the consensus is that a supply of mead, or honey wine, was given to the bride and groom to drink during their first month together. Oy, that's one alcoholic buzz!

Fast-forward to the present, when even the modern honeymoon is not immune to a makeover.

Take, for example, writer-editor Joshua Berman of Boulder, Colo. He and his wife, Tay, spent half of their 16-month overseas honeymoon as volunteers on a Peace Corps-style program run by American Jewish World Service (AJWS).

In an e-mail, Joshua says he and Tay, a registered nurse who married in 2004, were the only newlyweds (during their stint) on the New York-based program that places young Jewish volunteers in developing countries to provide skills and training.

After a three-month assignment in India that included working with tea workers' families, (and celebrating Rosh Hashanah during monsoon season), the Bermans were so keen they continued on to Sri Lanka and Ghana for AJWS.

Closer to home, Rabbi Wayne Dosick of San Diego and his wife, Ellen, ventured to a most unusual destination while honeymooning in Chicago, their mutual birthplace and hometown.

In an article published recently in the *Chicago Jewish News*, Rabbi Dosick describes this return to their roots as "couple's archeology," introducing "each other to the people and places that held history and meaning for us." That they did, including the shul they'd both davened in, old schools, a favourite park and museum, even their childhood homes that, at one point, had been on the same block. (The two had not known each other in Chicago).

But the journey really stepped back in time with their visit to the cemetery where, Rabbi Dosick writes, "we met the generations… those whose lives formed the foundations of our own." Moving from headstone to headstone, they told each other stories about those respective family members.

Rabbi Wayne Dosick and his wife, Ellen

Such honeymoon experiences are inspiring. Uplifting. What a wonderful opportunity to lay major groundwork for what a couple wants to accomplish, to define what's important to both. Perhaps the value of this post-nuptial time lies less in its allure as a sunwashed paradise than a chance to write a first draft of your history together, in the real world.

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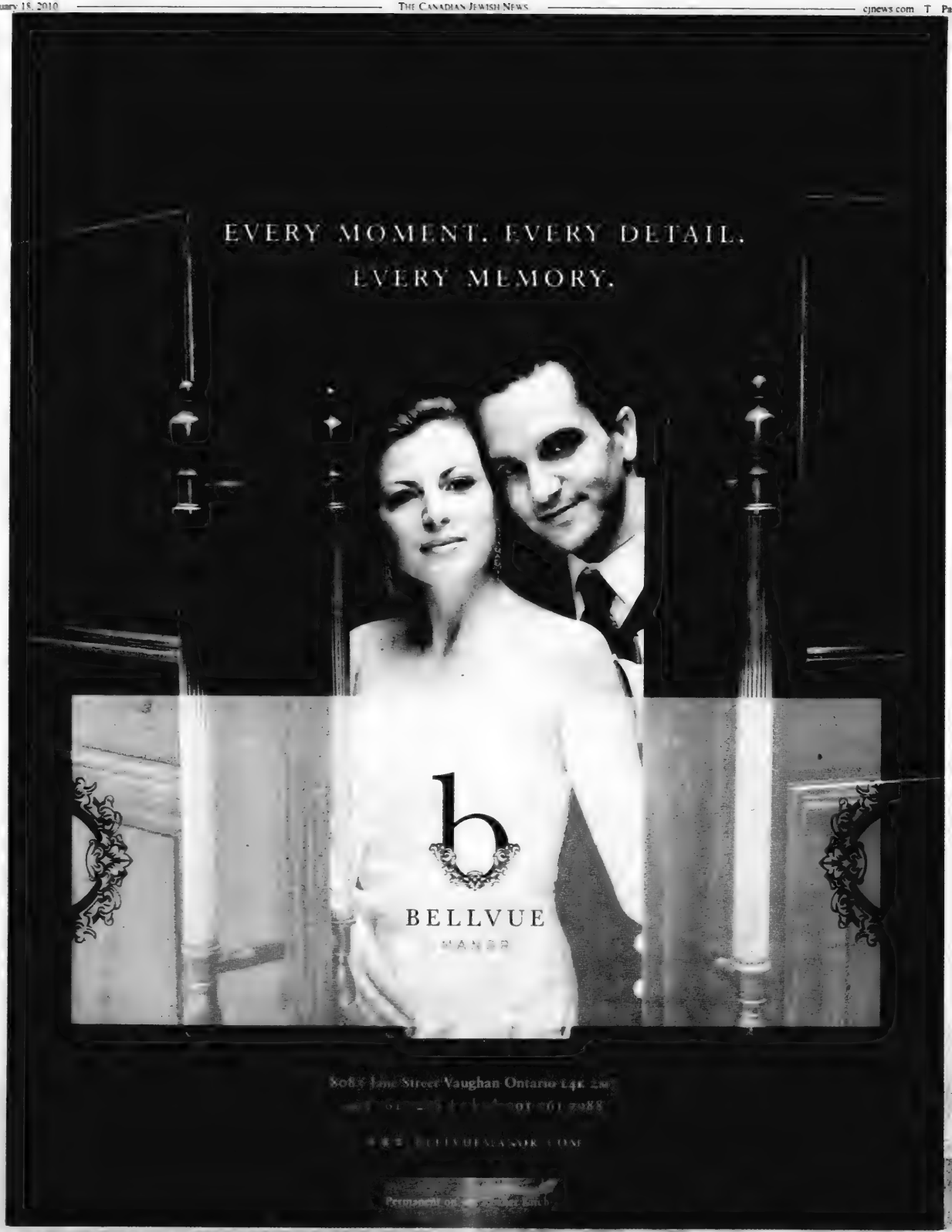
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Brides

At last I am a mother-in-law

By BEV BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

In dictionaries, the term "mother-in-law" is defined as mother of the bride or groom. She is often painted as the bane of the otherwise blissful existence of a married couple – or the saviour of it. But, regardless of any definition, I couldn't wait for the day I would become one.

Of my three grown children, my son Zev was the first to marry. All of the experiences at this joyous time in our lives were firsts for my husband and me: the nervous yet excited feelings we shared the evening our son brought home our future daughter-in-law for the first time, the butterflies in our stomachs the night we met our future *machatonim*, the engagement party, the shower – but the most meaningful of all was standing beside our son under the chupah.

In my case, I found the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Michelle, our son's intended, couldn't be lovelier. Her parents and sister couldn't be warmer or more enveloping. Our family and theirs bonded immediately. As we left their house that first evening, we could hear them shouting, "Thank God," because it was all good!

Leading up to the wedding, Michelle was incredibly thoughtful and inclusive. She wanted both her mother and me to share each and every stage of the planning of the wedding. I offered my vote on her final choice of bridal gown, she welcomed my opinion on her choice of wedding planner, décor company, invitations. If she was ever stressed about the minutiae of planning such an event, it certainly didn't show.

Zev, on the other hand, was a groomzilla! So, with some motherly advice from me, Michelle came to understand that less was more when involving him with the smaller details. She cleverly got the job done in a way that allowed him to think he was making as many decisions as she did.

The real excitement began when the RSVPs started arriving – we received "will attend" responses from as far away as Poland, Israel, Calgary, Saskatchewan, Texas and New York. Dinner parties were arranged, tours of the city were organized, and of course, Niagara Falls was on the agenda.

The hustle and bustle of the wedding day arrived. Hair, makeup, manicure-pedicure appointments unfolded on schedule. Suddenly, we were at The Venetian Banquet Centre, all dressed up for the wedding. For a second, I was overwhelmed by how everything had come together and how very beautiful everything was. I took a moment to soak up the perfection of the room where the ceremony would take place and then the stunning ballroom – both were prepared beyond any of my expectations, and I felt so proud.

Zev and Michelle Bergman
[Photo courtesy of Studio 2000]

When the bride and groom arrived in a limousine after having their formal portraits taken elsewhere, my eyes filled with the first tears of joy. They were extraordinary to me – they were such a stunning couple, glowing with happiness and serenity. They were the king and queen of the day.

Although Michelle did not have an Orthodox upbringing as Zev did, she and her family were happy to include Orthodox traditions in the wedding. At the *kabbalat panim* – the welcoming reception for the bride – Michelle, her mom, her sister, my daughters and I were joined by all of the women who attended. It was so much fun to share this with my closest girlfriends, as they had all seen Zev grow up and were proud of me for "letting him live to see this day." He wasn't always the easiest teenager to deal with!

The men were otherwise occupied at the *chossen's tisch* (groom's table), where the details of the marriage licence were gone over and signed, and where they had the opportunity to raise a glass to wish l'chaim to Zev and Michelle.

At the appointed time, Zev was escorted to Michelle by my husband and Michelle's dad and the rest of the men while they sang *Simen Tov and Mazel Tov*. Based on custom dating back to the days of Jacob, Zev brought the veil down over Michelle's face in preparedness for his marriage to her. I cried!

While standing in line waiting for the planner to tell us when to begin the march down the aisle, we teased Michelle and Zev that they still had time to change their minds. Michelle emphatically said, "No way."

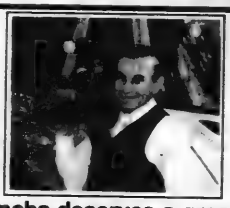
The music started, and the first to march, my mother-in-law and brother-in-law, disappeared through the door. Suddenly, it was time for my husband and me to walk half-way down and wait to escort Zev to the chupah. Our son had become a man. What an incredibly happy moment that was for us!

We were thrilled at the peaceful and loving look on Zev's face as he turned to see his beautiful bride walk toward him on the arms of her parents. The rabbi conducted the service with warmth and much humour, and suddenly it was there – the sound I had waited to hear all my life – the stomping on the glass and the shouts of mazel tov, as my son became a husband. And I became a mother-in-law!

The rest of the simchah unfolded into an evening of unbelievable fun – the music was incredible, the food was beyond incredible, the ambiance in the ballroom was elegant yet relaxed. Everyone had such a good time. My feet were killing me! I don't know what we would have done without our wedding planner. She took care of every last detail and ran around all evening to make sure that everything worked out perfectly. I am still tempted to present her with a pair of gold-plated roller blades as her Award of Achievement for being in 10 places at once!

I had been warned by so many to try my best to enjoy every minute of the wedding, as it would simply fly by. I did try to put things into slow motion, but the evening still went by far too quickly.

Now as a seasoned in-law of three months, I can honestly say that my life has been enriched in more ways than I can count. The young couple brings happiness to us whenever they are with us. They are loving and happy, and they are building a house. The next stage of their lives is unfolding and, with God's blessings, they will fill their four-bedroom home with children and I will become the most blessed of all women – a grandmother!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Brides

'Honeymoon for humanity' opened our eyes

By MICHAEL ETTEDGUI
Special to The CJN

The following is a story of learning, adventure and giving. We were married on June 21, 2009, and travelled to Kenya shortly thereafter on what we like to call our "honeymoon for humanity."

Our engagement lasted about nine months, which was just about long enough for Sherri to convince me to spend our honeymoon in one the world's most underdeveloped countries. Sherri couldn't think of a better way to start our married life together than volunteering in Nairobi.

I, on the other hand, was looking forward to white sandy beaches and tropical juices by the pool. So we got to work, trying to combine her desire for substance with my longing for the exact opposite.

Sherri with a group of students

We agreed to take a three-week vacation. The first week would be spent volunteering at a school with impoverished children infected with the HIV virus. The second would be spent at a resort on the magnificent island of Zanzibar in Tanzania, coupled with a safari in the Kenyan Maasai Mara. The third week of our adventure was divided between visiting internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and spending Rosh Hashana at Nairobi's majestic synagogue.

Needless to say, our island getaway and safari were breathtaking, but the time we spent volunteering made impressions on us that will never be forgotten. Agape Hope Centre is the name of the school and orphanage we worked at. While there, we lived with its founders, pastors Maggie Kimaiyo and Oliver Chiraba. Maggie was born in Kenya and Oliver migrated there as a teenager after fleeing recruitment into Congo's child armies.

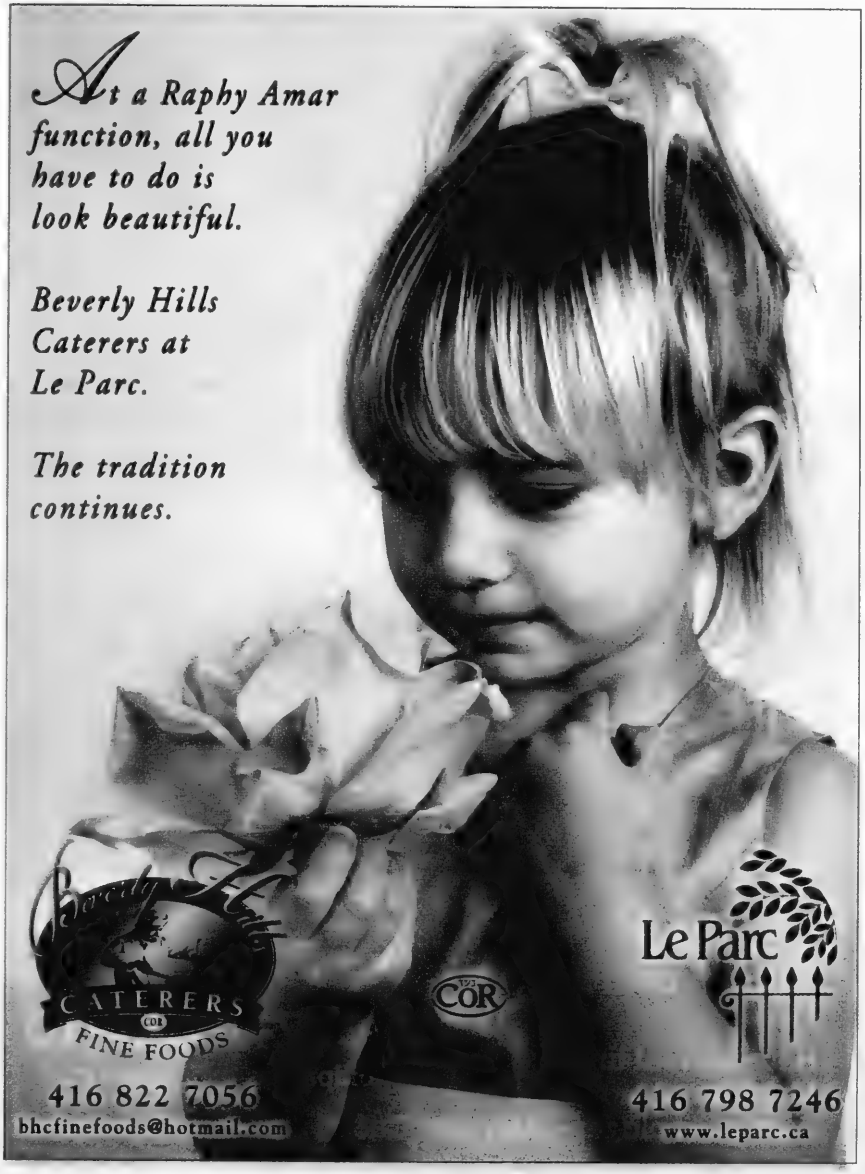
Sherri and Michael

These two people give everything they have and much more to the children they feed, house and educate. Elementary school is free in Kenya, but places such as Agape Hope exist because there are so many schoolchildren who can't afford the cost of shoes, uniforms and books – necessities that aren't supplied by the government. Agape Hope provides these necessities, as well as the only meal these children eat all day. The school is made up of a series of corrugated aluminum shacks, where children sit on wooden benches, above dirt floors and learn from a hodgepodge of donated textbooks. They rarely have the same teacher for more than two weeks at a time and often spend hours not learning at all.

Our days were spent building a shelving unit for the school's books, and teaching math and language arts. Our evenings were spent with Oliver, Maggie and their family, which includes two adopted daughters they saved from ill-equipped mothers. Electricity is often rationed in Nairobi, and there was no running water in the apartment.

We saw poverty in its truest and most depressing form. For one week, we gave up all of the luxuries most Canadians take for granted and lived alongside people who can't afford to eat three square meals a day and children who might not live to see adulthood merely because of the country they were born in. We learned that there's absolutely nothing separating them and us except for chance and the providence we were granted to be born in Canada. And most of all, we learned to take nothing for granted. To this day, those lessons play central roles in our new lives as husband and wife.

Now, about four months removed, we realize that our "honeymoon for humanity" was as important for us as it was for the children we tried to help.



Couple celebrates the 'glory of love'

By ELAINE COHEN
Supplement co-ordinator

"You've got to give a little, take a little and let your poor heart break a little. That's the story of, that's the glory of love..."
The Glory of Love *(composed by Billy Hill, 1936)*

Sybil and Dave Weigensberg recall cheering for Les Canadiens hockey team on their first date at the Montreal Forum.

Like the Habs in the 1950s, the Weigensbergs have rallied as a winning team. For close to six decades, the couple have withstood hard blows, overcome hurdles and celebrated victories.

Marking their 56th wedding anniversary last month, on Jan. 24, the celebrants reflected on their marriage and family life.

Their wedding, officiated by Rabbi Maurice Cohen, took place in 1954 at Congregation Shaare Zion. After honeymooning in New York, the couple settled in an apartment on Plamondon Avenue. When Heather, their firstborn, was nine months old, the elated couple bought a bungalow in Cote St. Luc. Their parental joy continued with the birth of Joel in 1957 and Risa in 1961. When Sybil's mother died, she and Dave welcomed her father into their home.

"He lived with us for 15 years, and twice a day he'd walk to shul. My father never missed a day of davening."

Sybil, 79, and Dave, 86, keep a kosher home, and they remain long-standing members of Congregation Beth Zion in Cote St. Luc.

The Weigensberg children matured beautifully and brought their parents lots of joy. Heather, a registered nurse, derived pleasure from her duties assisting physicians and patients in the case room at the Jewish General Hospital (JGH). Joel acquired ownership of a service station. Risa, a health professional, also works in the obstetrics unit at the JGH. In addition, Dave and Sybil were blessed when Risa gave birth to Ian (Beckenstein), now 19. Heather and Joel also welcomed the birth of their nephew. However, Heather's happiness was short-lived. Ian was only three months old, when Heather died waiting for a liver transplant.

The family was devastated, and the community mourned her death. Three years later, Risa gave birth to a girl and named her Hailee, in memory of Heather.

Sybil and Dave have always maintained an open attitude about Heather's death. "We talk about her often and in spirit she's still very much with us," Sybil says, motioning to a table in the living room with memorabilia related to Heather.

In addition, framed photographs and letters from the grandchildren adorn the Weigensberg's heimish home.

As for coping mechanisms, Sybil credits a support group for putting them on the right track. After Heather's death, they attended a program at the Montreal Children's Hospital and sought solace from other parents who had suffered a similar loss.

"I wouldn't have joined without Dave, but he agreed and it helped," Sybil says.

Throughout the years, Sybil and Dave have maintained a loyal circle of friends.

They have also developed an amazing bond with their grandchildren.

"Whether Risa and the kids come to us or we bring Shabbat dinner to them is immaterial, but the bottom line is we get together," Dave says. "Now the kids are getting older and they are busy with activities, and they are extremely productive."

Regarding their secret for marital longevity, they admit in some ways it was easier for newlyweds in the 1950s than it is for couples today.

"In our era, a wife took care of the house and kids and the husband went to work," Sybil says, "and nobody questioned it."

According to Dave, a marriage can't work unless each partner is willing to give and take a little. "Marriage is a two-way street. Either one gives in or the two have to come to an agreement. If Sybil feels strongly about something and I don't care one way or the other about it, I'll go along with her. She does the same for me. Even trivial disagreements add up, so it pays to save your battles."

Dave and Sybil Weigensberg, in 1954, prepare to sign the ketubah, with Rabbi Maurice Cohen in attendance.

Both were born and brought up in Montreal.

Dave and his siblings lived right across the street from Devonshire Elementary School, while Sybil (née Lubin) and her brother Irving grew up in Outremont. Sybil attended Guy Robert Drummond Elementary School and Strathcona High School.

Dave devoted his early adulthood to military service. A veteran of World War II, he served in Belgium, Holland, France, England and Germany. After the war, he was deployed to Germany, as part of the occupation forces.

Upon his return to Montreal, Dave, along with his partner, Hyman Lambert, opened and operated service stations. Their partnership continued until Dave's retirement in the 1990s.

"Our first station was on McGill Street, and we also had a parking lot," he says, adding throughout the years they ran stations on Somerled Avenue, Cote St. Luc Road and Westminster Avenue.

"Dave would be out of the house by 6 a.m. and would arrive home exhausted at 10 p.m.," Sybil says. "That's why I served the kids their meat meal at lunch, because he'd be too tired to eat a big meal at that hour." Nevertheless, Dave still made time to maintain his garden in the summer and clear snow during the winter.

When queried on how he adapted to retirement after working 16-hour days, Dave pointed to his wife and quipped good-naturedly, "It's easy, she keeps me busy. We're always running and shopping."

Until recently, they spent winters in Florida, and they continue to keep in touch with their friends down south.

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By NATALIE FINGERHUT
Special to The CJN

"Rabbi , will you marry us?"

"I don't think that is legal," Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut replied. My fiancé, Rob and I had taken Rabbi Plaut, my former boss, and his wife out for dinner to ask if he would officiate at our upcoming nuptials.

"But I will marry you to each other." He winked. "Is he the one you e-mailed me about?"

Rabbi Plaut was the first person I had told about Rob, knowing he would be happy that I had finally met a nice Jewish boy.

"Yup. He's the one."

"Does he know what he's in for?" Another wink.

"Is there anything we need to know about the ceremony? I was just at a wedding and the bride broke a glass. Can I do that?" I asked.

"Not in front of me."

He looked at both of us. "The ceremony will take exactly 17 minutes. You will have your shoulders covered, as will everyone up on the bimah. You will repeat exactly what I say, and then you will kiss."

"Seventeen minutes. Really? That's less than a period of hockey." I said.

"Miss Fingerhut," Rabbi Plaut sighed. I had been his research assistant on two of his many books, and we had developed a rapport based on respect and humour with a twist of irreverence. "I have been doing this longer than you have been alive. There are rules and customs that must be followed. Marriage is a serious business."

He looked at his wife, Elizabeth. "We have been married 60 years, you know."

Natalie and Rob

Rob and I got married on Aug. 9, 1998, at Holy Blossom Temple. After we signed the marriage papers in the rabbi's office, Rob pulled the veil over my face and everyone left, leaving me alone with Rabbi Plaut for a moment.

"Rabbi, do I really have to wear this veil. It doesn't really suit me. I'd prefer a baseball hat."

He knew I was nervous and took my hand. "Come, Miss Fingerhut."

"Seventeen minutes and it will be over?"

"Seventeen minutes."

Unfortunately, I remember little of what Rabbi Plaut said during the ceremony. The only words that I recall clearly were: "Brief kiss, brief kiss, brief kiss," in that unforgettable voice.

We wound up kissing the air.

"Thanks for marrying me," I said to him later.

"I didn't marry you, Mrs. Winters."

"Ms. Fingerhut," I corrected him.

"Well, mazel tov, Ms. Fingerhut. I hope you both are as happy as I have been in my marriage."

Eleven years is not quite 60, but so far so good.

Natalie Fingerhut is an editor at University of Toronto Press and a member of the board of the directors at the Miles Nadal JCC.

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Brides

JDate and Scrabble brings singles together

By DAPHNA WUNCH
Special to The CJN

After many years of online dating and setups, I received a message on my JDate account that caught my attention.

As I'm an avid Scrabble player, receiving a "flirt" inviting me to play couldn't have been more appropriate. The flirt was something to the effect of, "I don't know what your idea of a good time is, but mine is a game of Scrabble."

How could this random stranger (who turned out not to be so random) have known? So I replied. We messaged back and forth a couple of times, spoke on the phone and set our first date. On March 23, 2008, I met the man I'd been looking for for so long. We later discovered that we had several friends in common, who all agreed that we were a great match. I guess we don't have a Yente in the bunch.

Bram picked me up and, unbeknownst to him, he took me to one of my favourite restaurants for brunch. It lasted for four hours that were filled with scintillating and sweet conversation, even better than my cream-cheese-filled chocolate French toast. The date went so well that I forgot my doggie bag.

We went out again later that week, and I knew that he was different. Kind, thoughtful, generous, romantic and funny as heck (according to our wedding planner)! Still, being the experienced dater that I was, I waited to get really excited until after we had our fourth date. After countless more dates, meeting the families and surviving a puppy (who had an "accident" on Bram the first night I brought the puppy home), all of his qualities were still in abundance and I knew he was a keeper.

New way to propose

This past July, the story came full circle. Bram challenged me to a game of Scrabble at the cottage. When I got to the board, there were already tiles laid out. I had to read it twice as it said, "Will you marry me?" I couldn't believe it. I gave Bram a huge hug and started to cry. He asked me what my answer was, and I, of course, replied, "Yes." My Scrabble winnings had never been so rewarding, and there wasn't a triple word score in sight.

We've been planning the wedding for several months and are excited to report that it's only a few weeks away. The journey has just begun, and I am looking forward to what our life together has in store.

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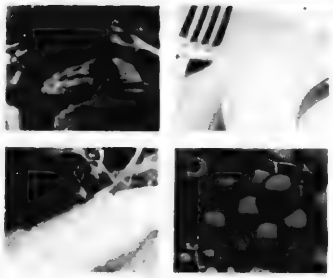

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For your Simchas

Bubbie watches wedding video in real time

By SHARON LEWIN
Special to The CJN

Three weeks before our daughter, Zoe, was to be married at Congregation Rodeph Sholom in New York City, my mother, then 88 years old, fell ill in Vancouver.

Two weeks before the wedding, I flew to Vancouver. Ma was still in the hospital, recovering slowly, but fatigued and weak. It was clear to me that she would not be able to make the trip to New York. Deep disappointment abounded, especially for Zoe, who is very close to her grandmother.

Wringing our hands and lamenting the situation was not helping anyone feel better. My husband, in his calm and persistent manner, found a wedding videographer, Ariel Andres, who streams videos of weddings in real time on a temporary website. His website explains the process and has an excellent FAQ section. We contacted Ariel, who agreed to travel to New York to film the ceremony and the reception. We paid him what we thought was a fair price and covered his hotel stay for the night of the wedding.

Apart from my mother, all of the Vancouver family was able to travel to New York for the wedding. My brother asked his friend, Steve, to come to our mum's house on the wedding day, Aug. 5, 2007, with a laptop computer. In a house with no Internet service, Steve was able to rig something up so that there was a good connection. My mother was able to watch the wedding as it actually occurred. During the reception, many wedding guests, family, and the bride and groom visited the video camera to say a special hello to her.

My mother watched the ceremony, the reception, the speeches and the dancing. My husband ended his speech with, "Ma, we miss you."

My mother complained. She wanted to know why she could only see Zoe from the back during the ceremony. I tried to explain that everyone physically present at the wedding also only saw Zoe from the back because the *chossen* and *kallah* were where they were supposed to be, under the chupah, facing the rabbis.

It wasn't perfect. We would have loved to see Ma's face shining with naches and joy. We would have loved to see her in the beautiful dress my sister helped her buy for the wedding. We would have loved to see her receive the kavod she deserved.

But at our end we knew she could see us and hear the music and watch the dancing. We knew she was as present as she could be, even 4,000 miles away.

And in her house in Vancouver, watching the wedding on the computer, she just kept asking Steve, "How do they get the wedding on that little machine?"

Rose Lewin surrounded by her eight grandchildren.

So much for a good plan...

By SABRINA PROPPER
Special to The CJN

On New Years Eve 2009, during a private candle-lit picnic, Rudy asked me to marry him. Thrilled with visions of our future together, we immediately began discussing dates.

While Rudy was ready to plan a wedding for the upcoming months, I, being a rational individual (as he likes to point out) decided that the "rational" thing to do was to wait until I completed graduate school. While this long time frame created somewhat of a torturous anticipation for both of us, I was also eased by the amount of time we had to plan.

Our planning began almost immediately, within days we were searching out venues. However, once that was chosen, the procrastination set in. Knowing how much time I had, little was done before May, when I left for a semester of school in New York City. However, I did have a plan. Once I arrived home in August, we would have a full month to scout out vendors before the start of school.

Unfortunately, I was quickly reminded that no matter what you plan, life sometimes has a way of throwing you off track.

One week before my arrival home, I received a call from Rudy informing me that he was on his way to the hospital. We soon found out that my healthy, athletic, 30-year-old fiancé was having heart problems. This bizarre set of events sent all of us (friends and family) into complete hysterics. The emotional toll was inconceivable. Needless to say, wedding plans were the last thing on my mind.

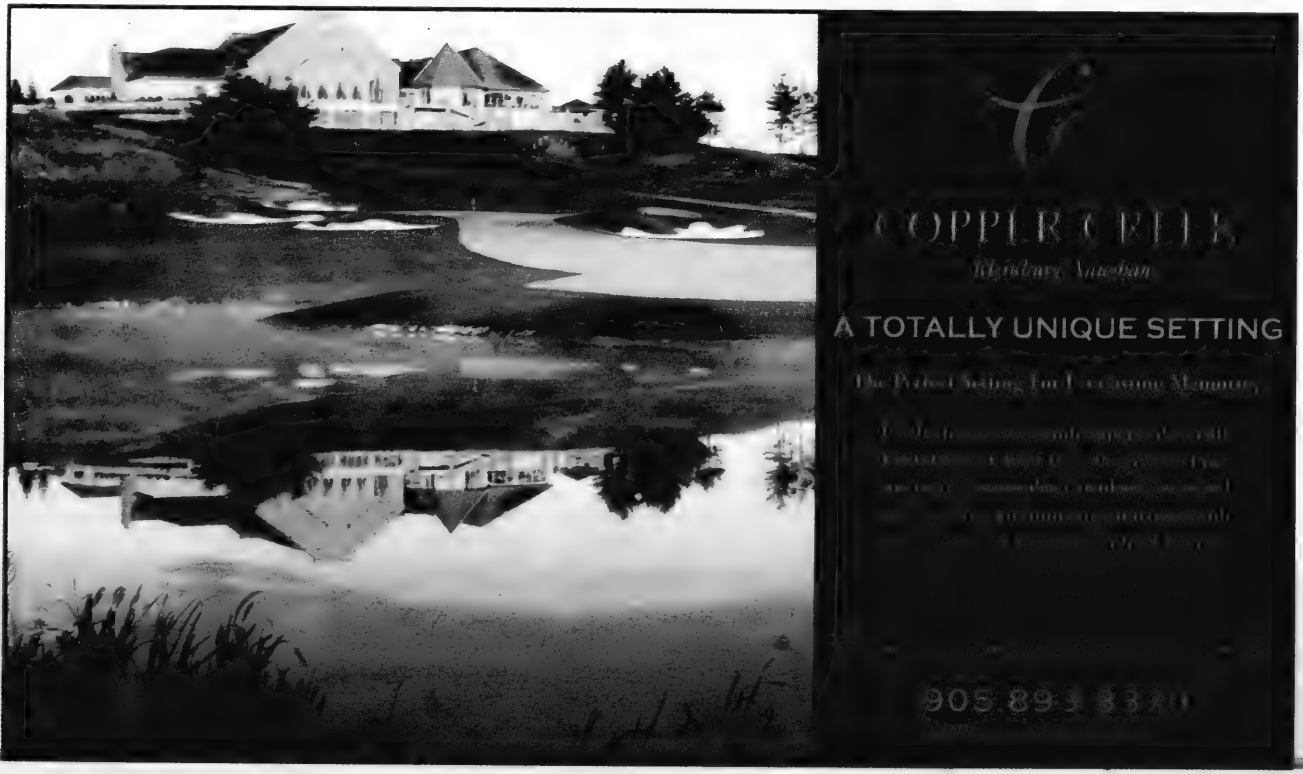
Sabrina and Rudy

While it has taken a couple months, Rudy has thankfully made a full recovery and has been left with nothing less than a tremendous learning experience, and an even greater appreciation for life.

Once everything eventually settled, it was back to the wedding plans – now, with even more excitement and appreciation in knowing that together we had overcome a tremendous challenge. We quickly made a number of other small arrangements.

However, it wasn't long before tragedy stuck again. About a month later, I found myself once again sitting in the hospital, but this time it wasn't for Rudy, it was for my father. Fortunately, he has also fought through his sickness, and since then, our lives have mostly recovered.

Now it's less than one year until the big day, and due to our unfortunate distractions, there is still much to do. However, when our wedding day eventually arrives, we can confidently stand under our chupah, knowing that together we have the strength to confront life's greatest challenges.



Brides

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Brides

It is truly a small world

By JULIE PILTZ
Special to The CJN

I'm from Toronto and Mike was raised in Montreal, but somehow we found each other at McGill University, where we met for the first time in late 2001.

Mike and Julie

During our first year at McGill, we were placed on the same winter carnival team, which is one of the main social events put on by the faculty of management. I spotted Mike from across the room and asked my friend about him. It turns out that she actually knew Mike from their days at Bialik High School. Mike and I became friends, but only started officially dating a year and a half later.

We were dating a few months when Mike came to visit me during summer break in Toronto. It was then that my dad put two and two together and realized where he had seen Mike's last name before. He ran downstairs and returned with a dusty yearbook. He flipped a few pages and came to a high school picture of himself. Then, without a word, he flipped to the very last entry, and there was a picture of Abe Zylberlicht, Mike's dad. It turns out that both of our fathers were in the same grade together at Outremont High School in Montreal.

There were many other interesting connections that Mike and I discovered as time passed. From Mike's dad being an usher at my best friend's parents' wedding to the similarly sounding streets that we grew up on (McMorran and McMurray), you might say that we were truly *bashert*, meant to be together.

At the beginning of 2007, we switched cities as Mike moved to Toronto for graduate school and I stayed in Montreal to complete my schooling. We were apart for a year and a half, but saw each other frequently. His family took good care of me in Montreal, and my family's door was always open to him in Toronto. In the summer of 2008, I moved back to Toronto and we were once again in the same city.

Last June, we had our six-year anniversary. Approximately three weeks later Mike planned a perfect evening and proposed to me in his apartment in Toronto. There were roses everywhere and teddy bears dressed up as a bride and groom.

When I called both of our families with the wonderful news, I had no idea that his family was in town and that everyone I had just spoken to was anxiously waiting for us in a limousine downstairs. Mike truly planned every detail to perfection.

We are currently in the planning phase for an August wedding at a synagogue in Toronto, and celebrate we will! There is so much to do, but we are enjoying every moment and both our families are very supportive. Most importantly, we can't wait to spend the rest of our lives together.

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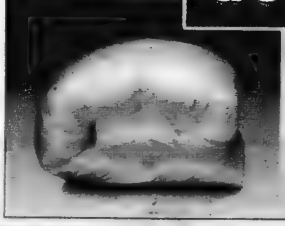

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Brides

The secret to a 60-year marriage

By REBECCA DENNIS
Special to The CJN

They sit on the sofa together, watching TV, holding hands. While she's busy at the kitchen sink, he comes up behind her and nuzzles the back of her neck. Newlyweds? Hardly. On Dec. 31, 2009 Rita and Sol Dennis celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on a Caribbean cruise.

Sol, working as furrier on Spadina, first caught Rita's attention by waving to her through his window. She sat across the bustling avenue proudly designing patterns for coats and dresses. Despite Sol's two left feet, he captured the heart of the beautiful, vibrant designer.

With their vastly different ideas, hobbies and habits, they got married on New Year's Eve 1949, honeymooned in New York City and started to build a family.

While Sol was fishing, playing handball, and drinking with his buddies at the Y, Rita was busy making matching shifts for the girls, Cheryl, Cindy, and Darlene, and surfer trunks for Steven. And while Rita's favourite colours are turquoise, coral and fuchsia, the best way Sol can describe his car is dark. That's because while she has a great flare for colour, Sol is colourblind.

Rita continued to thrive in her design career while Sol diligently built up his business, which supported the family for over 20 years. Dominion Smallwares became a second home and favourite hangout to many, especially on Fridays, when Sol brought the bagels in.

They are both retired now and divide their time between Miami (winters), their condo in Don Mills and their cottage on Lake Simcoe. With their children married, and eight grandchildren ranging in age from 18 to 28, you'd think they'd be busy enough, but they're both very active.

Sol plays golf and volunteers with Man to Man, a prostate cancer support group. Rita sculpts, paints, gardens, swims, rows, cooks and takes exercise classes at the Y. They also have many friends and enjoy a busy social life.

When asked "What is the key to a successful marriage?" Rita answered in one word, "compromise!"

There may be just a little more to it though. A love that lasts 60 years doesn't hurt.

With files from Steven, Madi and Cheryl Dennis

Sol and Rita Dennis with their family

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Grenada offers luxurious, environmentally friendly resorts

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

With its beautiful weather, gorgeous beaches, luxury resorts and friendly people, Grenada makes a wonderful honeymoon destination.

Though measuring only 19 kilometres by 34 kilometres, the island, long known as The Spice Island, boasts as many as 45 beaches, including the three-kilometre long Grand Anse Beach.

There are plenty of romantic, secluded resorts to choose from on this Caribbean island. Here are some that stand out.

* * *

The luxury **Spice Island Beach Resort** has been redesigned after the 2004 hurricane that devastated much of the country. The resort now contains 64 suites, half of which are directly on Grand Anse Beach. Guests can literally step out of their rooms and into the Caribbean Sea. Yet, they still have their own private patio with chaise lounges and hammocks.

The beach is wonderful for romantic strolls, stretching as far as it does. You can walk for about 10 minutes and come across some popular local hangouts where you can share a drink with the English-speaking locals. They are very friendly and will not bother you at all.

The rooms on the other side of the hotel are only a short walk from the beach. They have their own swimming pools in a closed-in terrace, and with their own private entrance and tropical garden, these are ideal rooms for a romantic retreat.

The Grenada Grand Beach Resort

The luxury cinnamon and saffron suites are palatial suites at the water's edge. At 1,440 square feet, they are furnished with a dining table for six and a spacious living room.

The restaurant is built on an open-concept design allowing the cool breeze from the nearby ocean to refresh guests. The menu changes daily on a two-week rotation.

The resort, like several others on the island, is committed to the environment. In December 2009, the Spice Island Beach Resort received the Green Globe Certification Award. The resort uses solar rooftop heaters and energy-efficient fluorescent bulbs throughout the property. It uses water from the sea through an on-property desalinization plant. The main swimming pool and all the private suite pools are purified with a chemical-free system, using salt instead of chlorine. It also maintains a vegetable and herb garden. Spiceislandandbeachresort.com

* * *

For sheer beauty, **Maca Bana** takes the prize. Completely isolated, yet minutes from the capital of St. George's, Maca Bana is ideal for honeymooners. This resort is situated on two acres of hillside land, above the stunning white-sand Magazine Beach, steps away from Grand Anse Beach. It consists of only seven villas: two one-bedroom *banas*, and five deluxe *banas*. Each has its own fully equipped kitchen.

Outside, on a hardwood deck, guests can enjoy their own private Jacuzzi pool or sit in loungers and watch the spectacular scenery.

The fully landscaped tropical garden has a wide variety of plants, flowers and fruits growing, and there's a swimming pool overlooking the beach below.

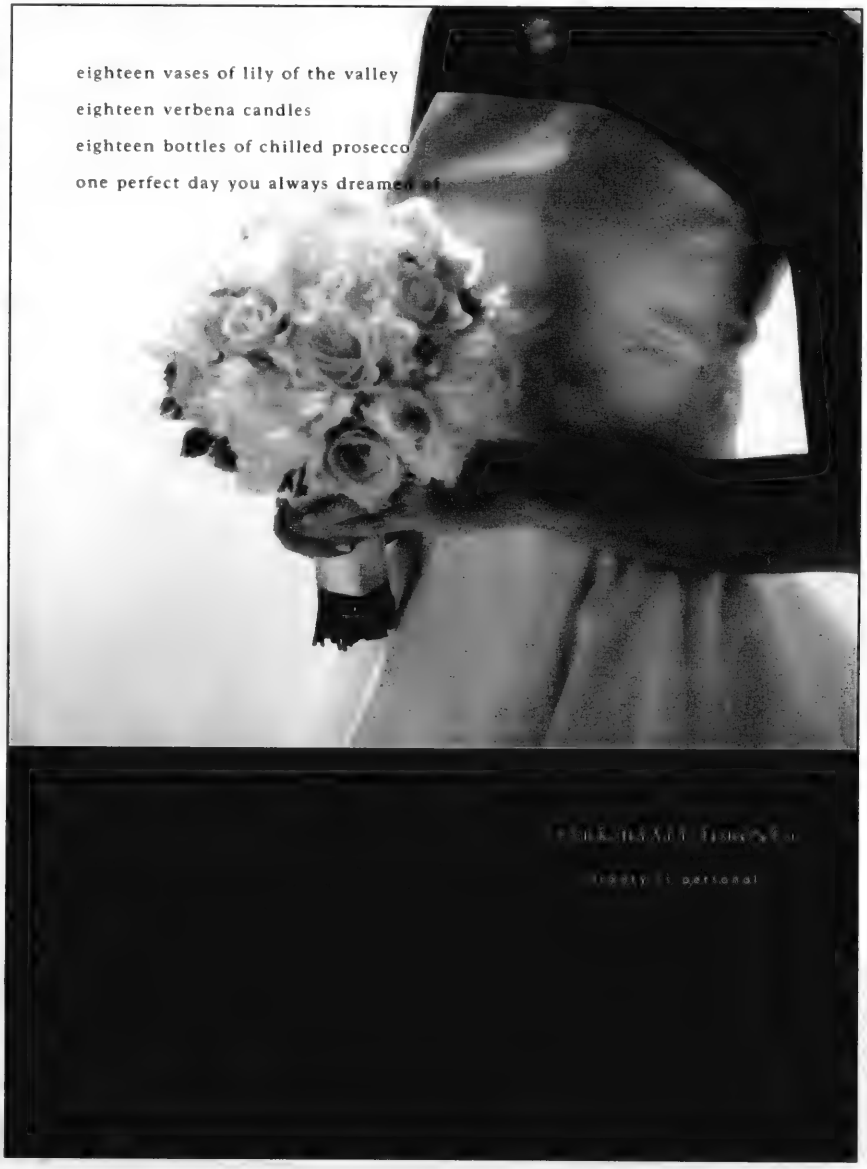
The resort offers private cooking lessons performed right in your kitchen. Learn how to cook scrumptious local specialty dishes like callaloo soup. You can also have your own private art lessons with resident fine artist and resort owner Rebecca Thompson.

Trip Advisor rates Maca Bana as the best resort in Grenada, and it's easy to see why. It is also very green, not just with the lush gardens that surround the villas but also with its environmentally sound policies. The resort has over 100 solar panels, composting, a fruit orchard, plus its own organic farm where fruit and short crops are harvested for The Aquarium, the resort's exclusive restaurant. www.macabana.com

* * *

The Grenada Grand Beach Resort is located on Grand Anse Beach, just 10 minutes away from St. George's. This resort is the largest on the island, boasting 240 luxurious rooms and suites. Each room has a private balcony with a beach or garden view. The resort has two swimming pools, the 300-foot Fantasy Pool with a sunken bar and giant waterfalls; and the 60-foot Sunset Pool, which is more secluded.

Continued on page B16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Brides

Secluded, intimate and ideal for honeymooners

Continued from page B15

The resort has tennis courts and a nine-hole golf course and has special wedding and romance packages. www.grenada-grand.com

Maca Bana's view is truly stunning.

* * *

For something a little bit different try the **Petite Anse Hotel.** This resort is located on the north coast of the island, off the beaten track and relatively undiscovered.

The hotel is one of the newest in Grenada, set to celebrate its first anniversary in March. It has 11 rooms, each with a panoramic view of the beach and Grenada's sister island, Carriacou, in the near distance. The constant breeze from the shore keeps the hotel virtually mosquito free.

Like many other hotels on the island, it is environmentally conscious. The Petite Anse Hotel uses recycled water to hydrate its tropical gardens and uses fruits and vegetables from the Old Plantation House where the owners of the hotel live. www.petiteanse.com

* * *

Seclusion and intimacy seem to be general themes, and the **Bel Air Plantation** on the southeast part of Grenada is no different. Nestled on a hillside overlooking a yacht-filled bay, the Bel Air Plantation has just 11 beautiful villas and cottages, carefully oriented for maximum privacy and each with both sea and bay views.

The resort is nestled within 18 acres of gardens bursting with colour, orchards and wildlife like butterflies and hummingbirds. This resort is a well-hidden paradise. www.belairplantation.com

* * *

La Luna is unique in that its décor offers guests a taste of East Asian style blended with traditional Caribbean. The main club house consists of several low-lying wooden buildings with overhanging thatched roofs.

Like most of the other resorts reviewed here, it is completely secluded, yet only 10 minutes from Maurice Bishop International Airport, on the southwestern tip of the island.

There are 16 one- and two-bedroom cottages, each designed in an open-style plan to take advantage of the ocean view. Even the bathrooms are partially exposed to the natural environment. Each room contains a four-poster Balinese king-size bed.

The resort has a unique Asian spa featuring two treatment rooms, and a tatami room in which massages are done on the floor on a special mat that allows for more stretching and foot pressure using the therapist's body weight.

La Luna also features food products grown in its organic gardens. This resort has been written up in such magazines as *Vogue, Instyle* and even *Sports Illustrated*, and guests have included models Kate Moss and Jerry Hall, although I didn't spot them on my quick visit there. www.laluna.com

A pool-suite room at Spice Island Beach Resort

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A dream come true

By LAURIE TEITELMAN
Special to The CJN

So here I was: tanned, relaxed and anxiously awaiting my boyfriend and his family's arrival at the Fort Lauderdale airport.

My entire family had just come off of the world's largest cruise ship, but somehow, what I was about to experience made the rest of my 2009-10 winter vacation memories momentarily fade away.

Kevin's family arrived – laughs, stories, smiles, hugs, kisses and flowers were all exchanged. We had truly missed each other.

Once the mountains of luggage were checked through, Kevin gathered our entire crew into a circle just outside of the security gate, got down on one knee and *proposed*!

Everyone was instantly cheering, crying, hugging, passing around phones with congratulatory messages, snapping pictures. Love was in the air.

As I glanced at the sparkling ring, I kept asking aloud, "Is this really happening?"

I quickly jumped into Kevin's arms and gave him the biggest hug and kiss, screaming, *Yes*!

Kevin reached over to put the ring on my finger, and his mom yelled, "Not that hand, the other hand!"

I was so surprised. None of us had a clue what was in store for us on this palindrome day 01/02/2010, also my father's birthday! A 1980 bottle of Dom Perignon was popped and passed around for a celebratory "Cheers" in the middle of the airport. (I have never tasted better champagne in my life!)

An airport engagement

The airport also shared in this momentous occasion by providing us with vouchers for our honeymoon – a bonus!

Pictures later revealed that the engagement was at exactly 11:11 a.m. – talk about perfect timing!

Two flights later, we finally arrived back home, but the whirlwind of emotions didn't end there. My now fiancé had set up another surprise: trailing up the stairs of our five-storey New York apartment were 10 dozen red rose petals!

Kevin carried me over the threshold, and to my amazement, there were hundreds more petals spread out on the bed, in the tub, covering the floor, on the couch spelling out "I love you." Chilled champagne was in the sink, and there were freshly cut strawberries and chocolates. Red and white candles in the shape of a huge heart surrounded a dozen more pink roses.

We are so in love.

I felt like a princess in the most romantic movie of all time, but this time, it was real. This is one happy beginning that will last forever. I love you Kevin, you are my dream come true.

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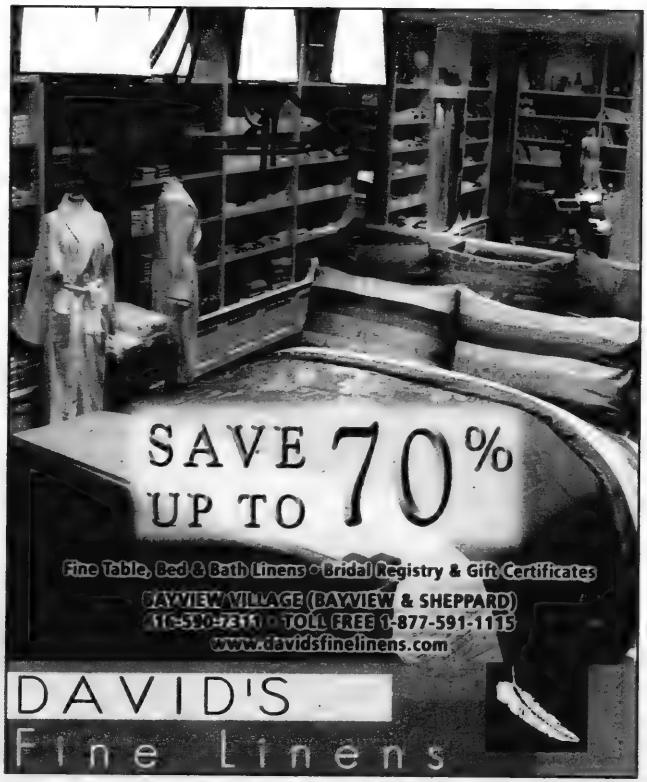
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Brides

Better than I could ever have dreamed

By JENNIFER RALSTON
Special to The CJN

I was never the kind of girl who fantasized about her wedding. Although I figured I'd get married someday, I had never breathlessly imagined the day or the actual experience. Likewise, I hadn't ever put much thought into what kind of Jewish life I would lead. As a Reform kid in the United States, I saw "Jewish" as being mostly about food, holidays and family back in New York and Florida.

By the time I met Paul, the man I would marry, I had been attending holiday services for a number of years at Toronto's Reconstructionist synagogue, Darchei Noam. What a joy to have discovered that there was a branch of Judaism that emphasizes egalitarianism, making Jewish traditions relevant to modern life.

Eventually, it was time to spend several hectic months envisioning the day I'd never really planned. While I was not formally a member at Darchei Noam, it seemed natural to approach the congregation's rabbi, Tina Grimberg, to ask if she would marry us.

Although Paul, having been raised in a Conservative household, had never experienced a Reconstructionist service, when we met with Rabbi Grimberg, we both felt strongly that we had made the right choice. Her thoughtfulness, spirit and profound emotion are immediately clear to anyone who hears her speak.

Paul and I incorporated several modernized, Reconstructionist elements into our wedding ceremony. We added a passage to the accepted Reform ketubah text that pledges mutual trust, respect, devotion and companionship. During the *bedecken*, before Paul lowered the veil over my face, I presented him with a special kippah.

Approaching the chupah, we added another modern twist when it came to the traditional circling of the groom by the bride. Rather than my walking around him seven times, we preferred the idea of circling each other three times each and walking the last circle together, to symbolize mutual protection and the home we were creating for each other.

For the chanting of the seven brachot, we were extremely lucky to hear Phyllis Angel Greenberg, a cantorial soloist at Darchei Noam. She is blessed with a voice that touches your heart with her first note.

Finally, during the ring ceremony, we were able to not only place the rings on each other's fingers, but also say the vows that accompany this act.

My husband and I truly felt this was a relevant, respectful way to begin our marriage. More than a year later, my husband and I still hear from our family and friends that the ceremony really did reflect our personalities. So many people were struck by the beauty in Rabbi Grimberg's words and emotion, by Phyllis' voice and songs, and by updated interpretations of familiar traditions.

Our wedding was still Jewish, and it was still us. And even though I never fantasized about it growing up, I can't imagine having done it any other way.

[Flo Weddings photo]

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Grandparents attend wedding as virtual participants

By FRANK SIMKEVITZ
Special to The CJN

Last year our son, Steven, got married in Toronto. The entire family was excited that our youngest son was getting married to a wonderful young woman, Lihor, whom he met almost 10 years ago.

Everything was shaping up to be a major family affair, except for one thing: Steven's grandparents live in Montreal and his grandfather, suffering from a long-term illness, and grandmother would not be able to travel and share in our simchah.

I was familiar with the technology that would allow a video signal to be captured and sent to another location many kilometres away, and was even aware that it could be accomplished over the Internet. But, I had no idea how to organize it.

We wanted to ensure that the quality of the image and the audio would be much better than you could expect off a webcam. We also knew that what Steven's grandparents really wanted to see would be the ceremony and the first part of the dinner, which would capture some of the speeches. The rest they could easily see on a video afterward. I was hoping that perhaps Steven's grandparents could actually say something to Steven and Lihor in real time over the telephone, not necessarily through two-way video.

I contacted our videographer (Video by Josh), and he was extremely helpful in finding a videographer who had the capability and expertise in video-teleconferencing. He recommended Peter Mykusz. I spoke with Peter at length and described exactly what we were looking for and that his services would only be required for about two to three hours. We determined that having Steven's grandparents actually talk to Steven and Lihor was going to be a little too complicated without getting into much more sophisticated technology. I also learned that the cost would be reasonable, considering the work and technology involved.

We agreed on a fee. Peter explained that all we would have to do is have a computer with Internet access set up at Steven's grandparents' home and he'd provide us with a website to go to in order to download the signal. We arranged all that – a friend of our nephew in Montreal brought over a computer and we arranged for a company to provide Internet access.

The day arrived and Peter showed up and began to set up. Once he was set up, I called Montreal and asked my nephew's friend to log onto the website. I must admit that I was quite nervous (as anyone who was aware of what was happening can attest to), and I was on the phone with Montreal for about half an hour, checking to see if the signal was working at that end.

Under the chupah

Finally, we got the signal to work, both picture and sound, just minutes before the ceremony was to start. I can still remember the excitement in my mother-in-law's (Steven's grandmother) voice when she saw the sanctuary filled with people and could hear and see everything so clearly. I stayed on the phone for a few minutes while the ceremony started, just to ensure that the signal was still there and then finally hung up.

Later, once everyone was in the hall for dinner, we re-established the signal, and Steven's grandparents were able to watch the first half hour of the festivities and see some of the speeches. Just before we signed off, I spoke with my mother-in-law and father-in-law, and could sense the emotion in their voices and how much they appreciated being able to share in the simchah. Steven's grandparents were indeed able to virtually participate in Steven and Lihor's wedding. For that, we are extremely grateful.

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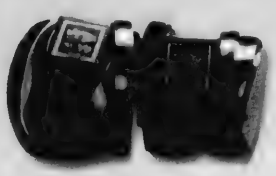

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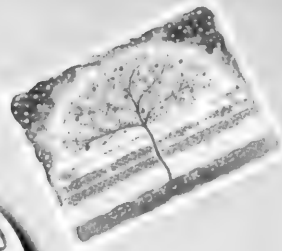

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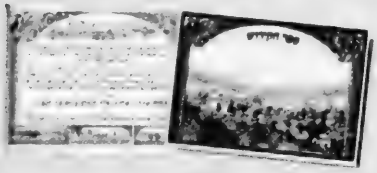

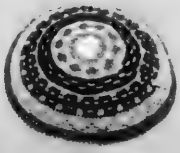

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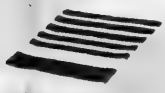

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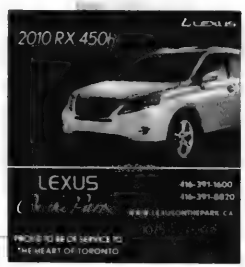

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Purim: a celebration of courage

It is one of the powerful paradoxes of the holiday of Purim that its entire commemorative imagery is one of high-spirited, playful, even clownish celebration. The young girl in pixie-ish costume running through a flowered meadow in the Elah Valley in Israel and Lia Loebenberg's colourful drawing are pleasant proof of this fact.

It is also a testament to the genius of our ancient sages that they steered an exceedingly difficult moment of national rescue into an exceedingly cathartic frolic of festival and delight.

If not for a king's restless night, which set in motion a train of unlikely but purposeful events, the Jews of Persia would have been on the verge of annihilation and destruction.

Of course, among those purposeful events were the actions of Esther that displayed determination and daring. Her decision to address the king, though unsummoned by him, was brave in the extreme. Had the self-absorbed, narcissistic Achashverosh chosen to ignore her, let alone her entreaty, she knew her life was forfeit. Nevertheless, Esther risked her life to save her people.

Purim is fundamentally a celebration of courage.

Being courageous has been both a requirement and a hallmark of every Jewish generation in our history.

Even this week, as we prepare once again to gragger Haman's name into deaf oblivion, our community, and especially our students on campus, have also prepared to stand up to and counter the deviously vile campaign against the Jewish state known as Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).

Editorial

Lia Loebenberg

That campaign is now in its sixth year and continues to spread to campuses across the western world. There is no relent. It is yet another front in the fiendishly obsessive effort to do away with the Jewish state.

As previous years have shown, it's not an easy thing, not a shrug of the shoulders, for students – Jewish and non-Jewish – who care about Israel, who care about freedom of speech on campus, who care about the sanctity of democratic values in our society, to walk past the aggressive IAW propagandists.

For one thing, the propagandists make it difficult to simply walk away. For another, conscience compels one not to walk away.

Not walking away, however, often requires courage.

We commend our students who this year, along with community leaders and umbrella groups such as the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy, local federations and Hillel, are, even now, countering the lie of apartheid with truth.

Jews of all affiliations and levels of involvement feel threatened during IAW, Ryerson University student Esther Mendelsohn told *The CJN* last week.

The Jews of ancient Persia also felt threatened, although to be sure, the threat was of greater immediate physical consequence.

Just as the Jews did then in ancient Persia, Jews today across Canada have assembled as a community, with courage in their hearts, to ward off the enemies who would celebrate the destruction of Israel.

Chag Samayach.

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Netanyahu calls for embargo on Iranian oil - please see page 36

The News in Brief

Canada

Novopharm No More

TORONTO — Israel-based Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, the world's largest generic drug maker, said last week it's changing the name of its Canadian subsidiary Teva Novopharm to Teva Canada, in order to reinforce the company's links to its Israeli parent. Teva Canada employs 1,400 people across Canada, most notably at facilities in Stouffville, Markham and Toronto, Ont. Novopharm was founded 45 years ago by pharmacist Leslie Dan. It was purchased by Teva in 2000.

World

Zundel Leaving Jail

BERLIN — Notorious Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel, 70, will be released from a German prison March 1 after serving a five-year sentence, a German prosecutor said last week. Zundel, a German citizen who was deported from Canada in 2005, received credit for time spent in custody ahead of his 2007 trial. He was jailed for 14 counts of inciting hatred, including contributing hate material to his U.S.-based website. He was able to be charged in Germany because the site was accessible there.

Editor Sentenced

MOSCOW — The editor of an anti-Semitic newspaper was sentenced to three years in a prison colony for inciting ethnic and religious hatred. Konstantin Dushenov, editor of *Russ Pravoslavnaya* (Orthodox Russia), was also banned from publishing for three years, the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union reported. Two other staffers received suspended sentences on the same charge. The men had distributed an anti-Semitic film throughout the country called *Russia With a Knife in the Back*, which is on a list of banned extremist materials.

Chabad Targeted

MUMBAI — A bomb that exploded in a crowded cafe in India was likely meant for a nearby Chabad house, Indian authorities said. The bomb that detonated Feb. 13 in Pune killed nine people and injured 57. The bakery is located several dozen yards from the city's Chabad house. Pune is 125 miles southeast of Mumbai, where in November 2008 a major terror attack at several sites, including the Chabad house, killed 179 people, including six Jewish victims at the Chabad centre. Officials said the Pune Chabad house had been under surveillance by David Headley, a Pakistani American in jail in Chicago for scouting out targets for the Mumbai attack. The Pune bomb was left in a bag by terrorists pretending to be customers, reports said. Police said another man was meant to pick up the bag and take it to the Chabad house, but it exploded when a waiter opened it.

Oldest Jew Dies

ZURICH — Rosa Rein, believed to be the world's oldest Jew, died about a month shy of her 113th birthday. Rein, Switzerland's oldest resident since September 2003, died Feb. 14 in her sleep at an old-age home near Lugano, her residence since a fall in 2001.

Singer wrote *My Sharona* For Jewish Girl

LOS ANGELES — Doug Fieger, the Jewish lead singer of the band The Knack who wrote the 1979 hit *My Sharona* for his Jewish girlfriend, died Feb. 14 in Los Angeles of cancer at age 57.

Doug Fieger

Fieger had been diagnosed with brain tumours in 2006.

The Knack, an all-Jewish, Los Angeles-based group fronted by Fieger, earned praise for their debut 1979 album, *Get the Knack*. Its guitar-based, hook-driven songs were seen as a breath of fresh air in an age of disco and nihilistic punk.

Their signature song was written for Sharona Alperin, who at 17 was 10 years his junior.

Co-written by Knack guitarist Berton Averre, the song's bass-driven beat and shouted, libidinous chorus proved irresistible to club-goers. The band had several other hits, but could never replicate the success of the first album.

In a statement released Feb. 14, Alperin, now a high-end real estate agent in Los Angeles, said, "Doug changed my life forever. He left on Valentine's Day, a day of heart and love, and that was Doug, all heart and love."

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OBITUARY

LEONARD ROSEN ל"ז

Peacefully, surrounded by his family, on Tuesday, February 16, 2010. Beloved husband of Ruth. Loving and devoted father and father-in-law of Reesa and Corey Margolese and Jill Rosen. Loving Zaida of Ari Ryan. Cherished brother and brother-in-law of Jack and the late Harriet Budovitch, and brother-in-law of Fred and Margarita Posner. Beloved and adored uncle of Joel and Perry Budovitch; Jason, Aaron, Carrie and David Posner. Leonard will be sadly missed by his family and all of those whose lives he touched.

The family would like to thank the doctors, nurses and staff of the CCU at the Jewish General Hospital for their extraordinary care and compassion. Funeral service took place from Paperman & Sons, on Thursday, February 18.

Donations in Leonard's memory may be made to the Hope & Cope Fund or to the CCU c/o the Jewish General Hospital Foundation, (514) 340-8251.

The Canadian Jewish news

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Minister expresses 'solidarity' with Israel

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Junior Foreign Affairs Minister Peter Kent said his widely publicized statement that "an attack on Israel is considered an attack on Canada" was made in the context of the "bellicosity" of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Iran's continuing nuclear program.

It was also intended as a message "of solidarity with the only true democracy in the Middle East and as a basic statement of principle," Kent said in an interview with *The CJN*.

His comments "paraphrase what the prime minister and others in our cabinet have been saying… It sets out clearly and restates the government's position" regarding the threat posed by a nuclear Iran.

"Any potential aggressor should be clear of Canada's position. Any potential aggressor should be well aware this is not lip service," he said.

Peter Kent

In an interview published on Feb. 12, the Conservative MP for Thornhill told *Shalom Life*, "Prime Minister [Stephen] Harper has made it quite clear for some time now and has regularly stated that an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada."

He told the online magazine, which serves the Israeli expatriate community, that Israel is considered an ally of Canada.

"We work with our allies. We regularly convey our concern in a variety of ways, at the United Nations as well as one on one. Foreign Minister [Lawrence] Cannon made a point last year of travelling all the way to Turkey for a regional conference simply so he could confront directly and personally [Iranian] Foreign Minister [Manouchehr] Mottaki to convey our concern at the time with regards to the brutal repression after the [Iranian] election."

He told *Shalom Life* that Canada believes the Iranian regime is a threat not just to its own people, but also to the countries surrounding it, including Israel.

Kent told *The CJN* Canada supports a broad international effort behind enhanced sanctions targeting Iran.

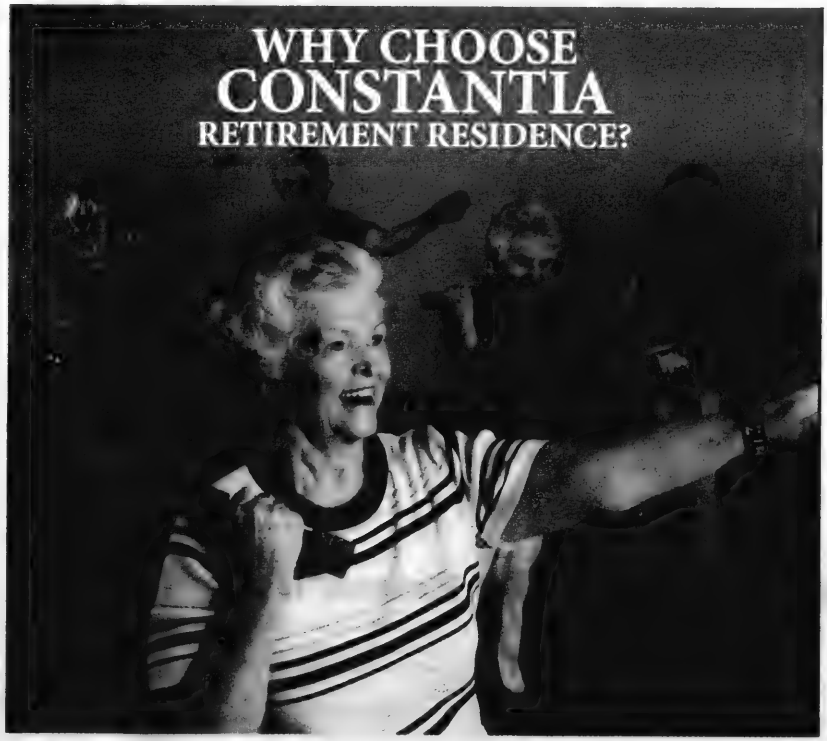
"Unilateral sanctions tend not to work," he said. "Canada, the UN Security Council and countries like Russia are coming together now, and there seems to be an agreement that the tougher talk and harder line against Iran would be timely."

Kent said his statement to *Shalom Life* was consistent with previous Canadian foreign policy. "It is the same solidarity we expressed a year ago when Israel was subjected to an unacceptable barrage of rockets from Gaza," he said, and the same stance taken during the 2006 Lebanon war.

In May 2008, in a speech marking Israel's 60th anniversary, Harper said, "Those who threaten Israel also threaten Canada, because, as the last world war showed, hate-fuelled bigotry against some is ultimately a threat to us all, and must be resisted wherever it may lurk."

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), the Jewish community's advocacy arm on Israel, said he was pleased with Kent's statement. "We are increasingly happy that the nature of the relationship is being fleshed out in particular terms, so it is clear what the nature of the bilateral relationship is…

"I think what it means is that an attack on Israel would trigger a set of responses from Canada consistent with an ally being attacked," as opposed to a more general response undertaken when a country with less close ties was in a conflict, he said.



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"Our mission is service to the Jewish people and service to the world," Menahem Ben-Sasson, president of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, (Jan. 31, 2010).

* * *

Hebrew University's medical sciences facilities are on the Ein Kerem campus on the far western hillside of Jerusalem.

Many people know of the Hadassah Hospital, the anchor of the campus, and of the 12 famous stained-glass Chagall windows in the small synagogue adjacent to the hospital.

But the campus, carved onto the hilltop high above the historically storied valley below, comprises much more than the hospital.

The Ein Kerem campus houses five distinct medical faculties: medicine, dentistry, nursing, occupational therapy and pharmacy. It is the largest educational institute for medical sciences in Israel. The 3,500 students who study there come from all ethnic and socio-economic groups of Israeli society as well as, of course, from around the world.

The place hums from all directions with healing-related activity. It is impossible not to sense the electricity in the super-charged atmosphere of this impossibly busy place that constantly flashes the message: life must be saved.

The largest single institute for medical research on the campus, indeed in the country, is a relatively new one. And it is one in which Canada and Canadian scientists are integrally involved: IMRIC.

The acronym stands for The Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada. It is a bold, imaginative, innovative approach to trying to save lives. More than 100 scientists work there in a multidisciplinary framework, each striving to understand some aspect, ever smaller, ever more particular, but ever more profoundly significant of the many diseases that fell human beings.

From the editor's desk...

IMRIC scientists are Israelis and Canadians. Together they are pushing past and through the terrain of what we know today into what we must know tomorrow if humanity is to vanquish cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases, infectious diseases and alas, many, many others.

Earlier this month in Jerusalem, *The CJN* visited with some of the IMRIC researchers.

Prof. David Lichtstein is the chair of IMRIC. His credentials are as long as a legal-size notepad. The former chair of the department of physiology and the former president of the Israel Society for Physiology and Pharmacology knows a great deal, inter alia, about intracellular activities and the interaction of drugs at the molecular and cellular level. But that was not the subject of our discussion nor did we ever come close to it.

David Lichtstein

Rather, the diminutive scholar, researcher and scientist quietly but dreamily spoke of his hopes for IMRIC, its importance to the world of medicine, its importance to everyone.

"We are trying to establish something for the long run," Lichtstein said. And then, echoing the words and the aspirations of Hebrew University president Menahem Ben-Sasson, and even his colleague, Dr. Aharon (Ronnie) Friedman, dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, he said, "We have the possibility of achieving significant results for the entire world."

Over the course of a singularly exciting day, *The CJN* met with nine IMRIC scientists. Not once through an entire day of introductions, discussions, note-taking and reflection did the feeling leave this writer that vastly exciting, good and important work is being done there.

Space does not permit even the most superficial of elaborations into any of their research. The following are two brief examples of aspects of their work.

Prof. Shosh Ravid at the department of biochemistry and molecular biology sparkled with emotion as she told of her discovery of a short peptide tail in an amino acid actually causing a diseased cancer cell to "commit suicide."

"We can possibly kill the diseased cell, while enabling the good cells to survive," she said.

Dr. Rotem Karni, also of the department of biochemistry and molecular biology somewhat dryly offered that certain aspects of his research into the gene-splicing factors that regulate the behaviour of cancerous cells may yield new tools for diagnosis. His lab has discovered that the appearance of a certain splicing factor may be treatable with already established, identifiable drugs.

The Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) has taken upon itself the daunting task of raising some $50 million to ensure IMRIC's permanence. CFHU national president Nathan Lindenberg told *The CJN* last summer that raising those funds was the most significant undertaking in CFHU's history. It could also be a significant undertaking for the future of medical history.

–MBD

To commemorate the 85th anniversary of the opening of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The CJN *was recently invited by Canadian Friends of Hebrew University to travel to Jerusalem, visit the university and meet and engage with some of its scholars, researchers and teachers.*

See]N

PHYSICS CONTEST WINNERS

The students who won Weizmann Canada's Shalheveth Freier Physics Tournament, held Feb. 17 at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Wallenberg campus on Wilmington Avenue, pose with their entry. Each team is asked to build a safe, based on the laws of physics, using simple materials. The winning team includes students from both Tanenbaum CHAT campuses. From left are Garrett Baron, Mattan Lustgarten, Ari Feinberg, Mark Karantayer and Josh Martow, who will go to Israel later this month for the international physics competition at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

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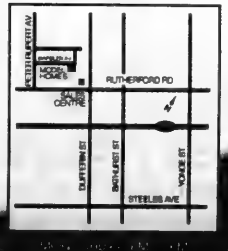

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Greater Toronto Area

Prayer service shows solidarity with Kotel women

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

A prayer service for Rosh Chodesh Adar brought together participants from all streams of the community in support of women who were arrested recently at the Kotel in Jerusalem for wearing tallits.

The celebration of religious pluralism, held Feb. 14 at the Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services, included silent prayers, *tchinas* (prayers written for and by women), a performance by Kol Neshama and a talk by educator and *CJN* columnist Rachael Turkienicz.

Rachael Turkienicz

In introducing the one-hour program, Rabbi Michal Shekel, said that participants hold different siddurs and practise Judaism differently, "but our love for Judaism is [the same.] We are different, yet we stand together as Jews.

"We are here in support of all Jews to express their Judaism. We are here despite our differences, and we all embrace religious pluralism. We are here because our love of tfillah is as essential to the Jewish soul as breathing is to the human body."

Turkienicz said that what was incredible to her about the gathering was that when she looked around, she saw "a tapestry of tallits and no tallits, and both men and women."

What triggered the gathering, she said, was an event at the Kotel in January, when members of Women of the Wall were arrested for wearing tallits. "We have the challenge of living in a world of different Jewish expression."

She said that when God spoke on Mount Sinai, His words were split into 70 tongues. "This was all the languages of existence, the totality of human understanding. Although God spoke one verse, it contained a variety of human understanding.

"A message came from God, and was received by each person differently. It was not supposed to mean the same thing [to everyone.]"

When a community is bonded, Turkienicz said, "then we [have] stability. When we look around the room and notice something that makes us uncomfortable, we have to remember that it is not about our comfort levels, but about our vision and our Torah."

Video footage casts doubt on assault at York U

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Video footage has cast doubts on the accuracy of reports that two Jewish students were assaulted during a pro-Israel event at York University earlier this month, a campus official said.

"From a physical assault perspective, you definitely see that no such thing was occurring," Alex Bilyk, York's director of media relations, said of the footage taken by security cameras of a Feb. 1 event to raise awareness for kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

The video, made available to *The CJN*, shows animated discussions and gesturing between Jewish and pro-Palestinian students. The recording shows that some 30 students were involved in all.

Police weren't called, but campus security intervened. The Jewish students lodged a complaint with the university's student conduct and dispute resolution office, and York appointed an adjudicator to investigate.

York did refer the case to the Toronto Police hate crimes unit, but no charges were laid.

"The police are very helpful in any kind of incident. In this particular case, we were watching the video and didn't have any audio. There were allegations that some statements may have been made," Bilyk said.

York invited local reporters to view the video.

Tyler Golden, co-president of Hasbara Fellowships at York, said earlier this month that about 50 activists and protesters surrounded 20 or so Jewish students and began chanting anti-Israel and anti-Semitic slurs.

He said two Jewish students were slapped, one on the arm and the other across the face.

Golden said Hasbara members have yet to see the security footage.

"It doesn't seem like we can comment on that unless we see the video footage," he said, adding that Hasbara is in the process of viewing the footage.

With files from JTA

UJA campaign closes as donations reach $64M

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The world has a lot to learn from Israel, Dan Senor told an audience of 700 at last week's UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's campaign closing event.

His recently published book, *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* – which he co-wrote with Jerusalem-based Saul Singer – was never intended for Jews, he said.

Senor and Singer, who are brothers-in-law, thought the book would have "prescriptive value," Senor said at the Feb. 16 event at Events on the Park, the site of the former Inn on the Park.

The projected total for this year's UJA campaign – once all pledges are in – is $64 million, announced Ken Tanenbaum, co-chair of the 2010 campaign with Debbie Kimel.

Kimel said that the campaign attracted more than 2,100 new donors as well as donors who have not contributed for several years, representing more than $2.5 million of the total.

Senor, who grew up in Toronto and has an MBA from Harvard Business School, is now an adjunct senior fellow for Middle East studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. He served as a Pentagon and White House adviser based in Qatar from 2003 to 2004, and was one of the longest-serving civilians in Iraq.

In his talk, Senor noted that, on a per capita basis, Israel attracts more venture capital than any other country in the world.

"People often ask, 'what if this is just a confluence of factors, and what if they all disappear?' " Senor said, citing the global technology boom in the 1990s, the influx of Jewish immigrants – many with PhDs in engineering – from the former Soviet Union to Israel, and the sense of hope arising from the Oslo peace process.

In fact, those factors did disappear, he said. "One would expect perhaps global venture capital to level off or decline. Neither happened."

Dan Senor *[Jen Arron photo]*

A group of Harvard business students who Senor took to Israel in 2001 wanted to know how Israel pulled off its successes in a state of war, with virtually no natural resources, he recalled.

Real economic growth comes from productivity gains, Senor explained. "Sustained productivity gains, at the end of the day, can only come from true innovation, and the biggest driver for that innovation is technological innovation. Typically, technological innovation happens at the small enterprise level.

"Israel is the quintessential start-up nation."

Although people often attribute Israel's success to Jews being smart or good at business, "we certainly don't have the monopoly on being smart," Senor said. "It's not 'smart' or 'not smart.' It's that [other countries] don't teach their young people how to be risk takers. They don't have a culture where there's a tolerance of failure."

Immigrants, he noted, are the "quintessential entrepreneurs. They know what it's like to have to start over."

In Israel, compulsory military service also plays a role in fostering entrepreneurism, Senor believes. "[Israelis] learn at a very young age what it means to lead, and to deal with imperfect information... [Israel's] military had to be nimble, had to learn to move quickly, and not constantly check with headquarters... There's a complete tolerance in the military for junior people to challenge the decisions made by senior people."

Israel has come up with "jaw-dropping solutions to really big problems," said Senor, citing as one example the camera pill that that shows the inside of patients' intestinal tracts.

In a brief address, Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, said that Israel "gives us many reasons to be proud, but sometimes we feel that when we try to approach others outside our extended family, we don't manage to pass on this pride, and what's left is related to the conflict."

Gissin said that Senor's message is relevant, as is the work Israel has been doing in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake, with the support of UJA.

The evening also included entertainment by the band The Midway State, and mentalist Haim Goldenberg.

Haitian-born Toronto nurse Ketty Jean-Batiste, whose family lost friends in the earthquake, thanked the Jewish community for its support.

Sherry Firestone and Jeff Rosenthal will take over from Kimel and Tanenbaum as chairs of the 2011 campaign, and Sarena Koschitzky will take over from Andrea Cohen as chair of UJA Women's Philanthropy.

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Dr. Beth Abramson, MD, FRCPC, FACC

Dr. Abramson graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto. She holds fellowships in internal medicine from the American College of Physicians, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in both internal medicine and cardiology and is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology.

Her present position is director of the cardiac prevention and rehab centre and women's cardiovascular health in the division of cardiology at St. Michael's Hospital. She is associate professor of the department of medicine at the University of Toronto. Her major research interests include prevention of coronary disease in both men and women, evaluation of women's cardiac health needs and the role of female sex hormones in the cardiovascular system.

She is a national spokesperson for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, as well as a member of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society. She spends much of her time educating the public on heart health and prevention.

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April 8, 2010
8 - 10 p.m.
Holy Blossom Synagogue
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Canada, the G8 and Iran

Last week, the International Atomic Energy Agency issued a report saying it had evidence of "past or current undisclosed activities" by Iran to build a nuclear warhead. The IAEA statement should, finally, put paid to the delusion that Tehran has only peaceful purposes in mind for its nuclear enterprise.

Iran steadfastly denies that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons. The issue however, is no longer the truth of Iran's assertions. The issue now is what to do with Iranian prevarications that even the United Nations – as expressed through the voice of its atomic energy watchdog – can no longer tolerate. The more pressing issue is how to punish Iran for the shameless patency of those prevarications. And the most pressing issue of all is how to stop the Iranian race to nuclear arms.

In light of the darkening news about Iran, the United States appears determined to lead the international effort for a fourth round of UN sanctions against Tehran. Even Russia may be willing now to join in the American-led effort.

The Canadian government has minced no words regarding the threat posed by Tehran. Two weeks ago, after Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced an increase in his country's uranium enrichment effort, Prime Minister Stephen Harper called on Iran to halt enrichment of its uranium.

"It is time for Iran to end its defiance of the international community, suspend its enrichment activity and take immediate steps toward transparency and compliance by halting the construction of new enrichment sites and fully co-operating with the International Atomic Energy Agency," Harper said.

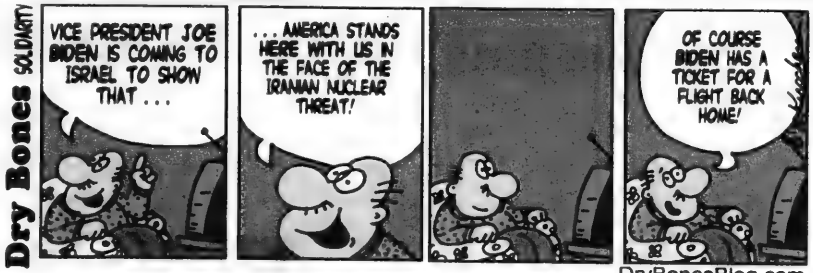
The prime minister took pains to differentiate between the government and the people of Iran. "While we are concerned about the regime in Tehran, our solidarity, for Canadians, is with the great Iranian people who continue to suffer terrible rights abuses, and our solidarity is with them going forward," Harper said. Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon elaborated upon the prime minister's promise to take advantage of Canada's G8 presidency at the meeting of the group in Gatineau, Que., in late March to focus world attention on Iran.

"Canada and the international community will not accept the regime's latest moves, which bring Iran considerably closer to possessing weapons-grade material," Cannon said. "Iran must suspend its enrichment activity and take immediate steps toward transparency and compliance."

To its credit, Canada understands that the spectre of a nuclear-armed Iran is not simply a problem for Israel, the country its leaders have said should be "wiped from the map." The regime in Tehran threatens the peace and the stability of the entire world. Perhaps Canada can lead the G8 to an effective, international response on Iran?

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres ended a two-day visit to Rome by saying that he would welcome King Hussein of Jordan in Jerusalem and offering to go to Amman for peace talks. Peres made the comments at a press conference with Italian prime minister Bettino Craxi. Peres also had a 40-minute meeting with Pope John Paul II, in which they discussed the Middle East and Jewish-Christian relations.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Don't bash haredim

As satisfying as it may feel to some, we won't achieve Jewish unity by bashing haredim and Orthodoxy ("Minority decides who makes a good Jew" and "Ruth's conversion not valid today," letters, Feb 11). The importance of the conversion issue pales in comparison to the issue of Jewish survival in the face of assimilation and intermarriage. Thousands enter the Jewish People through the conversion door yearly, while hundreds of thousands are quietly slipping out the back door. Tellingly, those streams of Judaism that have watered down their conversion standards are the ones who are losing Jews the fastest.

There is a deeper meaning and purpose to being Jewish that goes beyond being persecuted together or being a mutual benefit society, even in aid of such good causes as supporting Israel. We don't make Judaism more attractive or durable in the long run by loosening the connection with that meaning and purpose. Maybe we should ask if we could actually learn something from those segments of Judaism that have been successful in inculcating in the majority of their children a driving passion for living an observant Jewish life, committed to Jewish values, including the universal global vision that is part of the package.

Michael Orr
Toronto

* * *

Many approaches to Judaism

The Feb. 4 edition included a warning by Rabbi Michael Melchior about a "conversion catastrophe" and an eloquent plea for reasonableness by Rabbi Reuven Bulka ("Rabbi warns of conversion 'catastrophe'" and "Some observations on the conversion crisis"). They are right! For better or worse, the tiny world Jewish community approaches Judaism in many different ways. A large majority of Israel's Jews are secular, for example. No Jew has the right to force his or her way of doing things on other Jews or the community at large. In the case of Israel, this results from some decisions made around the founding of the state that have serious consequences today. At some point, a national unity coalition will have to be formed and will have to reform the electoral system, abandoning the purely proportional system that allows a tiny haredi tail to wag the national dog.

In Montreal, reason and goodwill usually prevail. When the directors of the YM-YWHA decided to open to some extent on Shabbat, compromises were made, but their attempt to serve the full community, rather than just the Orthodox, prevailed. The non-Orthodox communities, of which I am a member, are now more willing to stand up for our rights. Now, even modern Orthodox clergy are in the uncomfortable position of having to oppose haredi actions.

Ken Frankel
Montreal

Dry Bones
HOPES AND PRAYERS
NATO FORCES ARE STRIKING TALIBAN STRONGHOLDS IN AFGHANISTAN.
THE CAREFULLY PLANNED ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED WITH
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HOPES AND PRAYERS THAT, WHEN IT'S OVER . . .
HE WON'T END HIMSELF GETTING "SOLDSTONED".

* * *

Ruth's conversion is valid today

David Gabay wrote that in the Tanach, Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law accepted Ruth's conversion to Judaism based solely on Ruth's famous words: "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" ("Ruth's conversion not valid today," letters, Feb. 11) Gabay uses this as proof of Ruth's speedy conversion and takes our rabbis to task for not being more lenient in accepting potential converts.

The Talmud says in Yevamot 47 that we learn from the story of Naomi and Ruth the necessity for the convert to commit him or herself to all the commandments of the Torah. The Talmud says that Ruth, in response to Naomi's assertion that to be a Jew one must keep all 613 commandments, responded, "Your people are my people." (Ruth 1:16) According to Rav Yitzchak Arieli, co-founder and mashgiach at Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav in Jerusalem, we see from Ruth's response that Jewish peoplehood is synonymous with keeping the commandments. To join the Jewish People while not accepting the entire package deal of 613 commandments has no basis in Jewish jurisprudence, and anyone who does so cannot be classified as a Jewish convert.

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua
Montreal

* * *

BJCC closure

The article about the closure of the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre reveals only the tip of the iceberg. Despite the brand new daycare, our children's needs have been overlooked, and the new building is both difficult to access physically and lacking affordable family programs ("With BJCC closed, members have new fitness routines," health supplement, Feb. 4). Without the large, sunny lobby, children's museum, art gallery, cafeteria and drop-in Shabbat and holiday programs – including the free programs held every year on Dec. 25 – there is little to attract families with young kids.

Susan Lapell
Toronto

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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The story of the Book of Esther: an analysis

The following text was recently discovered among ancient manuscripts and smuggled out of Tehran.

By ANONYMOUS

Translated from ancient Persian
by Curt Leviant

Our community of Jews here in Shushan, Persia, has just had the pleasure of reading the newly written account of events that occurred last year, in 350 BCE, in our capital city and in surrounding towns in the kingdom of Achashverosh: how an evil man, Haman, rose up against us; and, with the help of Mordechai and Queen Esther, we were able to defeat him and all our enemies and make merry on the great day which we now call Purim.

This wonderful scroll, megillah in Hebrew, or the Book of Esther, has circulated widely, and I now offer you my view of this narrative.

The Book of Esther is an outstanding example of storytelling and will surely find a place in every Jewish household. The tale contains all the timeless literary devices which we Persian Jews love so much: a well-made plot, conflict and suspense, dramatic irony, believable characters, foreshadowing and a harmonious structure.

At the opening royal feast, we meet Achashverosh, the mighty king of Persia and see how hastily he disposes of his wife, Queen Vashti, when she disobeys him, foreshadowing the similar dispatch with which he later orders the Jews condemned to death.

Our king does not enjoy being lonely, so he must have a queen. (At this point, I must modestly say that I gave him the suggestion for a beauty contest.) Once it is announced, our lovely Esther – advised by her uncle and guardian, Mordechai, not to reveal her Jewishness – wins and marries the monarch. Soon Mordechai (end of Chapter 2), a minor court official, unearths an assassination plot against the king. Instead of informing Achashverosh directly, Mordechai instructs Esther to bring the news. Thus both Mordechai and Esther can win favour with the ruler.

Mordechai's discovery, inscribed in the king's Book of Chronicles, is pertinent to the story's development.

The main protagonists – the foolish king, the lovely Esther, the wise Mordechai – have made their appearance. Now, for conflict and tension, enter the villain, Haman, in Chapter 3. Everyone must bow to him, but Mordechai refuses. When Haman realizes that Mordechai does not bow because he is a Jew, he plans to destroy all the Jews. Lots – *purim* in Hebrew – are cast, and the pre-spring month of Adar is chosen.

To vent his hatred against one recalcitrant Jew, why should Haman want to kill all the Jews? But since earlier in the story, one woman's action prompted a law for all women, a precedent has been set for mass retaliation for an individual's misdemeanour.

Since the insubordinate Mordechai is Jewish, Haman infers that the entire Jewish People are disobedient, and moreover, their "laws are different" (3:8). Haman persuades the king by promising to give a great deal of silver to the royal treasury – booty from the slain Jews.

The chapter concludes: "The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Shushan was perplexed..." (3:15) – a hint that people in our great city realized that a wrong had been committed against the Jews.

In contrast to the opening moods of revelry, Chapter 4 begins with mourning and pathos. Mordechai tells Esther of the coming disaster and asks her to intercede. Fearing for her own life, she hesitates, for no one may come before the king uninvited, on pain of death. Mordechai counters that the fate of Esther and the Jews is one. If she remains silent now, salvation will come from elsewhere; and perhaps it is for this very reason that Esther has been made queen.

Esther asks the Jews in Shushan to fast for three days, after which she will go to the king. Here, at mid-point in the story (5:2), when Esther is before the king, the reversal starts: the heroes' rise, and the villain Haman's fall, commence.

But Esther does not state her request immediately. That evening, she prepares a banquet for the king, Haman and herself. She postpones her appeal until the following day, when all three will dine again. This artful postponement adds suspense and permits the inclusion of yet another strand in the story.

After Esther's invitation, we read that Haman was happy (5:9) – a wonderful bit of dramatic irony, for the villain does not suspect that his downfall is imminent. Interestingly, each of the male protagonists has a woman involved with plot movement: King Achashverosh-

Vashti, Mordechai-Esther, Haman-Zeresh. Haman takes his wife's suggestion to prepare a high gallows for Mordechai.

The craft of good narrative demands that some strands that later intersect should at first be left dangling. Three appear at the beginning of Chapter 6: Can Esther save the Jews at the banquet? Will Haman hang Mordechai? Has Mordechai's service to the king been forgotten?

The writer picks up strand number 3. A few hours after having dined with Esther, the insomniac king calls for the *Book of Chronicles* and realizes that Mordechai has not been adequately rewarded for saving his life. The king asks who is in the court. Fortunately, it is Haman, about to request that Mordechai be hanged for treason. At this moment, the villain and hero are at delicious cross-purposes.

The king asks Haman how to bestow honours upon a deserving man. The vain Haman, assuming he's being considered, suggests something grand: that man should ride, royally clad, on horseback, throughout Shushan, while all praise him.

"Then do so to Mordechai," the king tells Haman. And Haman, so high-spirited the previous day, hastens home in mourning (6:12).

Now Zeresh changes her mind. "Since Mordechai is a Jew," she tells Haman, "you don't have a ghost of a chance." At once, the king's messenger enters and hastens Haman to Esther's second banquet.

Note that this little section begins with Haman hastening home (6:12), and concludes with his being hastened away. Another example of the story's irony is these carefully chosen words, a tongue-in-cheek parallel to the speed with which the couriers "hastened" (3:15) to spread the edict for the Jews' destruction.

At the second banquet, Esther petitions for the lives of her people. The king asks who the perpetrator of the crime is. Esther points to Haman. Achashverosh, enraged, leaves. Haman falls on Esther's couch to beg for mercy. When the king returns, he assumes Haman is attacking the queen and orders Haman hanged on the gallows built for Mordechai.

At the close of the narrative, the villain has been destroyed, but the evil he has set into motion must be stopped. But Persian law states that a royal edict cannot be recalled. The most the king can do is to give the Jews the right of self-defence. Again, the couriers hasten to deliver the news.

Haste and speed are elements in the latter part of this tale. During the first half of the Book of Esther, time moves at a leisurely pace. The beginning is either measured in months – the 180-day banquet, the 12 months of purification during the beauty contest – or in indefinite time gaps. Gradually, however, time becomes compressed. When Esther decides to go to the king, time is measured by days. From then on, events follow not by the day, but by the hour. Action occurs swiftly around the clock.

Afternoon: Esther before the king.
Evening: the first banquet.
Night: The king's insomnia.
Middle of the night: Haman in the king's chamber.
Morning: Honouring of Mordechai.
Noontime: The crucial second banquet.
Afternoon: Haman's demise, the new edict in favour of the Jews. Mordechai becomes the king's right-hand man.

Ironic reversal is a favourite literary device of the author. Haman comes to bury Mordechai, not to praise him, yet ends up honouring, not hanging him. The very gallows prepared for Mordechai are used to hang Haman. The Jews' day of doom turns into a day of joy. Whereas before "Shushan was perplexed," now our city "Shushan rejoiced."

In Chapter 9, the story ends. The Jews defend themselves and are victorious. To the end of the tale an epilogue is appended. Purim is established as a holiday for all time, a day "of fasting and joy, and of sending portions to another and gifts to the poor." (9:22)

In our story, all the characters act of their own volition. Inner human drives move them. Unlike other biblical stories, there is no deus ex machina. Not only is God not mentioned in the Book of Esther – the only book in the Bible without the word "God" – there is no hint of any supernatural force.

The book opens with feasting and joy in Shushan and in the palace; it concludes with feasting and joy for the Jews of the realm. Upon this artistically harmonious note concludes the Book of Esther, one of the most perfect narratives in the Bible.

As a child, Curt Leviant, author of A Novel of Klass, *spoke ancient Persian fluently. Today he can barely say hello.*

Opinions

Esther's lesson for us

On the holiday of Purim we read the story of Esther. It's a wonderful narrative, filled with the threat of annihilation, a beauty pageant, parties, murder, evil ministers, subplots and hangings. True to all such adventures, the people win out – that is, our people win. We survive and Queen Esther and her cousin are victorious.

Sarma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

Many lessons are embedded in this tale, including the importance of the hiddenness of God. So as we prepare to celebrate, to put on our costumes or dress up our children, I call on you, the adults of Canada's Jewish communities, to heed some of the lessons, those hidden and not so hidden.

First of all, let's note that Esther is the hero. She is presented to us as much more than a beautiful maiden. At first obedient, she assumes leadership when Mordechai reminds her that she must stand up for her people. She does. Willingly and courageously, she takes on the mantle and responsibility of leadership

So please stand for her as the Megillah reports her heroic statement, "If I die, I die!" She goes before the king, unbidden, prepared to die but eager to contend with Haman for her people's survival.

She plots a strategy that eventually topples Haman, winning the heart of her capricious king. She stands alone with the weight of the Jews of Persia on her shoulders. But before she undertakes such a serious commitment, she prepares with fasting and prayer. And even before that she seeks one requisite ingredient. Not only must she and her retinue fast in preparation for this momentous responsibility, but the whole community of Shushan must join them. Everyone must fast.

When there's a crisis, it's everyone's responsibility to act, not just the leader's. That's the lesson Esther teaches us. All must act. Perhaps that's the purpose of God's absence in the Megillah. At this point in time, it's our job to act, our imperative. We act on this earth as God's representatives.

On the fast of Esther, on Purim, dedicate yourselves to community action. And not just in any arena.

Find an agunah – a woman who can't get her Jewish divorce. Help her. I have written before about the plight of agunot. We have too many women who are left alone in their struggle to obtain their freedom from recalcitrant men. Women chained to dead marriages. Women waiting for your help. Ask your rabbis what they're doing to help agunot. Ask your neighbours. Ask yourselves. Do something.

The Purim story is an immigrant story

Last month I wrote about the immigrant experience. This issue of *The CJN* goes out for the holiday of Purim. Talk about the immigrant experience! There is Esther Hadassah, a Jewish exile living in Persia, who rises to become queen of the kingdom. Now that's an immigrant success story.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

Success stories abound, but let's not forget how hard it may be to get there. It was long thought that immigrants would reach equivalence with their native-born peers in about five years. That is, it took five years to reach the same income level as longtime Canadian citizens from whatever their initial income level was. The 2001 census showed, however, that the period of time was now 10, not five, years, and many immigrants remain at sub-standard income levels for even longer. That goes for Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants.

We need to be aware of this struggle, since we're called upon to help those newcomers who will eventually enrich the lives of all Canadians.

One can also perish from success. Jews coming to Canada find that we now enjoy a status, income level, educational achievement and social acceptance that means we can go anywhere, be anything and, in fact, largely disappear into the mainstream.

Which brings us back to Esther. The story – surely an Arabian-nights inspired folk tale – opens with the Jews of Persia sitting pretty, safe, secure and even using the secular names of the people around them. Esther equals Astarte, the goddess of fertility and plenty. Maybe her *teudah*, her identity card, says Hadassah, but who would know?

Our own beauty becomes queen of Persia, and only when Haman darkens the doorway to success of the Jews does it seem to matter that she is Hadassah, not Esther.

Recently, at a morning minyan breakfast I attend, the topic of the influx of Sri Lankan boat people, who had recently arrived and were claiming refugee status, was raised. Tempers didn't exactly flare, but a lively discussion ensued. The question: whether to let in refugees who had "jumped the queue," no matter what hardships they were fleeing. No doubt the same discussion will erupt when considering relief for Haitians in the wake of the recent catastrophic earthquake there.

OK, all those Jews who are First Nations please raise your hand. No? Then my fellow immigrants, you are here by virtue of your parents', grandparents', great-grandparents' decisions to leave there and come here. You are reaping the benefits of their trip across the plains of Ukraine, the deserts of Africa, the crowded cities of Europe, the turmoil of South Africa, or the hostility of Muslim or Christian neighbours. Did everyone have a legal entry visa? No? Or – even more frowned upon – perhaps they were "economic refugees" coming here for a better and safer life.

My ancestors came to America in the holds of stinking sailing ships before the American Revolution. Some were mercenary Hessian soldiers hired by George III and captured by Washington at Trenton. They came and stayed because here was better than there. My husband's family came here because there was more violent (something about a Russian Revolution) or more dangerous (Poland in 1920) than whatever they would find on this side of the ocean.

Thank God their great-grandchildren are here, since there is now a vast graveyard.

Our minyan discussion was not very logical. But it did tell me something: that we soon forget how we came to be sitting in warmth and safety. Indeed, I have heard people involved with Jewish immigrant resettlement in Canada say, "Why pay for their [meaning Jewish immigrants] resettlement here? Let them all go to Israel."

Esther, too, thought she was home safe and free, until the moment of challenge came. "Who knows?" says Mordechai. "Maybe God put you here for just such a moment as this."

We don't know why we were put here, or what will come of welcoming refugees from tortured lands. Maybe it's for the time when a new challenge to our fine democracy will rise up and we all will be needed?

Olympics in Israel?

The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics are a source of pride for all Canadians. We collectively celebrate the breathtaking beauty of Canada's West Coast, the hospitality of its residents, its organizers and, of course, our own dedicated athletes and the many athletes from abroad.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

Hosting Olympic competitions is not new to Canada. We experienced the Montreal Summer Games in 1976 and the Calgary Winter Games in 1988.

The thought occurred to me – would it be possible for Israel to host a summer olympiad in either Jerusalem or Tel Aviv? Every four years, Israel successfully hosts the Maccabiah, the third-largest sporting event in the world.

Yet, one cannot envision the International Olympic Committee ever accepting a bid from either of those cities for fear of a boycott, or worse, from the same nations that constantly berate and criticize Israel in the United Nations and in other forums, be they political, academic or scientific.

For example, Canadian universities are criticized for hiring Israeli academics, and prestigious British medical journals are averse to publishing articles by leading Israeli researchers.

But the Olympics are about sport and a spirit of international cohesion. Supposedly, they are not about politics. To say politics play no role in the Olympic movement is patently untrue. Hosting the Olympic Games is a vehicle for fostering national prides, itself a form of political expression.

We saw that, for example, in Beijing. And in order to pressure South Africa to end official apartheid, that country was excluded from virtually all international sporting events until 1991. We witnessed the 1980 American boycott of the Moscow Olympics arising out of the Russian intervention in Afghanistan. And we can recall the historical travesty of the infamous Berlin Games, at which the glorification of Nazism was a paramount feature of that event.

One does not have to focus on the Olympics to see how international sporting events can frequently become forums for political (and arguably, anti-Semitic) sentiment when Israeli athletes are involved. For example, Swiss activists disrupted Israeli participation in a qualifying event during the 2007 World Cup soccer competition. During the past year, we witnessed pressure on FIFA (the World Cup organizers) by several nations to exclude Israel from future competition; the unwelcoming reception of the Israeli Davis Cup team in Murcia, Spain, for an international tennis competition; the call for a boycott against the presence of the Israeli national basketball team in Zaragoza, Spain; and, not surprisingly, the denial of a visa for an Israeli tennis player to permit participation in a tournament in Dubai.

Notwithstanding all these affronts to the State of Israel, they all pale by comparison to the horrific murders of Israeli athletes at the 1972 Munich Olympics, commonly referred to as the Munich massacre.

When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are essentially two categories of people or groups critical of Israel. There are some genuine supporters of the Palestinian cause. But there are also others who are part of a well-organized, international campaign to destroy Israel and use every possible opportunity to pursue their sinister objective.

Most dramatically, we saw them "hijack" the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, utilizing a modus operandi that has become a standard ploy at many international events. Many of those who participate in this world campaign to vilify Israel are plain and simply anti-Semitic. They are advocates of the so-called "new" anti-Semitism. Under the guise of support for the Palestinian cause, criticism of Israel is a thinly veiled coverup of blatant anti-Jewish hatred.

Practically speaking, an Olympics in Israel would entail a massive security undertaking. And an Olympics in Jerusalem would compound the difficulty with respect to the disputed sovereignty over east Jerusalem. But the main obstacle would be the internationally organized, unfair, one-sided and hateful condemnation of Israel. So, it would surprise no one that a bid to hold the Olympics in Israel would be doomed to failure.

The possibility of an Israeli-hosted Olympics is probably the furthest thing from the minds of observers at the Vancouver Games. Sadly, it is unlikely that the Olympic flame will illuminate the sky over an Israeli city.

The Kirshner File

Iran is militant and pragmatic

That Iran under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East is hardly earthshaking news. Since time immemorial, Persian dynasties, including the Pahlavi monarchy, which was overthrown by the Islamic revolution 31 years ago this month, have attempted to dominate the region. And now, in a replay of past practices, Ahmadinejad is attempting to extend Iran's influence through surrogates – Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip – and through its enduring alliance with Syria.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

As a result, observes Ray Takeyh in *Guardians of the Revolution: Iran and the World in the Age of the Ayatollahs* (Oxford University Press), a book of great depth and range, Iran has emerged as a "pivotal power" in the Mideast. "The goal of dominance and hegemony that eluded previous Persian rulers seems within grasp," he writes. "Tehran's determination to sustain its nuclear program, its quest to evict U.S. forces from Iraq, and its holding aloft the banner of resistance against Israel are all means of asserting its regional influence."

Iran, a nation whose borders have been breached by a succession of invasions, the last one having been launched by Iraq in 1980, is suspicious of neighbours and foreign powers that have coveted its territory.

But since 1979, Iran's foreign policy, suffused with power politics, religious fervour and historical grievances, but leavened by pragmatism and a careful calibration of national interests, has regarded itself as a "vanguard state" whose Islamic revolution transcends fixed boundaries.

The first spiritual leader of the new Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini, who died in 1989, tried to export its revolutionary ideals, but his neighbours rejected his theocratic model of governance, not only placing Iran at odds with the international community, but leaving Iran as something of a pariah.

His successors, Muhammed Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammed Khatami, attempted to tone down Iranian policy. Nonetheless, they recoiled from challenging hardliners or pressing ahead with their program of change. The current president, Ahmadinejad, has been the most reactionary of the lot, regularly denouncing the United States and Israel and denying the Holocaust.

Ahmadinejad has taken his cues from Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khameni, who has contemptuously described Israel as "a fabricated and fake state."

As Takeyh suggests, the one consistent, overriding theme in Iran's policy has been identifying Israel as an enemy of Islam and a state that must be eradicated: "Khomeini's hostility to Israel was not a cynical strategy but an essential and enduring pillar of his ideology."

Even a relative moderate like Khatami, who espoused "dialogue among civilizations" and promoted a good neighbour policy in an effort to ease tensions with the West, lambasted Israel as a racist entity and claimed that the Arab-Israeli peace process was bound to fail.

Takeyh, a former adviser to U.S. President Barack Obama and now a senior fellow for Middle Eastern studies at the Council of Foreign Relations, says that Iran's antagonism to Israel has basically defined its policy in the Mideast and led it to make common cause with radical states such as Syria and militant organizations such as Hezbollah.

He notes that Iran's strident opposition to Israel marks a departure in Iranian policy, since Iran forged close economic and security relations with Israel from the 1950s onward.

But even as their relationship grew, Shiite seminaries in Iran continued to be hotbeds of anti-Zionist rhetoric, he points out in a timely reminder of the fact that Israel's ties with Iran were unpopular on a grassroots level.

The clerical class often agitated against Israel, calling for a boycott of Israeli goods and denouncing the establishment of diplomatic relations. During Khomeini's years in exile, he continuously branded Israel as an enemy of Islam and a sinister agent of American imperialism. And on the eve of his return to Iran in 1979, he declared, "We must rise up, destroy Israel, and replace it with the heroic nation of Palestine."

Khomeini sensed Zionist conspiracies everywhere, claiming that "the independence of [Iran's] court and [its] economy have fallen into the hands of the Zionists." Of course, as Takeyh observes, Khomeini was probably referring to "Jews" rather than to "Zionists."

Although Iranian spokesmen have since gone to great lengths to differentiate between Iran's animosity toward Israel and its respect for Judaism, Khomeini's writings were peppered with anti-Semitic themes.

In his seminal book, *Hukumat-i-Islami*, the blueprint of the theocratic entity he envisaged, Khomeini wrote, "Since its inception, the Islamic movement has been afflicted with Jews, for it was they who first established anti-Islamic propaganda."

One of Khomeini's oft-repeated accusations was that the shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, had allowed Iranian Jews to "infiltrate" key sectors of society and "control" the economy. "Khomeini's indisputable anti-Semitism was not a passing phenomenon," Takeyh writes. "It has become a pillar of Iran's Islamist ideology."

Iran's former president, Muhammed Khatami, left, did not challenge hardliners.

Iran's animus toward Israel notwithstanding, the Islamic Republic has had direct dealings with Israel when it was convenient. The Iran-Contra affair was a case in point: Israel's eagerness to sell arms to Iran converged with the United States' desire to free its hostages in Lebanon. The affair gave Israel a golden opportunity to weaken Iraq, one of its mortal enemies, as Iraq and Iran fought an eight-year war from 1980 to 1988.

In an example of unbridled expediency, Iran made it clear that its acquisition of Israeli weapons – TOW missiles and spare parts for Hawk anti-aircraft batteries – should not be taken as a sign of its recognition of Israel.

During Iran's protracted war with Iraq, the United States funnelled vital intelligence data and financial credits to Iraq to ensure that Iran would lose so as not be in a position to dominate the Persian Gulf.

Washington's pro-Iraqi tilt, as well as its subsequent "dual containment" policy of Iraq and Iran, had the effect of deepening Iran's suspicion of the United States, better known as the Great Satan in Iranian ruling circles.

To the mullahs, the United States is a formidable threat not only because of its regional ambitions and its historic interference in Iranian affairs, but also because of the lure of its democratic ideals and seductive culture.

And yet, as Takeyh adds, Iranian and U.S. interests converged after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist events in the United States.

Both nations opposed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and regarded the Taliban as an adversary. After the United States invaded Afghanistan, Iran offered its co-operation. But the Karine A incident on Jan. 3, 2002, in which a shipful of Iranian arms bound for the Palestinian Authority was intercepted by the Israeli Navy, hardened Washington's skeptical attitude toward Tehran.

Iran's attempt to come to terms with the United States on a broad range of issues, as outlined in a 2003 proposal known as the "grand bargain," fizzled after the Bush administration learned that Islamic terrorists who had blown up a U.S. housing complex in Saudi Arabia were based in Iran.

Takeyh believes that containment cannot check Iran's growing influence in the region. In his view, dialogue, or engagement, is the most sensible way to convince Iran to adhere to international norms and commit to regional stability. As he puts it, "Ultimately, security for Arabs and Israelis will be more achievable if Iran is part of the region… rather than excluded from it."

Judging by its rejection of a aestern proposal to swap much of its enriched uranium for medical-reactor fuel and Ahmadinejad's recent boast that Iran is now a "nuclear state," Iran disdains genuine engagement.

On Purim, read, eat and make noise.

Purim is a time to recall the courage of Esther and Mordechai. To read the Megilla, to celebrate by feasting and drinking and, of course, to make lots of noise when we hear the name Haman the villain. Finally, there is misloach manot or tzedakah – the sharing of food or money with those who are poor.

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Bracelets create bonds for Reena volunteers, clients

By STEPHEN SWEET
Special to The CJN

It was an afternoon of beads, bracelets and learning at the Toby and Henry Battle Developmental Centre on Feb. 14.

Reena clients and New Leadership division volunteers worked together to make bracelets to be sold at the Not Just Another Saturday Night fundraiser, which will take place on March 27 this year. The New Leadership group are volunteers aged 25-50, who work for Reena and the Reena Foundation.

Sheri Becker, New Leadership executive member and volunteer co-ordinator, saw this as a great opportunity to bring the two groups together.

"Our goal is to integrate New Leadership volunteers with the clients to make what we're fundraising for a reality," Becker said.

Making the bracelets with the clients gave the volunteers an opportunity to get to know first-hand the people they support.

"It's easy to raise money, but when you don't know where your money is going to, it doesn't feel real," Becker said. "This event makes it real, and it gives [the volunteers] a chance to see where the money and their efforts are going."

The bracelets, which will be sold at the event for $25, grew out of an idea that Becker and other volunteers came up with in the previous year.

"Last year, we started a program where we wanted to involve some of the clients in the actual event," said Adam Henechowicz, co-founder of New Leadership and a member of the Reena Foundation's board of directors.

For the 2009 Not Just Another Saturday Night, the clients, with the help of volunteers, made paintings to sell at the event.

"This year, we didn't want to repeat the same thing we did last year, so we thought of a different arts and crafts activity to involve the clients," Henechowicz said.

"Making bracelets seemed like a very creative alternative."

Staff member Lisa Cohen helps Reena client Adam Whaley make a bracelet. The bracelets will be sold at Not Just Another Saturday Night, the Reena Foundation's fundraising event to be held March 27. *[Stephen Sweet photo]*

They'll serve an extra purpose this year, too, he said. "Normally, we get teddy bears donated to us and sell those for the prizes. Each bear will have a corresponding number with it, for a guaranteed prize.

"But this year, we thought that if Reena clients made the sellable items, it might be more of an incentive for people to buy them."

Becker was pleased with the clients' success at making the bracelets.

"It went way better than we had expected," she said. "It's a very fine motor activity, and we were worried it might be frustrating, but the clients really enjoyed it and kept looking to make more.

"We really managed to capture their attention."

A sense of accomplishment is important for the clients.

"They're very structured, and… go by a strict schedule," Becker said. "Knowing that they've accomplished this is a very big thing for them."

Helping produce the final product was a great experience for the volunteers, too.

"This has been my first activity with Reena, and I think it went really well," said Heley Taitlbaum, who recently joined the New Leadership group. "I feel like it really brings all of our work to life."

She even acquired an admirer. "One of the clients gave me a kiss because I helped them," Taitlbaum said. "It was very sweet."

The afternoon was an opportunity for the volunteers to learn a little more about the people they're raising money for.

"It's a great chance for the volunteers to know how they're helping the Reena clients in their day-to-day activities," Henechowicz said. "It's a great way to expose them to this population.

"A lot of volunteers don't have any previous experience working with this group, and this is a positive, easy and sociable way to do it."

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Five years later, Hariri murder probe goes nowhere

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Early last week, the media's foreign affairs gaze was fixed on the way Iran marked the 31st anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution – in particular, its increasingly repressive domination of its citizens and its open defiance of the international community over its nuclear program.

Almost entirely overlooked was another anniversary in the Middle East: the fifth anniversary of the assassination of Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri.

CBC Radio's Feb. 14 *World Report* was an exception. It featured a news report by freelancer Ben Gilbert in Beirut. After describing what he called "a pretty festive atmosphere" in which, under tight security control, thousands of people paraded down a street chanting and singing and holding pictures of Hariri and his son Saad, the current prime minister, Gilbert turned his attention to what's become of the investigation into Hariri's murder.

He noted that even though Saad Hariri, along with his coalition partners, had accused Syria of killing his father, especially after initial indications pointed to Syria's culpability, Saad this year travelled to Damascus and met with Syrian President Bashar Assad. "That was seen as a big compromise," Gilbert said.

As to the UN investigation, Gilbert added that it "has pretty much gone nowhere… Three different [UN] investigators have been head of this investigation and nothing concrete has come out of it, yet."

In "A UN Betrayal in Beirut" (*New York Times*, Feb. 14), Michael Young, the opinion editor of the *Beirut Daily Star*, provided additional details and was bluntly critical about the UN's failure to make any headway in this case.

Young began his piece by reminding readers that the Hariri assassination launched the "Cedar Revolution" in Lebanon, forced Syria to withdraw its army from the country and led the UN Security Council to investigate the murder. The initial investigation team in 2005 was led by Detlev Mehlis, a German prosecutor, whose first report pointed a finger at Syria's involvement.

Young wrote that by the end of that year, when Mehlis stepped down, "he felt he had enough to arrest at least one of the [Syrian] intelligence officers" and to name other suspects. Four Lebanese intelligence officials suspected of involvement were already being held in custody.

However, under Mehlis' successor, Belgian judge Serge Brammertz, the investigation quickly withered, even though it had been upgraded to a "special tribunal" near the Hague. Brammertz stepped down at the end of 2007.

According to Young things went from bad to worse: "More disturbing, the United Nations itself has remained silent, even though Mr. Brammertz's successor, Daniel Bellemare of Canada, has suffered his own setbacks. Last April, despite having acquired prosecutorial powers, he was forced by the tribunal's bylaws to release the imprisoned [Lebanese] suspects pending an indictment. Mr. Bellemare deserves blame for taking on such a weak case in the first place, effectively legitimizing his predecessor's shoddy work. But the onus surely lies with Mr. Brammertz, and with those at United Nations headquarters who never held him to account."

The sharp decline in the UN investigation was followed by changes in the region that also made Lebanon less inclined to pursue Syria in this case. According to Young, Saad Hariri's meeting with Assad last year came about as result of pressure Hariri was under from his backer, Saudi Arabia, which was attempting to reconcile with Syria, in large part, it may be assumed, to lessen Iran's influence over Damascus.

In the meantime, Syria has been reasserting its power in Lebanon, and although Young didn't mention this, Syria has been emboldened by Iran's backing and its support of Hezbollah. This development has led to recent heated exchanges between Israel and Syria over the increased threat Jerusalem sees coming from Hezbollah's heavy re-arming by Iran and Syria (in violation of UN Security Council resolutions).

Even though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has tried to calm the waters by speaking about the need for peace, Assad has maintained a belligerent posture warning Israel about the consequences of any "aggression against Hezbollah."

Tensions remain strong on Israel's northern border, even while the United States plans to nominate Robert Ford, a career diplomat, to become the first U.S. ambassador to Damascus since 2005.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Community comes together to celebrate UJA 2010 Campaign

Campaign expected to reach $64 million

Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum (right) with author Dan Senor

Toronto band The Midway State performing on stage

By Daniel Horowitz

More than 700 members of Toronto's Jewish community recently helped United Jewish Appeal celebrate its Campaign 2010 closing with an evening that featured something for everyone.

The February 16th event, held at Events on the Park, featured a keynote address by Dan Senor, co-author of *Start-Up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle.*

The event also featured mentalist Haim Goldenberg, and The Midway State, a Toronto band known for their unique blend of rock, piano and soulful lyrics.

The 2010 Campaign, chaired by Debbie Kimel and Ken Tanenbaum, which, despite the economy, attracted an impressive 2,100 new donors to the UJA fold, is projected to reach $64 million when the final count is completed.

"Debbie and I are keenly aware that although this is the end of the line for us as chairs, there is still much to be done," said Tanenbaum. "But, from everything we've learned about our incredible Jewish community over the last year, we can say with confidence that Jewish Toronto will continue to come together for those in need here in our city, in Israel and around the world."

"Your UJA campaign dollars change so many lives," Kimel told the audience. "Everything we accomplished this year could never have happened without all of you. Your support, compassion, generosity and plain hard work, literally moved mountains, making Campaign 2010 such a success in particularly challenging times."

Addressing the various attempts made by Israel's detractors to delegitimize the Jewish state, Senor told the audience that Israel's own success was the best blow to her enemies.

"The campaign to delegitimize Israel and whether or not Israel has a right to have a place among the nations is quite real," he said. "There is no greater blow to this campaign than to remind the world that it has a lot to learn from Israel. One of the lessons the world needs to learn is how Israel built this innovation entrepreneurship hothouse; this incubator that is transforming the world. The West needs innovation and Israel's got it."

One of the most moving moments of the evening was a brief address made by Ketty Jean Batiste, a Haitian woman who now calls Toronto home. Batiste was grateful to Toronto's Jewish community, which has raised approximately $850,000 through UJA's Hope for Haiti Relief Fund.

"We finally reached members of our family four days after the hurricane struck my beloved country of Haiti," she said. "They described the scene as people sleeping on the streets and in cars; of human cries coming out from beneath piles of rubble; and little children walking aimlessly, with no parents in sight, possibly already orphaned, as the only world they knew crumbled around them. I feel blessed to be part of a community made up of caring, compassionate and generous Jewish people, all of whom have gone out of their way to help my people, total strangers to all of you."

Every life has a story worth telling

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto – the endowment development program of UJA Federation – created its Book of Life initiative in 2003 in order to record the inspiring stories of donors who have chosen to leave a legacy for the future of Toronto's Jewish community.

Legacies are left by opening an endowment fund or making a gift through a bequest in your will or life insurance.

We encourage you to read some of the stories and get a glimpse into the minds and lives of our many supporters – stories that make our Book of Life a timeless document.

The stories, one of which is printed below, can be read on-line at www.bookoflife.ca.

For more information about how you can include your story in the Book of Life, please call Janice Benatar at 416-631-5847.

By Morris Saffer, Dodi Weill and Jacqueline Markowitz

Our parents, Minnie and Harry Saffer z"l, shared an encompassing love for one another and for their family and community. This abiding love is the blessing our parents bestowed upon us; their eternal legacy that we will hold close to our hearts and treasure always.

Dodi Weill and Morris Saffer

At the core of every piece of their life stories stands an everlasting and unrelenting love for their children and for family. A love that persevered through the loss of our father when he was only sixty years old, and a love that embraced our mother, sheltered her children, and withstood the loss of our brother, John z"l.

That love, like a prayer shawl, wraps around our shoulders now; the fringes are our children, and our children's children…our continuance. As the tallis is folded and placed in a velvet pouch, its essence remains at the core of our souls; the silk and tassels softening and becoming more precious over the years.

We each have poignant memories of Friday nights, where we would gather at our parents' table. The light of the candles cradled within our mother's hands as she sang the blessing; the look in our father's eyes as he sat proudly at the head of the table. These were enchanting moments, and ones that rooted our lives and made us understand the significance of our heritage, of family, and of community.

May this endowment flourish in their memory and act as a legacy for their thirteen grandchildren and fifteen great grandchildren.

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Jewish Life

Israel's secret weapon: democracy

By ISRAEL DUBINSKY AND JAY BRODBAR
Special to The CJN

Throughout Israel's history, we have had to be mindful of external attacks on its existence. In addition to a brave defence force, Israel's vibrant democratic society has also been a source of strength. However, recently we have been witness to concerted internal attacks intended to delegitimize and undermine this very source of strength: the fabric of democratic society. These internal attacks are not new, but in trying to use the processes of government to intimidate members of Israel's human rights community, the attackers have adopted a new and alarming strategy.

Guest Voice

These attacks target civil and human rights organizations in Israel, ranging from those fighting for religious pluralism to others who work to protect Israel's most vulnerable citizens. Most recently, a report by Im Tirtzu alleged that the United Nations' Goldstone report, which recommended independent Israeli and Palestinian inquiries into the conduct of last year's war in Gaza, would not have been possible without the support of the New Israel Fund (NIF), as well as other NGOs. Their report escalated to attempts in the Knesset to investigate the NIF and the funding of Israeli NGOs. Im Tirtzu also engaged in reprehensible personal attacks on the NIF's president, professor and former deputy Knesset speaker Naomi Chazan.

Naomi Chazan
(Flash90 photos)

The Israeli press and a broad coalition of groups and individuals both inside and outside of Israel quickly exposed the distortions of the Im Tirtzu report and condemned the attacks on Chazan. Members of the Knesset, including leaders of the Likud, blocked a proposed Knesset bill, decrying its fundamentally inappropriate and anti-democratic nature.

The democratic institutions that we as both Jews and Canadians hold dear are critical to Israel's survival and to its reputation as a beacon of democracy in the Middle East. This requires an active civil society in which citizens can participate in building a strong and just Israel.

Human rights organizations everywhere play a crucial role in ensuring that basic human rights are not at risk. Their messages may sometimes be difficult to hear, but it is the responsibility of every democratic society to investigate allegations when they stem from credible sources and to respond accordingly.

It may be tempting to argue that calling attention to instances in which Israel's actions may not be living up to its democratic ideals could serve to embolden Israel's enemies. However, there is an alternative view that must be considered: by strengthening Israel's democratic institutions, we preclude attempts to vilify Israel.

As one example, the human rights community successfully argued before Israel's Supreme Court that there were humanitarian consequences of the security barrier's route. After considering both humanitarian and security issues, the court ordered the route redrawn. As a result, criticism regarding the legitimacy of the barrier was rendered much less effective, because Israel could point to its internal democratic process that rightfully balanced the need for security with humanitarian concerns.

The right to express different points of view is an essential principle of any vibrant democracy. Those who care about Israel's survival have the freedom to support any of those voices. What we must not support are efforts to muzzle the free exchange of opinions. Respectful public discourse is an imperative for Israel's democracy to survive and mature.

Israel Dubinsky is president and Jay Brodbar is executive director of the New Israel Fund of Canada, an independent charity. Some of its projects partner with the New Israel Fund.

Jewish activists dressed as Arabs demonstrate last month against the New Israel Fund, vilifying its head, Naomi Chazan.

OH WHAT A NIGHT!

Stephen Lister, Dr. Molly Rundle, Heather & Max Gottlieb

Merodirh Krangle, Justin Hertzman, Felicia Salomon, Eddy Goldstein, Chris Mathers, Signie Nahmias, Adam Goldstein & Gloria Salomon

Joseph Gottdenker

Ruth Ekstein, Alan Latham & Ameyo Alvez

Kevin Li, Lori Sugarman-Li & Ellis Jacob

Joel Feldberg

'WINSTON CHURCHILL: WALKING WITH DESTINY' WORLD PREMIERE

A veritable Who's Who of Toronto's Jewish community turned out for Opening Night on Monday, February 8 when Canada played host to the World Premiere of Academy Award winning Moriah Films' newest production, "Winston Churchill: Walking with Destiny". Close to 600 supporters of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center (FSWC), the film's co-producer, packed the house at Varsity Cinemas in Toronto to be the first to view the eagerly anticipated documentary. Narrated by Sir Ben Kingsley, the film documents Churchill's rise to power and his courageous fight against the Nazis and the politics of appeasement.

Among the many prominent business leaders and philanthropists at the Premiere were Co-Chairs Ellis Jacob and Norm Bacal, and FSWC Board of Directors member Joel Feldberg, who thanked the Co-Chairs for their efforts. They were joined by Garry Foster, Chairman of the FSWC Board of Governors, and numerous well known supporters of the Center including the Shnaiders, Bronfmans, Feldbergs, Freedmans, Reitmans, Silbers, and Sonshines, as well as Michael Bregman and Katie Osborne, Joseph Gottdenker and family, Dorothy Shoichet and Hal Silverstein. Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder of the Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC) in Los Angeles and Rabbi Meyer May, Executive Director of SWC flew in from California for the gala evening.

Said Avi Benlolo, President and CEO of FSWC, "I'm thrilled Canada was chosen to host the World Premiere of this film and proud to be involved as co-producer in such a great project. I am also extremely excited about our upcoming Spirit of Hope Benefit on May 31, when FSWC will host one of my personal heroes – Elie Wiesel, together with the brilliant and provocative Salman Rushdie. Brian Mulroney will moderate their discussion and I honestly cannot imagine a more magnificent opportunity to see two of the world's great humanitarians on stage together."

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

The evening event was capped off with a delicious treat courtesy of Saint Cinnamon, which generously donated their tasty trademark cinnamon buns as a late night snack for theater-goers as they made their way home.

"Winston Churchill: Walking with Destiny" is the 11th documentary produced by Moriah Films, a division of the SWC, which won an Academy Award for 'Genocide' in 1981 and another for 'The Long Way Home' in 1997. To learn more about the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center please call 416.864.9735 or visit www.fswc.ca.

Alex & Simona Shnaider, Garry Foster, Rabbi Meyer May, Rabbi Marvin Hier, Norm Bacal, Ellis Jacob, Katie Osborne, Michael Bregman & Avi Benlolo

Stan Elkind & Arthur Stern

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Jewish Life

Mordechai's lesson: just do it

By RABBI RAFI LIPNER

The tension is palpable. The entire Jewish nation is on the brink of extermination. A country is poised to destroy our people, and the only one who stands a chance of overturning the decree is none other than the wife of the king himself!

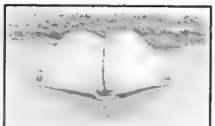
The suspense builds. What will the potential heroine do?

Her response comes. She's too scared to make a move. After all, the king decreed that no one may approach him unless they've been summoned. She fears he may take out his wrath on her, and this fear isn't unreasonable, for we know what happened to his previous wife.

When Mordechai hears this, he realizes he must convince Esther to change her mind, approach the king and hopefully save the day.

If you were Mordechai, what would you say? Maybe something like: "Esther, you're scared to say anything lest he kill you? But if you don't, we're all going to die!"

Perhaps some reverse psychology might work: "You're right. It's too risky. Who cares that everyone will get killed and our nation will be wiped out, as long as you're OK!"



Or why not get straight to the point: "Esther, you are our last hope. You have to do it for the sake of Jewish survival!"

But Mordechai forgoes any of these persuasive techniques. What comes out of his mouth is, at first glance, perplexing.

"Esther, don't worry – you don't have to put yourself forward. It's fine. Honestly. The Jews will somehow make it out of this predicament with or without your help."

At this point, if I was Esther I would breath a deep sigh of relief. The pressure's off. But what happens next? Against all logic, Esther responds by saying she's "going in."

What was it that Mordechai said that convinced Esther to change her mind?

Perhaps the answer is that Mordechai was teaching Esther – and all of us – an important life lesson. We're all put on this earth and in specific situations for a reason. While we often think the outcomes are dependent on us, in truth, we're the ones who are dependent on the actions we take in those very situations. Mordechai reminded Esther that while there was a promise that the Jewish people will always exist, there was no guarantee that she and her family would be remembered as having made any contribution. The Jews will never disappear from existence, but she might.

This doesn't only apply to big, historic moments. It also applies to our everyday lives. The approach we're supposed to take is not, "If I don't do something, it won't get done," but rather, "This might be what my calling is all about. I was put here with the opportunity to make the difference, and if I don't act, I forfeit fulfilling my potential in this world."

Often we think about doing something, but someone else ends up doing it first. We might have a great idea, only to pause, lose the desire and then be disappointed as someone else makes it a reality.

Don't mistake this as a desire for honour. Rather, it's about the need to express that you can and should make a difference. Mordechai reminded Esther that while we always have the option to bail out, if we do, we're the ones who lose.

So before reading the next article in this paper, pause and think of something that you could do – large or small. Think of all the excuses why you might not follow through, then realize that life is not about finding a way to get out of opportunities to make a difference. Rather, as Nike urges, "Just do it!"

Rabbi Rafi Lipner is director of The House, a Jewish educational centre for young adults, and a teacher at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

Work in an era of candid cameras

Money Matters

The proliferation of technology has added new meaning to the talmudic teachings that "there is a seeing eye, a hearing ear and all our actions are written down in the book." No longer can one ever be guaranteed that the most trivial of our activities won't one day show up on YouTube or a Facebook page, or in the pages of a newspaper.

While our sages were referring to our need to constantly remind ourselves of God's presence, man's ability and seeming urge to record almost everything helps to make real for us the insight of our sages. Many have learned and continue to learn this message the hard way, leaving both their personal and professional lives in tatters.

As a tired employee of the Toronto Transit Commission recently discovered, even such an innocent act as dozing off can become front-page news. Unfortunately, the rush to broadcast news about others, regardless of the underlying situation, is the more serious infraction of behaviour, at least from an ethical perspective.

It's true that Jewish law mandates a very strict work ethic. In order to ensure that a person is maximally focused on his or her employment, Jewish law generally prohibits moonlighting and demands that employees get a proper night's sleep.

The obligation to put in an honest day's work was so central that employees were relieved of many (or at least had lowered) religious obligations, such as prayer and grace after meals. One cannot be religious on someone else's time and at someone else's expense.

The recent report of a Muslim bus driver in England who in the middle of his route stopped his bus and, blocking the exit doors, took a break for prayer would be a clear violation of Jewish law.

This story is reminiscent of a complaint that Rabbi Yisroel Salanter had against a passerby who, engrossed in thoughts of repentance on the eve of Yom Kippur, didn't greet the esteemed rabbi. While such thoughts are very important, they don't excuse us from carrying out our basic human obligations.

Clearly, sleeping on the job is not to be encouraged. Yet that doesn't mean everyone has to know about it. Reporting information that portrays someone in a negative light, even if 100 per cent accurate, violates the Jewish laws of gossip. At times, revealing such information is mandated in order to prevent harm or correct a wrong. Never is revealing such information optional. Either it's forbidden due to the laws of gossip, or it's mandatory, since a compelling need overrides the concern with gossip.

Yet revealing such information must follow strict guidelines, which would include speaking to the "perpetrator" first, allowing him or her to take corrective action, revealing the information only to those who need to know, and not deriving any personal pleasure from performing this necessary obligation. The notion of getting back at someone is foreign to our system of ethics and must be resisted, even if it means important information will not be revealed.

Discovering a relatively minor infraction – catching someone napping on the job without understanding the context – does not grant one permission to broadcast that information to all.

An employee would have to be regularly asleep on the job to have grounds for their dismissal. And this can be done only after a proper warning is given. Since Jewish ethics believes in preventing – and then if necessary correcting – wrongs, placing hidden cameras in sensitive spots to try to catch someone would be an invasion of privacy and a violation of our ethical norms.

However, it's well within the right of an employer to notify an employee of having cameras overseeing his work, so that the employee will be forewarned to ensure they fulfil the job to the best of their ability.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Jewish Life

Book offers seeds of spiritual wisdom

By ELAN DIVON
Special to The CJN

Rabbi Yoel Glick's *Seeking the Divine Presence: The Three Pillars of a Jewish Spiritual Life* is an ambitious and rather unconventional book that provides insight into the foundations of a spiritual practice.

Why unconventional? Because although written by a Jewish rabbi, a person we tend to associate with tradition and Orthodoxy, the book surprises in its inclusion of other religious traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity, and moreover, challenges us to rethink the very purpose of religion in our day-to-day lives.

Written in a somewhat dry but straightforward manner, the book is a worthy read for anyone seeking spiritual insight, wisdom and a deeper understanding of religion's highest function.

Guest Voice

Elan Divon

Not surprisingly, Rabbi Glick's worldview is a mystical, kabbalistic one. He sees religion as a vehicle for moving the individual closer to God consciousness and to an experience of unity with the Divine. God knowledge is something that comes from experience, Rabbi Glick writes, not from intellectual pursuits. In other words, studying the Torah or other religious texts will only take us so far – we are going to have to live in the world and transform ourselves through the inner reaches of outer experience.

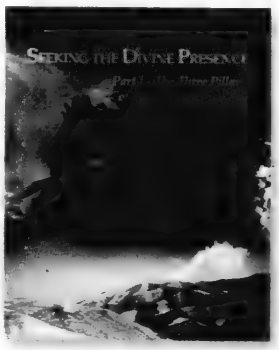
At the heart of Rabbi Glick's theology lies the notion that religion is about expanding our consciousness to the point where our perspective becomes totally inclusive and undifferentiated. Where we embrace the good, the bad and the ugly, and realize that everything in this world, even our enemies and nightmarish struggles, comes from the same Divine source that created us.

Spiritual growth, he explains, is equivalent to an expansion of consciousness, developing an inclusiveness in our perspective that enables us to see and feel with the whole arc of human experience – and this leads us to the recognition of the underlying unity of all religions and peoples. After all, is this not what religion literally means? To rejoin (from the Latin *ligare*)... ourselves with God.

Fair enough. But how do we arrive at this wonderful undifferentiated place within? This question consumes the majority of the book, as we are guided, somewhat unpredictably, by a variety of theoretical and esoteric teachings from across the religious spectrum. Drawing upon a barrage of anecdotes from the Baal Shem Tov to Saint Francis of Assisi and the Indian seer and sage Ramakrishna, Rabbi Glick weaves his way between East and West as he describes the virtue of humility, surrender and sacrifice, and how these must be cultivated together with discipline, courage and mindfulness in the evolution of our consciousness.

And for those of us left wondering what is distinctly Jewish about this transformative process, Rabbi Glick dedicates the final chapters of his volume to a mystical interpretation of the Jewish holidays, describing how each holiday (or holy day) functions as an instrument for spiritual growth.

One dimension of the manuscript that I particularly appreciated is its brutal honesty. Unlike most quick-fix, feel-good spiritual guides available today, *Seeking the Divine Presence* provides a sobering account of the pains and difficulties required of the spiritual practitioner. Indeed, the spiritual journey is not about finding peace and contentment, Rabbi Glick explains. It's about self-transformation. And this transformation can only arrive through great pain and tumult.



Like the patriarchs of Israel who are tried and tested, even humiliated, before achieving their exalted status, or the people of Israel who must first taste the bitterness of exile before inheriting the land of promise, each of us has to contend with our own demons and personal exiles. A wonderful Hindu metaphor is used to drive home this point: The dhobi (washerman) when washing clothes, beats them against a rock. But he does so only to remove the dirt from the clothes. Similarly, all sufferings are given for the sole purpose of purifying the mind of the devotee.

Now, this is where things get a little tricky. After reading the book from cover to cover, I realized that two competing arguments are at play. On the one hand, we are told that struggle is the hallmark of the spiritual devotee. You have to discipline your mind, struggle with your desires, tame your ego. This is a world of battle, Rabbi Glick reminds us. We come to this world to evolve and grow. If we do not constantly struggle, then we will have wasted the great opportunity that life in this world presents. This makes perfect sense. After all, struggle is what the patriarch Jacob encountered to warrant his transformation into Israel; it's what Adam and humankind were made to experience in their banishment from Eden, and it's what the Jewish people encounter time and time again.

Okay. But in the same breath, we are also charged to surrender our ego and our will to the Almighty. Contentment arrives from submitting to God's will and accepting with joy what He has given us, Rabbi Glick says. In fact, throughout much of his book, he talks about aligning our will with the will of God and following God's directives, even when these are painful and destructive. Abraham's submission to God in the famous story of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, can be taken as a case in point.

So, on the one hand, spirituality is a constant striving against our nature in an effort to cultivate and control it, but on the other hand, it's about our total surrender to God and His will. Do I sense a contradiction? But that's just the point! Although largely implicit in Rabbi Glick's writing, this paradox, I believe, speaks to the heart of spirituality in its unpredictable fluctuation between struggle and surrender and our requirement to choose between each in every moment. For within this tension lies a powerful message regarding the attitude we must cultivate, one that is quietly unattached to the whims of reality as we strive to do the best we can in this world, while accepting that the outcome, the fruits of our actions, are always beyond our control. The important Hindu scripture the Bhagavad-Gita, the binding of Isaac and the Buddha would certainly agree. Contradiction resolved.

There's no question that Rabbi Glick "gets it," as *Seeking the Divine Presence* offers many valuable seeds of wisdom. And although the style may limit the book's audience to the most disciplined of spiritual seekers, the substance is solid, enlightening and enriching, and promises to make you think.

Elan Divon is a graduate of the Harvard Divinity School and Brandeis University, and author of Reaching Beyond the Religious, *available April 2010. He currently serves as senior campaign consultant for United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto.*

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Coast to Coast

Israel to open trade office in Calgary

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

The Israeli government's economic mission to Canada is opening up an office in Calgary to service Western Canada.

Israeli Consul General Amir Gissin told *The CJN* that there is huge potential to increase trade between Israel and Western Canada with an office in Calgary.

"We want to give Israeli companies the chance to find Canadian partners and vice versa," Gissin said.

The Israel Economic Mission in Canada aims to promote trade, investment opportunities and joint ventures between Canada and Israel. The mission's Canadian head office is in Toronto, and there is also a branch in Montreal. The Calgary office will be the first in Western Canada.

Jonathan Levy, Israel's trade commissioner, said that bilateral trade between Canada and Israel has been on the rise, now amounting to "about $1.5 billion, with a surplus to Israel, meaning that Israel exports more to Canada than she imports.

"We realize that without an on-the-ground presence in Western Canada, it is difficult to achieve business results that we want to achieve. We are missing a lot of opportunities that we can capitalize on," he said

One of the reasons that Calgary was chosen for what Levy described as this "pilot project" is that the Calgary Economic Development Centre and the three-time mayor of Calgary, David Bronconnier, have been actively promoting the city as a place for conducting international business.

"They are creating an international centre and providing office services in a very accommodating way, that will give us good access to the economic organizations of the city. Israel is one of the first countries that are going to try this model, and the city of Calgary is very eager to have us come aboard," said Levy.

He added that Israel will be looking to form partnerships with Canadian companies in the fields of "IT, medical devices, and clean-tech [environmental technology] in areas such as water and renewable energy."

Levy said "more than 95 per cent of all laptop computers have been designed in Israel" and that the "BlackBerry has an Israeli heart."

Gissin told *The CJN* that "it is only natural for Canada to look to Israel in the high-tech field"

He added, "In a sophisticated world, every country is looking for strategic partnerships… The Israeli and Canadian economies have one thing in common – both focus on American markets. The difficulties in the U.S. market have caused Israel and Canada to look less towards the U.S and more towards each other."

Levy said that the person hired to staff the Calgary office, "will not be a [government] diplomat," but rather a local, non-Israeli professional person who is familiar with the Western Canadian business scene.

He added that if the pilot project works in Calgary, it is possible it will be replicated in other cities in Canada. He also noted that the choice of Calgary was made for business reasons only, and was not a "political" decision.

Although the Jewish community in Calgary is relatively small, Gissin said that was not a factor in the decision to open an office in Calgary. "We're coming to Calgary to do business," he said.

Vancouver campaign raises over $7M

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — While the recession cloaked the country, the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver managed to raise $7.325 million in its 2009 annual campaign, an increase of $125,000 over the previous year.

The campaign's slogan, "Put Yourself in Our Feet," really resonated with donors, says Michael Fugman, who chairs the JFGV board.

"People just don't realize how much we have to do for so many people," he said. "In the past when I was out campaigning, it was like trying to get blood from a stone, but this past year my experience was that people were proud to give. I think they really do care and are becoming more aware of the needs out there."

The Jewish Agency for Israel is the primary recipient of the federation's overseas funding, while locally the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver and Jewish Family Services are the two largest recipients. Some 300 canvassers volunteered their time to fundraise for the campaign, which ran September through November. Last year, federation worked to reduce its operating costs to maximize funding available to agencies, in part by eliminating 4-1/2 full-time jobs.

"We're very pleased we were able to come back with an increased campaign after 2008, in a challenging environment," said Mark Gurvis, executive director of JFGV. "We feel very good about what the community was able to accomplish this year, and we're looking to build on that for future growth so we can meet a broader set of needs here, in Israel and around the world."

Fugman agrees, adding that the results make him proud to live here. "We have a great, great community, and it's really evident that people care," he said.

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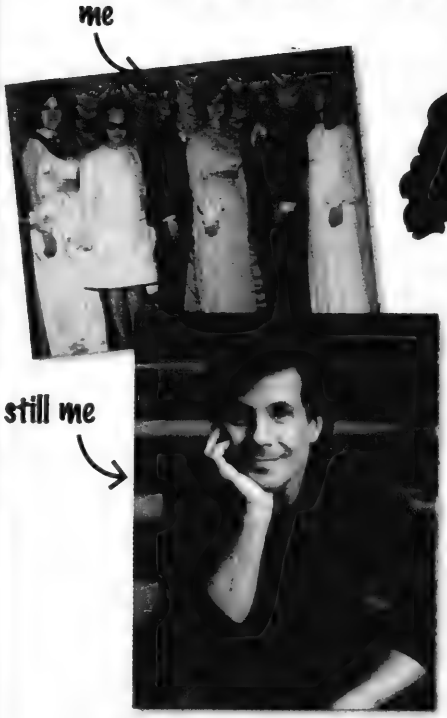

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Jewish, Muslim students share a laugh together

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — In a rare collaboration on Canadian university campuses, the Jewish and Muslim student associations here are co-hosting an evening of comedy on March 4, featuring the Israel-Palestinian Comedy Tour.

The Israel-based comedy troupe, which was formed in November 2006 and made its Canadian debut at the Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto in May 2007, features four standup comics. Charley Warady headlined comedy clubs and colleges across the United States, appearing on both NBC and Comedy Central, before emigrating to Israel more than 10 years ago. Ray Hanania is a Palestinian-American standup comedian and an award-winning columnist for publications including *Yediot Achronot's* English website Ynetnews.com, the *Arab News* in Saudi Arabia and the *Jerusalem Post*. Aaron Freeman, a black American convert to Judaism, is a standup comedian, columnist and radio commentator. Yisrael Campbell is an Orthodox Jew who was born Catholic. He made aliyah eight years ago and has performed standup comedy around the world.

The Winnipeg program came together as a result of a meeting between Jewish Student Association (JSA) president Eyal Kraut and Muslim Student Association (MSA) president Asma Mneina. They met at an interfaith program in November where they both spoke to an audience of high school students about their communities.

"On so many Canadian campuses, there is tension between Jewish and Muslim students," says Kraut, a third-year arts student at the University of Manitoba. "Asma and I thought that by having joint programs, we could alleviate that tension here. After all, we are all students at the university. Despite differences of opinion on certain issues, we all have similar concerns as students."

"I thought it was a good idea to do something together," says Mneina, a first-year arts student, also at U of M, who came to Winnipeg from Libya with her family when she was a baby. "I was active in high school, and when I started university, I saw a void in interfaith and intercommunal activities. There are a lot of different communities reflected at the university level. It's refreshing to have Jewish and Muslim student groups working together."

Kraut reports that the two groups have already held one joint event aimed at promoting the comedy evening. On Feb. 12, they staged a hummus competition. One Jewish student and one Muslim student each prepared a quantity of hummus, and students were invited to sample them and vote on which was the tastiest.

The hummus prepared by the Muslim student was preferred by the majority of students who took the taste test, Kraut says.

Mneina and Kraut are looking forward to more joint programming in future.

You can reach Eyal Kraut at eyalki@hotmail.com or 479-6190.

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PURIM PROJECT: Grade 5-8 Girls at Or Haemet Sephardic School collected food items and helped to prepare mishloach manot packages for the Ezrat Achim Annual Purim Project. Ezrat Achim is a non-profit organization that gives food and financial assistance to needy families and individuals.

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Jewish groups appeal for calm over chassidic schools

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Quebec Jewish Congress (QJC) is warning the government opposition, unions and media not to make a small number of chassidic schools the lightning rod for what is promising to be an anguished debate over the province's "identity" and how that can be reconciled with accommodation of religious minorities.

"We do not want the Quebec identity debated on the backs of a handful of schools in Outremont," said QJC president Adam Atlas. "It's a mistake to make Jews the centrepiece of this debate."

He said Education Minister Michelle Courchesne's proposed reform of the school year calendar is "an important step forward" because it may make it possible for these six schools to, at last, fully teach the mandatory curriculum, while maintaining their traditional religious instruction.

At the same time, the change can benefit the entire school system, perhaps even reduce the province's high dropout rate, he said.

Atlas suggested that those worried that this modification of the law threatens the goal of state neutrality might better consider removing the crucifix from the National Assembly, the cross from Mount Royal or eliminating statutory Christian holidays. However, he added, QJC is not advocating any of these moves.

Fears that accommodation of the chassidic schools by the government will somehow open the door to the creation of more religious schools are unfounded, in Atlas's opinion. "I don't think this is going to change anything...and may go some way to help [chassidim] integrate into Quebec society."

QJC has not been directly involved in the talks between the chassidic schools and the ministry, which have been going on for a couple of years.

Courchesne's decree, deposited Feb. 3, would base the minimum length of the school year on the total number of hours, rather than days, which means schools could fulfil that time on weekends and in summer.

The chassidim could extend their teaching time into Sunday. The change would also allow flexibility with regard to holidays taken.

Forty-five days of consultation are required before the decree becomes law.

Although the modification affects all schools, public or private, critics maintain Courchesne's main motivation was resolving the chassidic schools issue, in effect, catering to a tiny group that has defied the law for many years – and, in most cases, continued to receive public funding.

She has been derided in a couple of French papers as "Rabbi Courchesne" and caricatured as a chassid.

Two of the schools, however, have reportedly informed the minister that they will not be complying, even after the calendar change: the Rabbinical College of the Tash community in Boisbriand and the Satmar community's Yeshiva Toras Moshe in Mile End.

B'nai Brith Canada also decried turning the school calendar modification into a Jewish issue and placing these six schools at the eye of a storm. Moïse Moghrabi, Quebec chair of B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights, said, "it is wrong to claim that these changes open the door to a return to confessional schools. Religious education is a right that private schools, Jewish or not, have and currently exercise."

Quebec's public schools, historically either Catholic or Protestant, have been non-denominational since 1998.

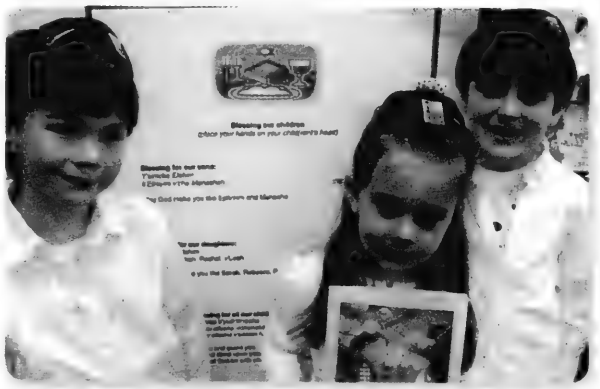
"The proposed modification to the school calendar is simply a question of giving a larger margin of flexibility to schools to realize specific projects such as sports, arts, internships and vocational training. Accordingly, this is not at all an issue of 'unreasonable' accommodation," he stated.

Courchesne said little about the negotiations with the schools until last April when she issued an ultimatum that they must comply with the law by this past September, or face legal action. The communities themselves have said even less.

Max Lieberman, a spokesperson for the Jewish Orthodox Community Council, declined to answer any questions from *The CJN*. "We are not interested in engaging in any discussion, it would not do us any good."

Even the schools involved have not been made public by the ministry, but the Belz, Skver, Satmar and Tash communities have been identified in the media.

Continued on page 24



KABBALAT SHABBAT: Senior kindergarten students at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus – from left, Mason Drutz, Masha Bongard and Joshua Dimpfel – lead their very first Kabbalat Shabbat service.

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PQ slams decision

Continued from page 23

The Parti Québécois (PQ) has called for the repeal of Courchesne's decree and charged that she erred in making a secret deal with these schools and undertaking such a transformation of the school system without public consultation. The PQ says it will pave the way for the "reconfessionalization" of the province's schools.

The major unions, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec and the Fédération des syndicats de l'enseignement, the big teachers' union, have also demanded that the plan be dropped.

The issue of "illegal" Jewish schools has been the focus of intense French-language media scrutiny for more than three years, even though these six schools and others associated with the chassidic communities have been around for a long time, some more than five decades. Most receive government funding, although not all. It also is not clear if all even have permits.

Until the media scrutiny, successive governments have generally turned a blind eye to the situation.

The problem appears to be confined to the boys' schools, especially at the high school level, which are said to not be sufficiently teaching the required secular subjects. For the most part, these students do not write the provincial exams or receive high school leaving certificates.

Since 2006, Federation CJA has taken the position that the schools must conform to the law. The schools in questions are not affiliated with the federation agency, the Association of Jewish Day Schools.

Courchesne received some unexpected support last week from former PQ premier Lucien Bouchard who said he did not like the tone the party is taking.

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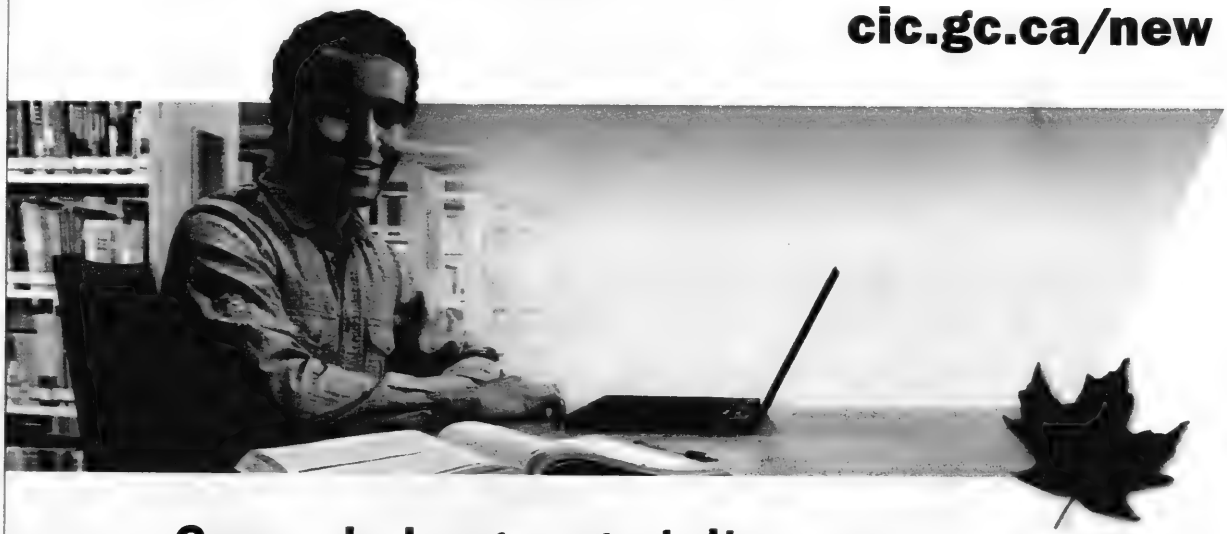

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Class Acts

OLYMPIC MOMENT: Jake Raubvogel, left, and Sarah Prosserman of United Synagogue Day School's Beth Tikvah campus hold Olympic torches in preparation for an in-school run with the torch, as vice-principal Nanci Wax Pearl, left, and principal Gail Silver look on. Students from nursery to Grade 8 took part in a Winter Games ceremony where an Olympic flame was lit and a student-prepared slide show was shown.

OLYMPIC GAMES: In recognition of Canada's hosting the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Netivot HaTorah Day School students in grades 1 through 5 enjoyed doing crafts, solving word puzzles and playing bingo and board games. They also had fun going through an obstacle course and were given Canada stickers to help cheer on Canada in the games. Pictured is Shira in Grade 5. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

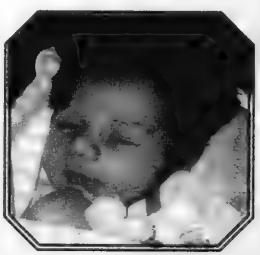
Happy 65th anniversary, Harry & Esther Fish. Many more happy and healthy years together. Love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mazel tov to Harry Weinstein on the occasion of your 90th birthday! From family and friends.

Mazel tov Mom & Dad on your 65th anniversary! All our love, Syma & David Forberg's entire family.

Mazel tov to our cousin Rosica on her recent 90th birthday! Love from all the Krafts and extended family.

Noa Rothman had a surprise 30th birthday party arranged by husband Shayle. Son, Aedden, family and friends joined the celebration on Feb. 13.



Mazel tov to Shanna & Aaron Goldberg on the birth of Ayden. Proud grandparents are Alan & Ruth Goldberg, Robert Indig and Dahlia Sterling.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation
YT

What's New deadlines: Deadline for the March 11 issue is March 1, and deadline for the March 18 issue is March 8. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, Feb. 25

POLISH-JEWISH HERITAGE

Shalmi Bar-Mor, Holocaust historian, will talk on "When Oil Was Struck in the Shtetl: The Impact of Modernity on Jewish Life and Identity," 7:30 p.m. Beth Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave. Presented by Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada. $5 members, $8 non-members.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Parents will learn ways to move from a win-lose conflict situation to one of problem solving. Skills will be introduced, 7.30 p.m., Temple Sinai. $15 in advance; $20 at the door. 416-487.3281 or education@templesinai.net.

Friday, Feb. 26

NEW ANTI-SEMITISM

Shabbat Zachor lecture and discussion, "The New Anti-Semitism – Is It New? With Israeli historian, **Shalmi Bar-Mor**, 8:15 p.m., Congregation Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave.

Saturday, Feb. 27

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah Torah class, 10-11 a.m., *Tetzaveh*, everyone welcome.

ARK DEDICATION

Shaar Shalom Synagogue is dedicating a new Ark, 9:45 a.m. Kiddush follows celebration.

SERVICES

Toronto Partnership Minyan meets at Toronto Heschel School, Sheppard and Faywood. Shiur 9 a.m., services 9:30 a.m. tpmcentral@gmail.com

Sunday, Feb. 28

KULANU TORONTO

Screening of *Reclaiming Our Pride*, about the politics in Toronto's Pride Parade, 2-3 p.m., Wolfond Centre basement, 36 Harbord St. $10 suggested donation.

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Koffler Chamber Orchestra season continues with "From Sweden to Italy" with stops in Jerusalem and Prague, 7 p.m., Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Tickets, ticketweb.com or 1-888-222-6608.

Monday, March 1

ADD/ADHD

Attention deficit awareness program is holding a workshop geared toward parents, guardians, teachers and others living and working with people with ADD and ADHD. 7-8:30 p.m., 30 Drewry Ave. 416-395-1727 to register.

Tuesday, March 2

RABBI CAPERS FUNNYE

The first African-American rabbi to serve on the Chicago Board of Rabbis, and **Michelle Obama**'s first cousin, **Rabbi Capers Funnye**, will talk about his journey to Judaism and to the rabbinate, 7:30-8:15 p.m., Temple Sinai. Members $10, non-members $15. 416-487-3281 or education@templesinai.net.

SHABBAT PRAYERS

Rabbi emeritus **Michael Stroh** continues his series on the Deep Meaning of Prayers in the Shabbat Morning Service, Temple Har Zion, 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY AT THE MOVIES

Beth Tikvah Synagogue is screening *Arranged*, 2 p.m. No reservations, $5 at the door.

Wednesday, March 3

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore

Continued on page 27

"Visually ravishing" ★★★★ Eye Magazine
★★★★ Now Magazine
"Act of God hits the mark" The Globe and Mail
"Riveting" ★★★★ Time Out London

ACT OF GOD

A film by Jennifer Baichwal

Award-winning Canadian director Jennifer Baichwal's **Act of God** is a documentary about the metaphysical effects of being struck by lightning. The film explores seven stories that raise questions about chance, fate, and the meaning of life.

Featuring **Paul Auster**, the best-selling novelist, struck as a teenager, and musician, **Fred Frith**, whose original compositions demonstrate the ubiquity of electricity in our bodies and in the universe.

Wednesday, March 3, 7:30 pm
Congregation Habonim, 5 Glen Park Avenue
(one block north of Bathurst & Glencairn)

Discussion with Director Jennifer Baichwal to follow screening.

Admission: Charitable Donation at Door.
Donations go to "Access Education - Guatemalan Children's Fund".

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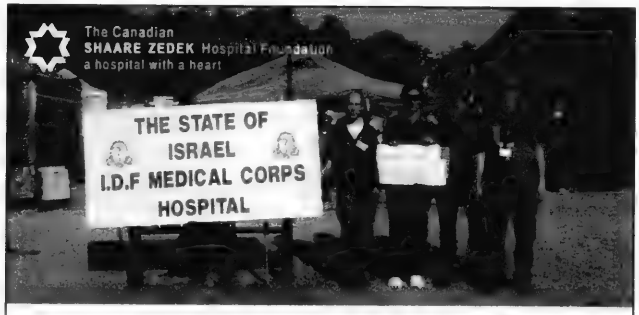

The Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation and community partners Shaarei Shomayim Congregation & The Speakers Action Group present:

Sharing My Experiences in Haiti,
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Chief of the Israel Defense Forces Field Hospital in Haiti and Deputy Director General and Trauma Surgeon at Shaare Zedek Medical Centre in Jerusalem

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What's New

Continued from page 26

Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Tonight's program, "Stop Crying." No charge. 416-633-3838.

CANTOR IN CONCERT

Beth Sholom Synagogue's **Cantor Meir Finkelstein** will appear in concert with his daughter **Emily**. 8 p.m. Tickets $18. **Rivy**, 416-783-6103, ext. 228.

COMMANDMENTS IN ART

Rabbi Michal Shekel will speak on "The Ten Commandments in Art" at a lecture in memory of **Rabbi Sol Tanenzapf**, sponsored by Beit Rayim Synagogue, Reena Battle Centre. Ma'ariv, 7:30 p.m., lecture, 7:45 p.m.

BIKUR CHOLIM

Bikur Cholim luncheon recognizes gynecologist **Dr. Paul Bernstein**, rofeh of the year. Kehilat Shomrei Shabbos Congregation. bikurcholimtor@rogers.com.

Thursday, March 4

YIDDISH VINKL

Frieda Johles Forman will speak about "Jewish Refugees in Switzerland during the Holocaust," noon, Free Times Café, 320 College St., $15 includes lunch and program. RSVP, yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

OTHER NEWS

PURIM CELEBRATIONS

Shaarei Tefillah Congregation children's celebration following the Megillah reading, which begins at 7:15 p.m., Feb. 27.

Adath Israel Congregation, Purim concert with **Kayla**, Feb. 28, 9:30 a.m., followed by carnival, 10:30 a.m. $10 concert and carnival; $7 concert only; $3 carnival only. Prize given with tickets purchased in advance, 416-635-5340.

Winchevsky Centre's family Purim carnival, Feb. 27, 11 a.m., 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Costume parade, performance by Clay & Paper Theatre. 416-789-5502, www.winchevskycentre.org.

Toronto Partnership Minyan hosts a Purim celebration at Toronto Heschel School, Sheppard and Faywood, Feb. 27. Megillah 8 p.m. torontopartnershipminyan@gmail.com.

Beth Jacob Synagogue's Purim party, Feb. 28 starts at 4:30 p.m. with Minchah and followed by seudah, 5 p.m. Prizes for best costume. $10 adults, children under 10 free. 416-635-9287 for reservations.

Kehillat Shaarei Torah Purim winter olympics, Feb. 28, 4:30-6:30 p.m. 416-229-2600.

Temple Emanu-El and **Ve'ahavta** join together at the temple to support Ve'ahavta's Kinder Kit project at a Purim carnival, Feb. 28, 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. $20 adults, children under 13 $10.

Anshei Minsk, Megillah reading, Feb. 27, 8:15 p.m. followed by Purim party. Dance to the sounds of Eldan Cohen and Co., Anshei Minsk Synagogue, 10 St. Andrew St. reachus@theminsk.com

DRIVERS NEEDED

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house, March 3, 10 a.m., April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP, Judy, 416-928-3537, ext. 135 or judy@djds.ca.

YIDS IN THE HALL

Comedy show with Yids in the Hall, a fundraising event for Hillel Children's Workshop. March 6, 7 p.m., Bishop Strachan School, 298 Lonsdale Rd. $36 includes wine and sweet table. www.hilleltoronto.com, 416-277-3340.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration open for the Melton Mini School graduate classes. Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity begins March 3 for eight weeks. Call 416-789-7400.

GIRLS' SHABBATON

Girls' Shabbaton, March 5-7 with **Rabbi Danny** and **Esther Bahar**. No charge. For info, 905-882-6755.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m., followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m., followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

BLOOD SERVICES

Blood donor clinic, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, March 7, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 1-888-2-DONATE for info and to book appointment.

SHAAREI TEFILLAH

Natanel Javesky conducts a four-week seminar on Jewish medical ethics, beginning March 2, 8 p.m. No charge.

Rabbi Moshe Stern conducts a four-week seminar on the Passover Haggadah, beginning March 3, 8 p.m. No charge. 416-787-1631.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

BBYO and Canadian Young Judaea's Battle of the Bands is raising funds for Free the Children, 7:30-11 p.m., Dufferin Clark Community Centre, 1441 Clark Ave W. Tickets $12, 416-398-2004 or info@bbyo.ca. March 6.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com for info on following groups.

Birthday's, Hockey Games and Holidays: making it work after divorce,,March 8, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

High-Conflict Divorce, for parents wanting to develop strategies to deal with high-conflict situation. Active participation, not for those in an abusive situation, March 10, 6:30-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Adolescents and Divorce focuses on helping adolescents cope during transitional time, March 11, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids, March 24, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 6:30-9 p.m.

Develop a Successful Business Relationship with your Child's Other Parent, March 25, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

Effective Parenting: four-session group for parents of children 2-11 years, begins March 25, 7-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, suite 313.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call Pearl, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, friendly atmosphere in beautiful surroundings: line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Casino Rama, Wednesday, March 3, 10 a.m. departure. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, March 4, 1:30 p.m., lecture with music: "Early Yiddish Tin Pan Alley New York 1890-1920" features **Jordan Klapman**, 416-924-6211 ext. 155

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Diabetes risk screening, March 9, 10 a.m.-noon. Call **Nadya** for appointment, ext. 126.

Lecture, "A Jewish Scientist's Journey from Traditional Atheism to Uncommon Faith," with **Arnie Gotfryd**, March 9, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Purim Drum Circle, Feb. 28, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Magician, drums, face painting, refreshments. Megillah reading to follow. $25 per family of 4. To reserve tickets, call ext. 4235.

New programs at the Culinary Arts Studio include "Soups to Warm Your Soul" with chef **Margie Arosh** Feb. 25, 7:30-9:30 p.m. "Say Good-bye to Passover Boxed Desserts!" with chef **Ellen Grossman**, March 4, Noon-4 p.m. "Food for the Soul Series," with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** of Yeshiva University Torah Mi Tzion, March 8, 1-3:30 p.m. To register, 416-638-1881, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Celebrate Purim @ the J, Feb. 28. 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m, $5 per person / $10 per family at the door, ext. 154

Feb 26-28, Canadian Art Foundation Reel Artists Film Festival. Screenings at the Al Green Theatre. Passes $65, advance only; individual tickets $10 in advance; rush tickets $12; students and seniors $7. 416-368-8854, ext. 102. Info: www.canadianart.ca.

New lecture series, Exploring Israeli Society, Mondays, March 1-22, 6 -8 p.m. Register: ext. 0

Media Mondays: The Art of Television, March 1, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Topic: "Where Do We Go From Here? A Look into the Future of Television." Drop in, $12. Ext. 606.

Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation present ISH Theatre's Odysseus Chaoticus
March 4 and 6, 8 p.m., Al Green Theatre, clown theatre for adults/teens, general admission $18, students (ages 13+) and seniors $12. Ext 0.

March 3, 9:15-11:15 a.m., "A Healthy Dose of Laughter: International Week of Clowning, Laughter and Healthcare," free community plenary with international experts and Israel's dream doctors. Al Green Theatre, no registration necessary.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 33

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Steeles Memorial Chapel

Tsiroulnikov, Leonid	Jan. 29/10	Private
Chertov, Lev	Jan. 30/10	Private
Bernstein, Leah	Jan. 30/10	850 Steeles Ave. W
Hartman, Emery	Feb. 1/10	40 Joel Swirsky Bl
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Barkan, Tsilia	Feb. 3/10	80 Antibes Dr
Lant, Ben	Feb. 3/10	151 Kennard Ave
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Gershon, Samuel	Feb. 4/10	262 Ridley Blvd
Schneider, Chaim	Feb. 4/10	209 McMorran Cres
Bruner, Flora	Feb. 5/10	14 Brill Cres
Markus, Sara Ina	Feb. 5/10	2 Buchan Court
Bowman, Laura	Feb. 5/10	3560 Bathurst St
Biriukova, Zinaida	Feb. 4/10	Private
Trattner, Magda	Feb. 7/10	Private
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Obituary

Koschitzky matriarch was a role model

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The matriarch of a family known for its support of Jewish education and other causes in the Jewish community – among them the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, the Golda Koschitzky chair in Jewish Education at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education, and the Golda Koschitzky Women's Halachic Hotline – died Feb. 13 in Toronto.

Golda Koschitzky at age 100 in Jerusalem, on Sukkot 2007

Golda Koschitzky was 102, and had celebrated her last three birthdays in Israel.

In a eulogy at her funeral in Toronto, Rabbi Yehoshua Weber of Clanton Park Synagogue spoke of her wisdom, fortitude and "stoic sense of self-confidence" and her sincere, committed religious observance.

Rabbi Shlomo Gemara, rosh yeshiva of Bnei Akiva Schools, who also spoke at the funeral, recalled her inner strength and sharp mind. As well, "her heart was exactly in the right place," he told *The CJN*.

"She led a rich and full, incredible life. She was a truly great matriarch... a role model," her daughter-in-law Julia Koschitzky said last Thursday after returning from Israel, where her mother-in-law's burial took place.

Golda Landau was born in Lutowiska, Poland, the descendent of two rabbinic dynasties. As a young child during World War I, she fled from Poland to Hungary with her parents and younger brothers by horse and buggy. She spent three years in Prague, studying at a German-language school, before the family returned home in 1917. Because her school had only five grades, Golda took private lessons to attain the equivalent of a high school education, Julia said. She belonged to the local Zionist youth organization, and as a young woman helped her father run his dry goods business.

In 1933, the year that Hitler came to power, Golda married Israel Koschitzky, a native of Oswiecim (Auschwitz) who was in the roofing business, and who shared Golda's interest in literature and worldly issues.

Difficulties and challenges lay ahead: The couple was exiled to Siberia during World War II, and Golda insisted on taking their two young sons. Her decision saved their lives, Julia noted.

After the war, the family immigrated from Germany to Canada. In Winnipeg, where they had cousins, Golda washed dishes in a restaurant, while Israel took a job loading sugar boxes onto a truck and worked as a ba'al tfillah (prayer leader), as they built a new life.

Golda never bemoaned her fate, said Julia. "Whatever life had in store, she faced it bravely."

Israel, who died 15 years ago, established a roofing business in Calgary in 1957, and later in Toronto. In his 60s, Israel decided to take on a new challenge: starting a roofing business in Belgium. He and Golda spent the next 23 years in Antwerp.

"They were great Zionists," Julia said of her in-laws. "They were believers in education. They built a mikvah here [in Toronto,] and Jewish institutions here and in Israel. They always found a Hebrew teacher for their sons. I think [what drove them] was a sense of responsibility, and that they felt they had to share their good fortune."

Koschitzky is survived by her sons Saul and Henry, daughters-in-law Mira and Julia, seven grandchildren, and many great-grandchildren.

דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

אינגעלאדן צו זינגען אין וואַרשע
האָב איך געפונען מיינע יידישע ווארצלען.
פון מערשא מובה

איך בין אַ קינד פון פּליטים וואָס האָבן דורכגעמאַכט
דער חורבן. איך בין אַ זינגערין פון דזשעז און פון יידישער כוסיק.
איך בין אויך אַ שרייבערין און אַן אקטיוויסט. כּיוו אַ פּאָר יאָר צוריק
האָט דער אַמעריקאַנער יידיש פּעכטיוואַל מיר איינגעלאַדן צו
טעלן אויסצוגן פון מיין שפּיל "סטיל די נאַכט" וואָס איז
אינספּירירט פון די מעשיות וואָס מיין באָבע האָט מיר דערציילט
חענג איר אַנטילין פון דער וואַרשעווער נעטא און איירע פּינף יאָר
אין די פּוילישע וועלטער כּיוו די פּאַרטיזאַנער. איר דער זעלבער
ציט וואָס מיר מיר אויך געבעטן קומען פֿאַר־טעלן מיין פּראָיעקט
אין וואַבורג אין וואַרשע. א שוי שפּילער ניט וווּ כּיוו נעפֿינט אַ
ביינע.

איך כּוח אויך זאָגן אז די לעצטע צוויי אינזלאדונגען האָבן
מיר נעמאַכט זייער אומבאַקוועם. אין האַלאַנד האָב איך זיך נעפֿילט
צוישן פֿיינט. אַבער דיישלאַנד וואָס צוויקגעבראַכט נעדאַנקען
חענג די יאָרן תּקע וואָס האָבן גמאַרבעט פֿאַר דעם אומקום פון
אַלע יידן. און פּוילן איז פֿאַר מיר אויך נעווען אַ לאַנד אין וואָס די
נעשיכטע פון אונטערגעטיטשער פּאָליטיק האָט נעמאַכט קלאַנגדיק
דאָס לעבן פֿון יידן. כּיוו ציל, מיט ביידע קאַנצערטן, איז נעווען צו
חזיין אַן עולם, אין איר מערהייט אַ נישט יידישער, אז איך די יידישקייט
לעבעדיק שפּראַך כּיוו ניצער קומט און קינסטלער אין חערט
נעווען ערנסט.

די וואַרשעווער איינבאַדונג צו שפּילן אין שלום
צענטער איז נעקומען פון נאָלדע טענצער. די איז די דירעקטאָרין
פון שלום צענטער וווּ וואַרשעם יידן קומען זיך צוואַמען פֿאַר
אַלערלייי קולטורעלע און כּהילשע נעשעניסן.

. זי אין איר נאַן, שמעון טורקיין, זיינען איבערגעגבן צו
דער אופֿהאַלטונג פון דעם וואַרשעווער יידישן קונסט טעאַטער.

די באַלד איך בין אַנגקומען אין סטאַם איז מיר עפּנט
איבערגעפֿאַלן. וואַרשע איז מיר נעווען באַקאַנט אין באַקוועם.
אַזוי וי איך וואַלט דאָרט מיין נאַנץ לעבן נעווינדט. איך האָב
אַנגענהרבן זוכן די נעסלאַך וווּ מיין מאַמע האָט זיך אויפֿגעלעבט
אירע קינדערשע יאָרן. זייער חידוש איז נעבליבן פֿון נעסט. אַבער
איך נאָס שטיט נאָך כּיוו אַן טיר און פֿענצטער – בלויז די כוערעס
וועגט –פּראַכטנע נאָס. באַלד ביי דער פּראַכטנע נאָס וואָלט מען יעדן
יאָר דעם י"ב. זינגער יידיש פֿעסטיוואַל וואָס פֿירערט די ריכטיקע
פון אונדזער קולטור און איז אויך, פֿאַר מיר, נעווען אַ דערמאָנונג
פון וואַרשעווער נעטא אויפֿשאַנאַנד.

מיין קאַנצערט אין שלום צענטער איז נעווען נעפֿאַקט.
אין אַלע מיינע יאָרן אַף דער בינע נעדענק איך נישט אַזאַ וואַרעמען
אויפֿנעם. צוישן די וואָס זיינען נעווען ספּעציאַל אינגעלאַדן האָבן
זיך נעפֿונען פּאָליטישע און נעשעפֿטלינע פערזענלעכקייטן אוך די
בעלהביתס פון די חיכסטיקסטע טעלפֿחיזע סטאַנציע אין פּוילן.
דעם נעקסטן מאָרגן בין איך נעווען אַ נאַסט אויף פּוילישער
טעלעוויזיע וווּ איך האָב נעזונגען יידישע לידער. דעם מיין פֿרשטן
קאַנצערט האָב איך נעזונגען נאָך צוויי כּאָל אין וואַרשע צוואַמען
מיט מיינע פֿרינד עדרינן קופּער און דושאַנא בארן – יעדעס כּאָל
אין נעפּאַקטע זאַלן.

דאָס יידיש לעבן אין וואַרשע איז נישט וווּ נעווען – אַבער
עס פֿירט זיך אויף נייע, פֿרוכטבאַרע חענג. פֿאַר מיר איז דאָס אַ
נס. מיין ציל אין וואַרשע, און וווּ איך זינג, איז צו טאָן וואָס איך קען
צו פֿאַרזיכערן מאַמע לשון און חיזיק אַז־מיר זיינע דא."

אויב איר האָט נעדאַנקען חענג אנדזער חיזקל לאָזט
חיזק. שרייבט מיר אויף מיין אַדרעס, דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליק־
פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

High school's oldest 'grad' gets honorary diploma

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

When Toronto Holocaust survivor, Martin Maxwell was 14 years old, he was only weeks away from his high school graduation.

Maxwell, now 86, and his brother, Leo, were rounded up by the Nazi SS officers, but they were miraculously freed because of a "letter of passage" obtained from a German soldier who had employed Leo at one time. Their two sisters died in a concentration camp.

Shortly after that, Maxwell, an orphan, fled from the Nazis in Austria following Kristallnacht in November 1938. He came to England where he was adopted by a British family.

In 1942, he joined the British army. He took part in the D-Day invasion of Normandy in June 1944, and later the same year, he fought at the battle of Arnhem in Holland, where he was wounded and held as a prisoner for seven months.

The decorated veteran came to Canada in 1952 and made his home in Toronto where he has a successful health and beauty business.

Maxwell, a volunteer speaker for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, has reached out to thousands of students and groups, sharing his story of survival and overcoming obstacles, encouraging tolerance and respect.

For many years, Maxwell didn't talk about his painful past. But when a friend asked him to fill in for a Holocaust speaker who was unable to come, Maxwell says he was finally able to talk about his past without reliving it.

During Holocaust Education Week last November, Maxwell was the guest speaker for students and staff at The York School on Yonge Street south of St. Clair Avenue, where his topic was "My Personal Testimony: From Kristallnacht to Liberation."

The staff and students were so moved by Maxwell's presentation that when they learned he had never had the opportunity to graduate from high school, the school decided to present him with an honorary secondary school graduation certificate.

Holocaust survivor Martin Maxwell, right, accepts an honorary high school graduation certificate from The York School's upper school principal, David Hamilton.

At a recent school assembly his wife, Eleanor, son Randy and granddaughter Carly were there to see him receive his certificate.

He told the students it's important to try your best and treat people with dignity. "It's not the falling down that counts, but the getting up," he said. "I receive this honorary degree, not only for myself but for my two little sisters and the million and half children who died in the Holocaust, and the other children who never had a chance to live long enough to go to school and graduate."

The graduation diploma "recognized Martin Maxwell for his courage and perseverance. He is a lifelong learner who exemplifies the ideal of The York School and the International Baccalaureate Programme.

"He contributes to his community by helping people to understand diversity and conflict by encouraging them to pursue world peace."

At the graduation ceremony, David Hamilton, York's upper school principal, said, "There are so many life lessons that Mr. Maxwell taught us that morning that we truly felt we owed him so much."

The Jerusalem Foundation of Canada
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The National Board of Directors
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sincere condolences
to the entire Koschitzky family
on the passing of

Golda Koschitzky ז"ל

whose inspiring model, abiding commitment
to Jewish learning and extraordinary
devotion to the Jewish community
will be greatly missed

YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

On Campus

Purim party promotes Jewish pride

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

There will be dancing, there will be singing and there will be Jewish pride. This is the Canadian Friends of Hebrew University's response to the upcoming Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW).

CFHU is launching its Be U Be Hebrew campaign during its Purim party on Feb. 28, which will feature the Israeli hip hop band Hadag Nahash. The campaign's goal is to motivate students to maintain their Jewish pride while they prepare for IAW, which will run from March 1 to 14.

IAW, which will include speakers and rallies on university campuses, compares Israel's situation to apartheid in South Africa.

Canadian Friends of Hebrew U program designed to counter Israel Apartheid Week

"Apartheid week is... in my opinion a one-sided, anti-Semitic campaign," said Rami Kleinmann, the national director of CFHU.

"It's intimidating Jewish people. It's actually forcing a lot of students to hide their Jewish identity this week, which is something that... the Jewish community cannot stand."

CFHU will continue to support pro-Israel activities on campus after the party through their campaign.

"[It's] a very simple message of [being] proud of who you are. You did nothing wrong; don't let anyone else make you feel ashamed of who you are," Kleinmann said.

The CFHU decided to launch its campaign through this party because of the comparisons that can be made between the current situation and Purim, which celebrates a foiled plot to eradicate the Jewish people in the ancient Persian empire.

"If you look at both situations, there is a very strong link between what happened 2,000 years ago and what people in Apartheid Week are trying to do," Kleinmann said. "What we're trying to do is give [students] a historical perspective by saying... this is not something new."

The CFHU's campaign aims at providing the right tools to the younger generation to combat anti-Israel initiatives like IAW, Kleinmann said.

"[The younger] generation is becoming a player in this unfortunate game. By giving them a little bit of pride, it will be a good place to start," he said. "Fortunately we're living in a democratic country where we can use the democratic tools to combat anti-Semitism."

Funds from the Purim party will go to the Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which focuses on relations between Jews and non-Jews in situations of crisis.

For Miriam Pilc-Levine, the national director of communications and marketing at CFHU, the party is a good way to launch the campaign.

"It got started because we wanted to play a role in showing the students that they have support from the Jewish community," she said.

"The whole piece kind of fits together with Purim and wanting to have a celebration. I guess the students find themselves overwhelmed by the supporters of Israel Apartheid Week. We wanted to give them an opportunity to be proud of who they are."

The Netivot HaTorah Family
wishes to extend our heartfelt condolences to the extended Koschitzky family on the passing of

Mrs. Golda Koschitzky ע"ה

Her generosity and friendship will be remembered always.

"המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים"

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בס"ד

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Henry and Julia Koschitzky and Saul and Mira Koschitzky and their families

on the loss of

Golda Koschitzky ז"ל

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

David Wm. Brown, *President* — Sheldon Carr, *Chairman of the Board*

The Yeshiva University Family
is deeply grieved by the passing of the grand matriarch of the Koschitzky family

Golda Koschitzky ז"ל

The Golda Koschitzky Chair in Jewish Education in the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education is a tribute to her brilliant, visionary and generous commitment to the preservation of the Jewish heritage for which she and her late husband, Israel Koschitzky, were widely revered. They inspired their children and loved ones to strive for excellence and to follow in their noble ways.

Heartfelt condolences to her children, Yeshiva University Benefactors, Saul (and Mira) Koschitzky and Henry (and Julia) Koschitzky, her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Yeshiva University

Richard M. Joel, *President*
Samuel Z. Ettes, *National Chair, CFYU*
Dr. Norman Lamm, *Chancellor*
Kurt Rothschild, *Ontario President, CFYU*
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Bar-Ilan University

Bar-Ilan University and Canadian Friends of Bar-Ilan University
deeply mourns the passing of

MRS. GOLDA KOSCHITZKY ז"ל

The entire Bar-Ilan University family is deeply saddened by the loss of such a truly remarkable woman and grateful for her generosity in endowing the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Department of Jewish History

Heartfelt condolences to her children,
Saul and Mira and Henry and Julie
and all her grandchildren and great-grandchildren

May you be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem

Gabi Weisfeld, National President
Patricia Freidland, Ontario Regional Chair
Dov Altman, Executive Vice President

On Campus

Releasing Schalit called a 'complex issue'

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The kidnapping of Gilad Schalit is not a black and white issue, said Middle East analyst and educator Ari Applbaum.

Applbaum spoke earlier this month to a group of young people at the House, a Jewish social and educational centre. He created the lecture about Schalit as part of the educational programming of the David Project, a non-profit organization that encourages Jewish leadership through educational seminars and workshops, on college campuses and off.

Ari Applbaum

In leading the event, which was organized by the House and the Birthright Israel Alumni Community, Applbaum concentrated on humanizing the sometimes controversial issue of kidnapped Israeli soldiers.

"I started with saying [Schalit] is a person," he told *The CJN* after the talk. "I wanted to remind them that he's a person. I told a little bit about his life."

Schalit, a staff sergeant in the Israel Defence Forces, was kidnapped by Palestinian militants near the Gaza Strip on June 25, 2006. He is currently believed to be alive and is being held by Hamas.

Two other soldiers, Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, were also kidnapped around the same time. Goldwasser and Regev were held by Hezbollah and killed.

These three abductions led to military actions in Gaza and to the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

"I think that it's such an emotional issue. Israelis have such a complicated relationship with it. It's hard for [people] outside the country to understand," he said. "I tried to bring shades of gray [to the discussion]."

During the lecture, he also discussed the return of Goldwasser's and Regev's bodies, which were swapped for five Hezbollah prisoners in July 2008.

"It was really controversial. Until the last moment, [the army] wasn't sure whether they were alive or dead. Until the last day, Hezbollah dropped hints that they were alive," he said. "Many Israelis said if you're willing to put a price on two question marks, what you're conveying is it doesn't really matter... why keep them alive?"

Applbaum's lecture ended with a discussion about the best course of action to achieve Schalit's release.

He said there are three options when dealing with Schalit: to let the issue go, to stage another military action or to negotiate a swap.

"[The first] is a non-starter in Israel. It's not even weighed as a serious option," he said, adding that there will most likely be a swap, possibly for some 1,000 Palestinian prisoners.

"People say that the IDF is a unique army... one tool in their toolbox is knowing that whatever happens, they'll return home," Applbaum said. "Proponents of the deal say that if you lose that commitment, soldiers will not go into battle prepared."

While the lecture was meant to inform, Applbaum's main goal was to initiate a discussion with the audience.

"The facts can be researched by anyone in the audience. The answers are out there. The value I brought was in facilitating a discussion where the audience began to understand the complexity [of the situation]," he said after the lecture.

Brandon Marlon, 30, who was in the audience, agreed. "It's always best when it's interactive," he said. "It's always good to talk about it. I think it's a complex issue. The idea is to rise above the emotions."

For Lior Cyngiser, the alumni relationship co-ordinator for the Birthright Israel Alumni Community, the talk was an important one, especially for the event's target audience – Jews aged 20 to 30.

"I think it's super relevant because the target audience are all connected to Israel... Everyone can relate to the issue. It's important to keep the issue alive," he said.

CELEBRATING PURIM

Royalty was sighted at Bialik Hebrew Day School when junior kindergarten students got ready to celebrate Purim. Pictured, from left, are Mordechai (Adam Ziskind), Queen Esther (Emily Robinson), the court jester (Abby Finkelstein), King Achashverosh (Braden Kuzmarov) and Haman (Shayne Kerbel).

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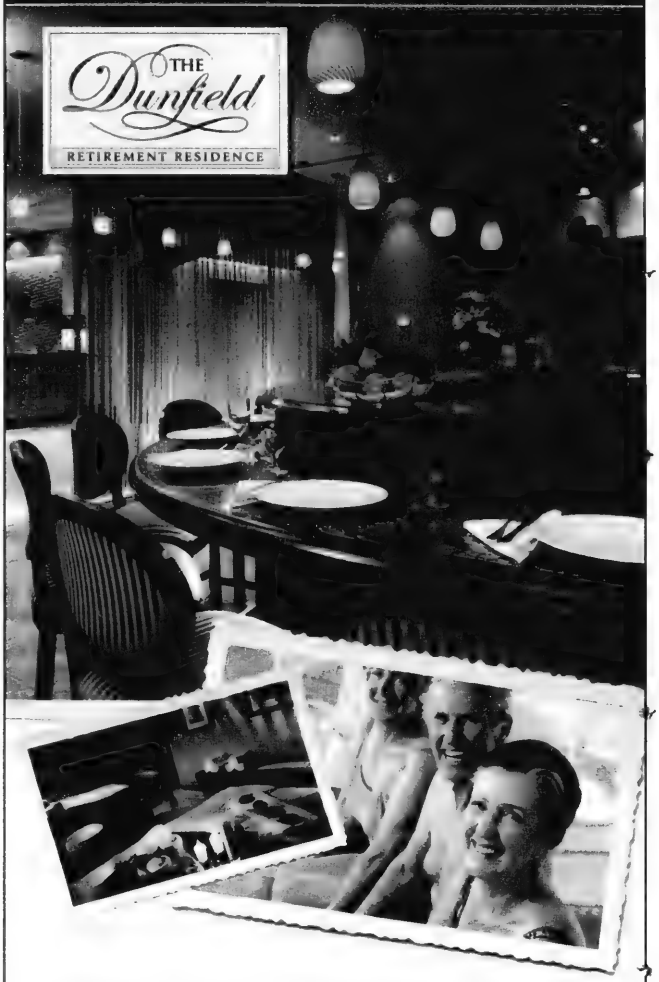

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Remembrance of food past

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

We associate people with all kinds of things – a song, a place or an article of clothing can conjure up an image or a memory of a familiar person.

The same holds true for food. For instance, hamantashen, those triangular filled cookies we eat on Purim, remind me of my paternal grandmother, Ethel Kirshner. She would spend hours making these tiny, delicate, prune-filled hamantashen.

She tried to teach me to make them, but at the time, I wasn't interested in mastering a culinary activity that was so labour-intensive. I was too young to appreciate the value of preserving family recipes, but they are, indeed, precious heirlooms. When my grandmother died, her hamantash recipe was lost forever.

Another family recipe that has gone by the wayside is that of Toby Dollin's *mun* (poppy seed) cookies. She was the mother of my childhood friend Connie (Dollin) Smilowitz.

Mrs. Dollin was a real balabuste. Her house was always spotless, and she was a terrific baker. Her *mun* cookies were a fixture on her kitchen counter. She was not in the habit of letting people help themselves to the cookies, but I was an exception, and I could easily polish off a dozen in a single sitting. Her daughter laments that she never learned to bake those delicious, wafer-thin cookies.

When I eat mandelbroit, I think of the late Pearl Schwartzman. She was a warm and exceptionally kind woman who made delicious mandelbroit.

During her shivah last year, her daughters, Sandra and Cindy, shared childhood memories of their mother. They reminisced about coming home from school and finding a plate of homemade mandelbroit waiting for them on the kitchen table. It was part of a daily afternoon ritual: Mrs. Schwartzman sat and listened to her daughters talk about their day over mandelbroit and milk.

The scene, which has stuck with me, epitomizes the selflessness of mothers of Mrs. Schwartzman's generation. Most of these women did not work outside of the home. Their lives revolved around their families.

Mrs. Schwartzman's mandelbroit recipe may have disappeared, but for her children, the memory of her mandelbroit is indelible.

The following recipes come from *Second Helpings Please*, edited by food writer and author Norene Gilletz (1974).

HAMANTASHEN

Cream Cheese Dough
1/2 lb. butter
1/2 lb. cream cheese
2 cups flour
1/4 cup icing sugar

Cream butter and cheese well. Add flour and sugar and mix well. Wrap in wax paper and refrigerate overnight. Roll dough to 1/4-inch thickness. Cut in rounds. Fill and shape by bringing the sides together to form a triangle. Bake on a greased baking sheet for 15 minutes at 400 until delicately browned. Yield: 2 dozen.

Prune Filling
1 lb. prunes, stewed, pitted and chopped
1 cup raisins, chopped
1/4 cup chopped nuts
1/2 lemon, juice and rind
1/4 cup bread crumbs
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. honey

Combine all ingredients and mix thoroughly

For more recipes, please go to cjnews.com

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HAPPY PURIM

Health & Lifestyles

JWI completes transformation

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Over the past five years, Jewish Women International of Canada has reinvented itself.

The final step of that transformation took place last November, when its governance was taken over by a board of directors, said Penny Krowitz, JWI/C executive director.

The process began a number of years ago, said Krowitz, when JWI/C recognized that the landscape had changed for membership organizations.

"Young women were leading different lives than their mothers and grandmothers had. The young women were not as committed to organizational life. This was not just a Jewish phenomenon or a women's phenomenon. It was North American-wide."

She said that young women, especially, had many valid reasons for not participating. "At one time, women joined organizations because they needed outside stimulation. Now, young women are working and don't have the time."

With that in mind, said Krowitz, the organization began a strategic planning process designed to envision the future of JWI. "It was a difficult process and very emotional. We had to be brutally honest about our strengths and weaknesses, discard what didn't work and adopt new ways.

"We changed the organization from an internally focused membership organization to an externally focused social-change organization, with membership."

She said members recognized that a lot of work was needed in the area of violence against women and, for the past five years, have focused all their resolutions on this issue.

The concept behind having a board of directors, she said, is that the board is made up of women from across Canada, who may or may not be involved in the organization – previously the national executive was made up of members – and who all have an interest in ending violence against women.

"They bring to the table their interest in the issue, their professional experience, and their contacts and connections."

Krowitz said that JWI members were kept informed throughout the entire process, and they were invited to participate. "We also needed, however, broad community involvement, and we wanted a geographic representation."

Currently, she said, there are four board members – Jill Leiberman from Montreal; Laura Martin from Calgary, and Sandra Posluns and Carole Tanenbaum from Toronto – and the group is looking to expand to 10 members.

JWI also has a national leadership council made up of members and supporters across Canada, she said. "The board of directors determines and sets policies, fundraises and manages the affairs of the organization. The leadership council implements the programming."

WATCHING THE CHICKS: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School principal Janet Nish-Lapidus, along with students, from left, Maddy Toker, Arlo Godel, Aviva Penn, Ethan Wilder, Jacob Davis and Gabrielle Herzenberg, are mesmerized by the hatching of one of the chicken eggs the students had been observing and caring for during 21 days of incubation.

KIDS WITH CLEMENTINES: Thirty-one Grade 10 students and three staff from both campuses of the TanenbaumCHAT toured Israel Feb. 7 to 16. Here Dylan Kisliuk, left, and Josh Shapiro volunteer at the Leket Israel-Table to Table gleaning project. The kids and staff picked over 300 kilos of clementines, and hundreds of needy Israeli families will enjoy fresh produce that would otherwise have rotted in the fields.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

MC prepared cities across Canada for torch relay

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Bram Goldstein's cross-Canada road trip included -37 C temperatures, crowds of 15,000 cheering fans and a 300-metre jog with an Olympic torch.

Goldstein, head of BiG Entertainment in Toronto, was approached by RBC, an official sponsor of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, and asked to create a 10- to 15-minute show to get cities ready for the Olympic Torch Relay.

"It's a big deal," Goldstein, 35, said of the offer. "RBC... trusted me to represent them on the world stage."

Goldstein created a mobile art show, which included one of two artists splattering paint onto a spinning canvas as Goldstein MCs. The globs of paint eventually formed an image of a torch bearer, which was donated to each city involved in the relay.

"This is the biggest thing I've ever been a part of," said Goldstein.

For the MC, the show epitomized his love of the entertainment industry.

"It's that bar mitzvah feeling. You get onstage, you're talking to the people, you're getting them jumping, singing, dancing... We really have a lot of fun up there."

Goldstein started off his career in the entertainment industry as a DJ when he was about 15. It didn't take long to get hooked.

"I wear many different hats. I loved performing, I loved music, I loved being my own boss. I loved events," he said, adding that he started his own party-planning company, BiG Entertainment, nine years ago. "I enjoyed standing back and watching people have a good time. The best feeling in the world is when you come up with a concept and see people have a good time."

At the pre-relay Olympic shows, Goldstein was able to do just that. He MC'd for about 80 of the 106 days, and toured through hundreds of cities, including Yellowknife, Timmins, Ont., and Victoria.

"We got to see every community, every gas station, every restaurant," he said, adding that he toured with some 250 others from RBC and Coca-Cola Canada.

"It was amazing... When you go into the town and you see the Canadian flags waving, it puts a smile on your face."

For Goldstein, the tour allowed him to connect to his country.

"[When you] live in Toronto, you think you live in a bubble. [On the tour] I saw places I'll never be able to see again. You're in a car, you're seeing the landscapes, you're seeing how other people live and you're realizing you're very lucky."

One of Goldstein's most memorable moments came on the first night of the relay, in Victoria.

"You're standing in front of a crowd of 15,000 people, seeing them all so excited. That first night, when we did the first show, I knew it would be a success," he said.

Goldstein also remembers a cold day in Timmins, Ont., where the temperature was -37 C. The performers were freezing, the stage was filled with blankets and heaters, and the show went on.

Bram Goldstein, 35, created and MC'd a show to get communities ready for the Olympic Torch Relay. He also helped carry the torch through Merritt, B.C.

"It was definitely an unforgettable night," he said.

While on the cross-country tour, Goldstein got to see hundreds of torch bearers, including hockey superstar Sidney Crosby and singer Shania Twain, who ran in Timmins.

"She asked to see if she can have one of our paintings. She loved it," he said.

When watching the Olympics on TV, Goldstein always enjoyed the montages of the best and worst moments.

"I was more into that, seeing the music come together with somebody crying or falling or winning gold," he said.

Goldstein's role in the tour was to get the crowds excited for the torch. But he ended up becoming a part of the relay's bigger goal – to bring Canadian communities together.

"We've seen families come together. Every time you hear *Oh Canada*, that's the moment that we stand there in silence and we're so proud," he said.

"I never in my life have been more proud to be Canadian. People ask us all the time what energizes us each day. It's going into the towns. You see the kids, you see people smiling, dancing, singing. It makes you feel alive."

As a reward for creating and running his show, Goldstein got to represent RBC as a torch bearer in Merritt, B.C.

"It was a huge honour for me. That was a big moment... I've had some incredible experiences in my life, but this tops it all," he said. "When you look up and someone passes that torch to you, it all comes together."

Goldstein ran about 300 metres while carrying the torch. It was 300 metres he'll never forget.

"What I remember is that the flame came really quickly. I remember you just take in the moment. It's hard to describe in words," he said, adding that while he held the torch, he thought of his wife and daughter.

"I can't wait to get home to show Samantha that her daddy was a torch bearer. I made a difference. That's why I'm here. That's why I got a chance to run. We gave them a show."

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Lieberman on Dubai hit: Arabs always blame Israel

By AVI ISSACHAROFF and BARAK RAVID
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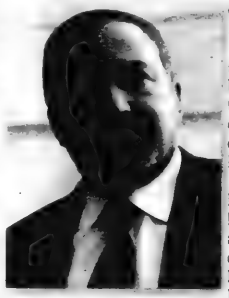
BRUSSELS — During a meeting between Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin on Monday, Lieberman was asked about the alleged use of fraudulent Irish passports by the suspected assassins of Hamas terrorist Mahmoud al-Mabhouh.

Mabhouh, a Hamas commander, was assassinated in a hotel in Dubai last month.

"The Arabs have a tendency to blame Israel for anything that happens in the Middle East," Lieberman said, adding that the region "has many internal struggles within groups and states which are not as democratic as Israel is."


Avigdor Lieberman

Martin also reportedly questioned Lieberman about the fact that the Dubai police chief had stated he was "99 per cent" sure that the Israeli Mossad was responsible for the operation.

Lieberman reportedly said that there wasn't "even one story indicating that Israel was implicated in the assassination. If anyone other than the media would have claimed otherwise, we would have addressed the issue, but as that there are no such allegations, there is no need to address it further."

Lieberman was scheduled to meet British Foreign Minister David Miliband later in the day, where he was also expected to be asked about the alleged use of fake United Kingdom passports in the January assassination in Dubai.

Both Miliband and Martin have made strong statements in recent days condemning the forging of passports and theft of identities. It was unclear what message Lieberman would offer at the meetings, though sources say the foreign minister was likely to claim that no evidence exists tying Israel to the hit.

Earlier Monday, European Union foreign ministers condemned the use of forged European passports by assassins who killed the Palestinian militant in Dubai, but made no direct reference to Israel.

Diplomatic sources said that the statement was intended to censure Israel over its alleged involvement in the killing of Mabhouh last month – though other senior European sources said the statement would not formally link Israel with the assassination or the forging of passports.

Israel has declined to confirm or deny any involvement.

"The EU strongly condemns the fact that those involved in this action [assassination] used fraudulent EU member states' passports and credit cards acquired through the theft of EU citizens' identities," a declaration on behalf of EU foreign ministers said.

Another senior diplomat said EU ambassadors had been summoned for consultations by Foreign Ministry officials in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.

During the meeting, Abu Dhabi officials requested that EU foreign ministers issue a communique over the use of European passports in the Mabhouh operation. The UAE is also demanding an explicit EU statement supporting the Emirates' authorities who are investigating the case.

According to the European source, the UAE government did not blame Israel for carrying out the assassination, nor did it request that Israel be cited in the EU statement.

The source added that senior officials from Germany, France, Britain, Ireland and the EU met Sunday to agree on the language of the statement. Ireland is advocating the hardest line among all EU members by demanding that the statement explicitly refer to Israel.

According to the European source, the communique would include three key elements: the EU's condemnation of the use of European passports by members of the assassination team, an expression of support for the UAE government and investigators in Dubai, and a commitment to investigate the passport forgeries and theft identities as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, the commander of the Dubai police revealed additional details about the Jan. 20 assassination.

The police official, Dahi Khalfan, said the police had information that would not be disclosed currently but which related to the use by some of the assassins of diplomatic passports to enter Dubai.

The Dubai police chief added that some of the hit squad had been in the emirate for at least a year before the killing and used the same passports. He made the remarks to *Al-Bayan*, a newspaper published in the UAE.

Khalfan said the information that led to the killing of Mabhouh came from an associate of a senior Hamas official, according to a statement published in another UAE newspaper, *Al-Khaleej*. Khalfan has been reported as saying the associate gave information about Mabhouh's arrival in Dubai.

Hamas officials criticized Mabhouh's conduct. Hamas legislator Salah Bardawil said Mabhouh endangered himself by ordering airline tickets over the Internet and said the senior Hamas official even notified Mabhouh's family about where in Dubai Mabhouh was staying. Mabhouh's brother, however, denied that the family had received such information. For their part, Hamas spokesmen denied the Dubai police chief's account.

One spokesman, Sami Abu Zahari, denied there was an informant in Hamas. Another senior Hamas official criticized the Dubai authorities for failing to sufficiently involve the group in their investigation.

Moreover, Arab media reported yesterday that the UAE has asked Egypt to officially lodge a protest with Israel over the assassination, as well as the alleged participation of two Palestinians who were arrested in connection with the hit.

Abu Dhabi's national security adviser met over the weekend with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. UAE officials said the arrested Palestinians were former members of the Palestinian Authority security apparatus.

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Ruth Rosen
on the passing of her husband,

Leonard Rosen ל"ז

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Israel demands embargo on Iran oil

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JERUSALEM — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on Monday for an immediate embargo on Iran's energy sector, saying the United Nations Security Council should be sidestepped if it can't agree on the move.

Iran's uranium enrichment, in defiance of several rounds of Security Council sanctions, has spurred world powers to consider tougher diplomatic measures, against the backdrop of threatened military action by Israel as a last resort.

Netanyahu told foreign Jewish leaders that if the world "is serious about stopping Iran, then what it needs to do is not watered-down sanctions, moderate sanctions… but effective, biting sanctions that curtail the import and export of oil into Iran."

"This is what is required now. It may not do the job, but nothing else will, and at least we will have known that it was tried. And if this cannot pass in the Security Council, then it should be done outside the Security Council, but immediately."

Many western diplomats believe that China, along with fellow veto-wielder Russia, would oppose sanctions targeting Iran's energy sector. Proposed sanctions for now focus on Iranian government assets such as the Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Iran, the world's fifth-largest oil exporter, says its uranium enrichment is for peaceful energy needs. But the fierce anti-Israel rhetoric from Tehran and threats of Israeli military action have stirred fears of a regional war.

Netanyahu made no reference in his speech to the possibility that Israel would try to attack Iran's nuclear sites.

Iran has earmarked potential sites for new nuclear enrichment plants and construction of two of them could begin this year, an Iranian nuclear energy official said Monday.

"We have earmarked close to 20 sites and have passed the report on those to the president, however, these sites are only potential," Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, was quoted as saying on the news agency ISNA.

"We should begin the construction of two enrichment sites next year… In the two new sites, we plan to use new centrifuges." The next Iranian year begins on March 21.

Iran announced plans in November to build 10 new enrichment plants to match its existing Natanz complex. The announcement came as the United States and its allies hoped to reach an agreement for Iran to enrich uranium abroad.

Washington fears Iran's nuclear energy program will allow Tehran to develop nuclear weapons. Iran denies any such intention and says it only wants to generate electricity.

Salehi said President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad would announce on April 9 what kind of centrifuges will be used at the new sites.

The United States and its allies hope to get new UN sanctions imposed on Iran in the coming weeks over its continued enrichment work.

The head of U.S. Central Command, Gen. David Petraeus, told NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday that the United States is placing its efforts to thwart the Iranian nuclear program on a "pressure track."

Petraeus said he thought that "no one at the end of this time can say that the United States and the rest of the world have not given Iran every opportunity to resolve the issues diplomatically."

"That puts us in a solid foundation now to go on what is termed the pressure track," the U.S. general said, adding that "that's the course on which we are embarked now."

SILBERMAN—Fanny
Yeshiva University and the Canadian Friends of Yeshiva University (CFYU) are saddened by the passing in Toronto, of the highly respected and beloved mother of our cherished friend, Madame Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Rosalie S. Abella, who was last year's distinguished Commencement Speaker at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (CSL) and also served as a major panelist at its Capt. Alfred Dreyfus Conference. Heartfelt condolences to her children, Rosalie S. Abella (and Irving Abella), Toni Silberman and her brother Sam Krongold, and her cherished grandchildren, Jacob and Zachary Abella and Jaime Filer. May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

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Longtime MK Rabbi Menachem Porush dies

JTA

JERUSALEM — Thousands attended the funeral of long-serving Knesset member Rabbi Menachem Porush.

Rabbi Porush died at his home in Jerusalem late Sunday evening at age 94. He was buried Monday afternoon in Jerusalem's Mount of Olives cemetery.

Rabbi Porush, father of current Deputy Education Minister Meir Porush, served in the Knesset as a member of the Agudat Israel and later the United Torah Judaism parties for 35 years until 1994, but remained politically active for the rest of his life.

He was a writer and editor for religious newspapers in the 20 years before entering the Knesset in 1959.

Rabbi Menachem Porush

"The Jewish People have lost a dear, wise and warm man who loved his people and was among its most dedicated public servants," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement released from his office. "We mourn his passing."

"His big and merciful heart suddenly stopped, but his activities will forever be remembered," said President Shimon Peres. "The rabbi was a rare man, a distinguished Jew, like one of the Western Wall stones in the Holy City. He did not waste a minute of his life and gave his all to serve the public, the country and the Jewish people."

Authors & Poets

The CJN is pleased to announce its

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We invite readers to submit unpublished, original works of fiction or poetry that explore Jewish themes.

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Submissions can not be returned.

Israel is Americans' fifth favourite place

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WASHINGTON — With all due respect to Washington's special relationship with Israel, Americans much prefer their neighbour to the north.

According to a new Gallup poll released over the weekend, Israel ranks fifth among the countries viewed most favourably by Americans, behind Canada, Great Britain, Germany and Japan.

A mere 10 per cent of Americans said they had a favourable view of Iran, which came in last place among a list of 20 nations. The survey was conducted among a random sampling of 1,025 respondents.

Americans' perception of the Palestinian Authority has vacillated over the course of the last decade. In 2005, 27 per cent of Americans held a favourable view, but that number dropped to 11 per cent following Hamas' election victory in 2006.

In 2009, the PA's favourable rating recovered to 15 per cent, and this year it increased further, to 20 per cent. However, 70 per cent of Americans still said they held an unfavourable view of the PA.

With regard to the foreign countries most often mentioned in the news, American public opinion did not significantly change with the Obama administration's assumption of power.

Canada remains Americans' favourite country, with an approval rating of 90 per cent. That compares to approval ratings of 87 per cent for Britain, 80 per cent for Germany, 77 per cent for Japan and 67 per cent for Israel.

The poll also revealed the generational and ideological gaps that affect Americans' views on foreign policy. According to Gallup, most countries were viewed more favourably by Americans aged 18 to 34 than by those aged 55 and older.

Israel is the only country that received more favourable views from Republicans; Gallup said. The PA, in contrast, received more support from Democrats.

The nations with the lowest favourability ratings in the poll included Afghanistan (18 per cent), the PA (20 per cent), Yemen (21 per cent), Iraq (23 per cent), Pakistan (23 per cent), Cuba (29 per cent) and Saudi Arabia (35 per cent).

Yemen was included in the survey for the first time after the suspect in the Christmas Day attack against a Detroit-bound airliner was linked to a Yemen-based terrorist group linked with Al Qaeda.

Mexico garnered a favourable rating of only 49 per cent, a two-point drop that is most likely attributable to the drug-fuelled gang wars that are plaguing America's neighbour to the south. This is the first time since 1993 that less than 50 per cent of Americans have seen Mexico in a positive light.

PA settles with terror victim

The Palestinian Authority settled a lawsuit for an undisclosed amount with the widow of an American killed in Israel in 2002. Papers were filed last month requesting the suit be dropped since the conditions of the settlement written last October had been met, *Politico* reported this week. The suit was brought by Leslye Knox, whose husband, Aharon Ellis, was gunned down at a bat mitzvah party in Hadera. The Al Aksa Brigades, linked to the Palestinian Authority's ruling Fatah Party, claimed responsibility for the act, allegedly carried out by a PA security officer. The payment is a reversal of the Palestinian Authority's previous years of refusal to meet lawsuits filed by victims' families. During the Bush administration, the PA sought intervention from the executive branch, claiming that suits such as the Knox case eventually would bankrupt the PA's leadership as it tried to exert itself over Hamas.

Rehab experts to Haiti

Israeli medical experts in the rehabilitation of amputees arrived in Haiti to help examine and evaluate injured victims from the devastating earthquake. The medical professionals from Alyn Hospital, an Israeli rehabilitation centre in Jerusalem for physically disabled children and adolescents, arrived in Haiti last Wednesday under the auspices of IsraAID, a co-ordinating body of Israeli and Jewish relief organizations and other interested parties based in Israel. The team will examine and evaluate the type and number of injuries and amputations, as well as assess the abilities of the medical staff in Haiti to carry out the rehabilitation of its people. "We are terribly saddened by the heartbreaking number of amputees in Haiti, but are grateful for the opportunity to be a part of IsraAID's mission so that we can lend our expertise in rehabilitation to the people who need it most," said Dr. Shirley Meyer, director-general of Alyn Hospital. "Our therapists will make a ground assessment of the rehabilitation and resources needed. Meyer said that Alyn would provide rehabilitation to Haitian children and training to the island nation's medical professionals if a decision is made to bring them to Israel.

Israelis abroad goodwill ambassadors

A new campaign will turn Israeli citizens into goodwill ambassadors for Israel abroad. The Ministry for Public Diplomacy and the Diaspora has started an initiative to teach Israelis how to present Israel positively. The initiative includes pamphlets given to Israeli passengers leaving Ben-Gurion International Airport, a website and training workshops across the country. The trainees will include ordinary citizens, as well as businessmen, celebrities, athletes, youth groups participants and politicians, among others. "To counter the vast sums of money invested by Arab states in propaganda against Israel, we have to mobilize our human capital, meaning the residents of Israel," Information Minister Yuli Edelstein said in a statement. A poll commissioned by the ministry found that 91 per cent of the 495 Jewish Israelis surveyed believed that Israel has a bad or very bad image abroad. Some 85 per cent said they would want to help represent Israel when they are abroad. Three million Israelis go abroad each year.

Teens riot during army drill

A soldier and two Border Police officers were injured when teens from the town of Yitzhar, in the West Bank, rioted, believing an army exercise was an eviction. Some 30 teens threw rocks and bottles filled with paint at Israeli soldiers and other Israeli security forces last week in the middle of an exercise aimed at defending Israeli communities against terrorist attacks, according to the Israel Defence Forces. The exercise took place at Yitzhar, located near Nablus. The teens also blocked the community's gate to prevent the security forces from leaving. In addition to the injuries, several military vehicles were damaged, according to the IDF. The IDF had cleared the exercise with community leaders, according to reports. "The IDF condemns tonight's events, and will take severe measures against those involved," an IDF statement said.

– Files from JTA

Germany: Iran must pay for its nuclear defiance

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BERLIN — Iran's failure to comply with the wishes of the United Nations over its nuclear program is forcing the international community to pursue further sanctions against Tehran, the German government said on Friday.

"The persistent defiance...of United Nations resolutions and Tehran's continuation of a dangerous nuclear policy are forcing the international community to pursue further comprehensive sanctions in New York against the regime in Tehran," government spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm told a regular news conference.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was still "extending her hand" towards Iran and remained committed to reaching a diplomatic solution, Wilhelm told a regular news conference.

"We rule out a military solution," he said.

Germany's comments came as Russia's Foreign Ministry said last week that Iran must more actively co-operate with the UN nuclear agency, the IAEA, to convince the world that its nuclear program is peaceful, Interfax news agency reported.

"Tehran must be more active in its co-operation with the IAEA and widen it," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko was quoted as saying at a briefing in Moscow.

Iran said on Friday that charges in a recently leaked IAEA report claiming the Islamic republic was attempting to develop nuclear weapons were "nothing new but tiresome."

"The West's accusations are baseless because our religious beliefs bar us from using such weapons ... we do not believe in atomic weapons and are not seeking that," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was quoted as saying on state television.

In its report, the IAEA said that it had concerns that Iran is currently working on a nuclear warhead. The IAEA said the Islamic Republic will not allow inspectors access to heavy water activities – heavy water is used in nuclear reactors – and has not sufficiently explained possible military activities, such as exploding high-powered detonators, that could be used in making a nuclear device.

The report also said that uranium particles found by the IAEA in Syria show that a site bombed by Israel in 2007 could have been a nuclear reactor. It was the first time the Vienna-based organization has used such phrasing in one of its reports, which had so far referred to past activities.

"The issues related to alleged studies regarding missiles raised in the latest IAEA report had also been raised in previous IAEA reports and are therefore nothing new but gradually becoming tiresome," Iran's IAEA envoy Ali-Asghar Soltanieh told ISNA news agency.

The Iranian envoy also claimed the new IAEA chief, Yukiya Amano, confirmed the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear projects.

President Shimon Peres said that Israel must form a broad international coalition to face the Iranian nuclear threat, adding that it wasn't a question of who has nuclear weapons bur rather what it intends to do with that arsenal.

Speaking at the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in Jerusalem, Peres said that to "curb Iran's nuclear ambitions Israel must create a broad coalition of nations that can face the Iranian threat."

"The question isn't who has the bomb, but who has executioners," Peres said, adding that "the Iranians are executioners who are trying to get a bomb, and it's time we called the executioner by his name, and call a dictator a dictator.

In related developments, the United States reportedly is preparing a new National Intelligence Estimate that will portray Iran as more aggressively pursuing nuclear weapons.

Iran continues to enrich uranium and has announced plans to substantively expand enrichment.

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Film producer Christina Fon gravitates toward Aboriginal issues

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Movie producer Christina Fon is co-producer of *Reel Injun*, a documentary by Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond that traces the evolution of Hollywood's portrayal of North American Aboriginal Peoples from the silent era to the present day.

The film – which opened in Toronto and Vancouver on Feb. 19 and will be broadcast by CBC on March 28 – explains through archival clips and interviews how stereotypical depictions of native people have affected their self-image.

The topic has a certain resonance for Fon, a 42-year-old Canadian of Jewish Hungarian extraction.

"I'm a first-generation Canadian whose parents lived through persecution and anti-Semitism during World War II," said Fon, one of the principals of Montreal-based Rezolution Pictures International.

"My father wore the yellow star, and I was raised in a household that promoted empathy for all oppressed cultures," she added in an interview.

To Fon, who has produced a slew of films on Native issues since joining Rezolution Pictures International almost a decade ago, Jews and Aboriginals share an important connection.

"The most obvious one is the persecution and the displacement," said Fon, whose parents, John and Agnes, met in Montreal after separately immigrating to Canada in 1956.

"Native people are very funny. They have the ability to laugh at themselves even in the most difficult and painful situations. This is one of the things that has kept them going throughout their history. Jewish people can relate to this. I can relate to this. I was brought up in a family that definitely used humour to deal with many horrific situations."

Christina Fon

Fon rates *Reel Injun* as her "proudest achievement." As she put it, "When you produce a film about an oppressed minority, you bear the weight of that responsibly. You've got to get it right."

As she discovered to her surprise, some of the Aboriginal talking heads in the film are of partial Jewish ancestry, including Jesse Wente, a Toronto movie critic, and musician Robbie Robertson, formerly of The Band, who in recent years has become a Hollywood composer.

A graduate of Concordia University who majored in communications, Fon has produced or co-produced a plethora of award-winning films on Aboriginals in the past nine years.

The River, set on a fictional Native reservation on the Canada-U.S. border where a crime family runs a smuggling operation, will be broadcast on the Movie Network and Movie Central in the near future.

Club Native, filmed in the Mohawk community of Kahnawake, explored the question of who exactly is a Native.

Rez Rides took viewers inside two very different Native custom car shops, while *Mohawk Girls* explored the lives of teenage girls in Kahnawake.

In addition, she produced three seasons of *Dab Iyiyuu/Absolutely Cree*, which focused on the legends and wilderness skills of elders; *One More River*, which told the story of a Cree referendum on a contentious hydro-dam project, and *Moose TV*, the first all-Native comedy series, which starred Adam Beach.

Fon has also produced general interest films.

Mommy Mommy is about the trials and tribulations of a lesbian couple who want to adopt a child. *The Last Explorer*, a docudrama about revenge and forbidden love, takes place in the heart of rugged Labrador. *Heavy Metal: A Mining Disaster in Northern Quebec* looks at a small community devastated and tested by toxic mining waste.

Fon launched her career in Vancouver as an assistant director. "I worked in Vancouver for about two years and returned to Montreal, homesick, as a freelancer to work on various films."

As far as she is concerned, she was lucky to join Rezolution International Pictures.

"The freelance life was not for me," said Fon, a mother of two whose husband, Alfonso Maiorana, is a cinematographer.

Her co-principals at Rezolution Pictures International are Ernest Webb, who was raised in a Cree community; Catherine Bainbridge, a Torontonian who was a print journalist and television host, and Linda Ludwick, a Winnipegger who brings expertise in production and finance to the mix.

"In Webb, Bainbridge and Ludwick, I found a group of people who were not 'industry types' but creative people who wanted to do work that made a difference. Native, Irish, Jewish and gay. That's us. Despite the diversity of our backgrounds, we function as a single unit. It's a rare blessing when your best friends are also cherished creative partners."

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Provocative play deals with Mideast conflict

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Michael Nathanson's *Talk* is about the collapse of a friendship between a Jewish man and his non-Jewish friend in the aftermath of 9-11.

The provocative Governor General Award-nominated play is being staged in Toronto at the St. Lawrence Centre for The Arts next month.

The Jewish man, Josh, is played by Michael Rubenfeld, and Kevin Bundy has the role of his non-Jewish friend, Gordon.

During their 18-year friendship, the two have never discussed Middle East politics and religion. But one day, when Gordon's girlfriend drops the word "Palestine" in conversation, in reference to a scarf she's wearing, the men's friendship begins to break down, as Gordon reveals he's become very pro-Palestinian

"The play for me is a love story between two friends that dissipates as a result of politics," Rubenfeld says. "What is so fantastic about the play from my perspective is that it is asking us to look at the Middle East conflict with a very diasporan perspective, which is very complicated and is one that is often very black and white. One, that many people have a hard time understanding... Jews and non-Jews alike."

Rubenfeld wants audiences to leave the theatre with a greater understanding of the complexity of the situation in Israel, and also how the conflict is affecting everyone around the world.

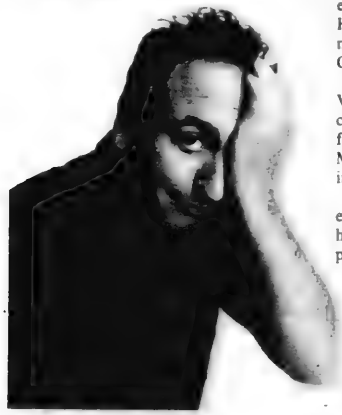
Continued on page 41

Jeremy Hotz's act revolves around his 'miserable' life

By PAUL TELNER AND BYRON PASCOE
Special to The CJN

"Shouldn't it be written right to left?" Jeremy Hotz said during an interview with *The CJN*.

Canadian Jewish comedian Jeremy Hotz's act revolves around his misery with, well, just about everything.



Jeremy Hotz *[Mark Hill photo]*

"I went to Hillel Academy in Ottawa for six years," Hotz said. "That traumatic experience is solely responsible for my career."

His miserable attitude is what brings him on a cross-Canada tour from Feb. 25 to March 13, appropriately titled Jeremy Hotz... It's the Most Miserable Time of the Year Tour. Audiences can expect "more of the miserable stuff that happens to me every day that people find funny," he said. He considers the beach to be the most miserable thing about this time of year in Canada.

His tour will take him from Ottawa to Vancouver, except for some "miserable" cities, that is. The Canadian cities that he finds most miserable are "Red Deer and Moose Jaw, cities that feel the need to include animal names in their title."

If he wasn't a comedian, Jeremy knows exactly what he would be doing with his life. "I would be a plumber. I love to plumb," he said.

The comedian has appeared on screen in a variety of TV series, including a recurring role on the CBC show *The Newsroom*, and many standup showcases.

He recently shot a pilot for a reality show. "I have a new sitcom in about my miserable life," he said.

As a seasoned comedian, Hotz said the most exciting part of the business has been that "it has afforded me the opportunity to date women well out of my league." The most disappointing part is that "I can't afford women well out of my league," he added.

Many comedians use Twitter and Facebook as ways to get their comedy out. Hotz thinks social networks are definitely a positive for comedy. "Yes. Join my Facebook page. And if you're a single girl well out of my league, I've recently run into a bit of money," he said.

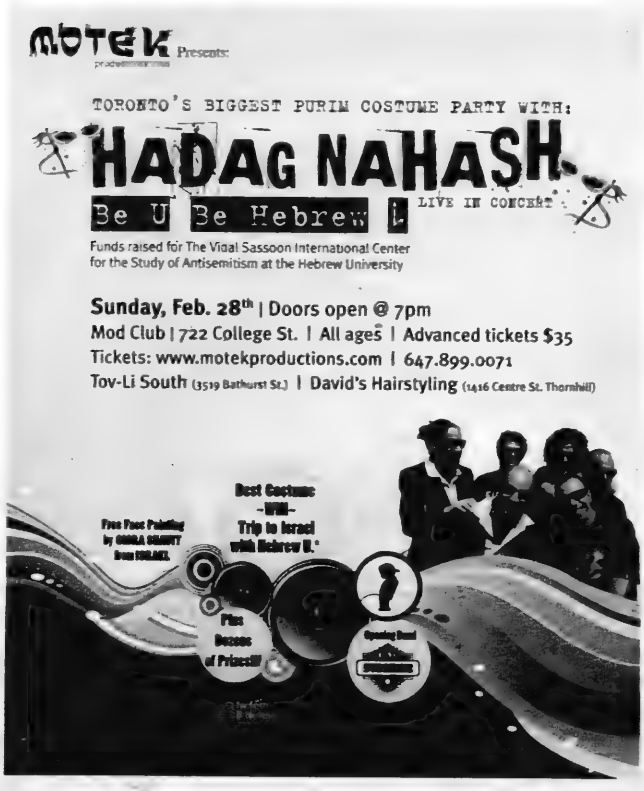
Hotz, who has has appeared on the Letterman and Leno shows, also weighs in on the recent late-show wars. "Conan [O'Brien] won in the end. I wish someone paid me $8 million for just standing there."

Hotz won two Canadian Comedy Awards: the Dave Broadfoot Comic Genius Award 2008 and an award for the best male standup in 2009. He received a Gemini for *The Newsroom*, and he was nominated for one for the best writing in a comedy or variety show or series for his special, *Whatever Happened to Jeremy Hotz?* He's still pretty miserable.

Hotz's most memorable gig was playing the Playboy Mansion, which he said was also his worst gig.

When asked about the moment when he truly felt as if he'd made it in comedy, he responded in typical Hotz fashion, "When it happens, I'll let you know."

Hotz's tour brings him to Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton and other cities. For more information, visit www.hahaha.com/JeremyHotz, and if you're a single woman well out of Jeremy's league, visit www.facebook.com/JeremyHotz.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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ISRAELI HIP-HOP BAND HADAG NAHASH HEADLINES PURIM BASH AT MOD CLUB

Canadian Friends of Hebrew University is sponsoring a party on the eve of the odious campus hatefest Israeli Apartheid Week, to show solidarity with Jewish university students and raise funds for the study of anti-Semitism. The party falls on Purim, a holiday that commemorates a foiled plot in the ancient Persian Empire to eradicate the Jewish people. Its theme is "Be U Be Hebrew." The party features **Hadag Nahash**, Israel's most popular hip-hop band. Mod Club, 722 College St. Sunday, Feb. 28, doors open 7 p.m. 647-899-0071, info@motekproductions.com

* * *

Names in the News: Amy Winehouse plans to attend her family's Passover seder this year but hopefully won't drink any of the four traditional cups of wine, according to an interview with her father, **Mitch Winehouse**, in London's *Jewish Chronicle*. The 26-year-old singer, who's known for her eclectic mix of R&B, soul, jazz and ska, and who's had heavy problems with drugs and alcohol, is trying to kick her self-destructive habits.

The story also reveals that Mitch Winehouse, a 59-year-old cab driver, has recorded an album of popular songs that will soon be released. "I've always sung in the house, and Amy and I first spoke about my doing an album five years ago," he said. "But then she wasn't well, and I just didn't have the *koyech* for it. Now that she is well into her recovery, I decided I could do it." The piece further relates that Amy idolized her grandmother, **Bubbie Cynthia**, a "former jazz singer with **Elizabeth Taylor** looks" who "was clearly the model for Amy's love of big hair, eyeliner and performance itself."

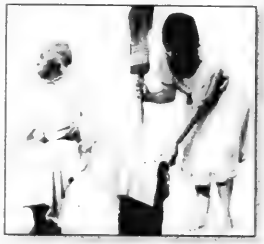
* * *

Literary Awards

• **Kim Ablon Whitney**, author of *The Other Half of Life*, a work of historical fiction based on the ill-fated voyage of the MS St. Louis, has won the 2009 U.S. National Jewish Book Award in children's and young adult literature. The St. Louis sailed from Germany in May 1939 with some 950 Jewish refugees who were refused entry in Cuba, United States and Canada, and ultimately forced to return to Europe, with tragic consequences. The publisher is Alfred A. Knopf.

• *The Importance of Wings*, by **Robin Friedman**, a coming-of-age novel about an Israeli girl whose family relocates to Staten Island, won in the older readers' category in the 2010 Sydney Taylor Book Awards for Jewish children's literature, administered by the Association of Jewish Libraries. *Tropical Secrets: Holocaust Refugees of Cuba*, by **Margarita Engle**, won the highest award in the teen category.

The Varsity Jews perform at Beth Radom Congregation Feb. 28



Odysseus Chaoticus at the Al Green Theatre March 4.

• **Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**, of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth, has won the 2009 (U.S.) National Jewish Book Award, modern Jewish thought and experience, for *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible, Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*, published by OU Press and Maggid Books. The book offers a collection of essays on the weekly Torah portion, reflecting Rabbi Sacks' sophisticated approach to life lived in an ongoing dialogue with the Torah. Sacks also wrote the introduction and commentary to the Koren Sacks Siddur, which was one of the finalists in the awards.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• The Reel Artists Film Festival, hosted by the Canadian Art Foundation, invites you to "journey through the world of visual art" via a series of screenings at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Festival pass $65, individual tickets $10 in advance, rush tickets $12. Feb. 26 to 28. 416-368-8854, ext. 102, www.canadianart.ca/raff

• **The Varsity Jews**, a Jewish a cappella choir at the University of Toronto, performs a CD release concert for their debut album, *This One's A Kippah*. All proceeds go to charity. Admission $5, with CD $20. Beth Radom Congregation, 18 Reiner Rd. Sunday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m. By reservation (varsityjews@hilleltoronto.org) or at the door. www.varsityjews.com

• **Mark Clamen** discusses "The Art of Television – Where Do We Go From Here? A Look into the Future of Television," at the next Media Monday lecture. $12 with TV clips. Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, March 1, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org

•Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation present ISH Theatre's *Odysseus Chaoticus*, clown theatre for adults and teens, direct from Israel. "Uproarious physical comedy… pure fun." Al Green Theatre, March 4 and 6, 8 p.m. $18, $12. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.algreentheatre.ca. The clowns are also presenting A Healthy Dose of Laughter workshops at Baycrest and the Hospital for Sick Children, March 1, 2 and 3.

• **Jordan Klapman** discusses "Early Yiddish Tin Pan Alley, New York 1890 -1920" as part of a series on the history of Jewish popular music. Miles Nadal JCC, Active Seniors, Thursday, March 4, 1:30 p.m. $2; refreshments. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• Submission deadline for the 2010 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition is June 30. For complete submission guidelines and prizes, please phone 416-924-6211, ext. 606, or visit www.mnjcc.org.

* * *

Passages: Helen Weinzweig, who won a Toronto Book Award in 1981 for her second novel, *Basic Black With Pearls*, has died in Toronto, at age 94. The Polish-born writer came to Toronto as a girl, with her mother, and was married to the famed Canadian composer **John Weinzweig**, who died in 2006.

Weinzweig did not begin writing until she was in her late 40s. "One of the drawbacks of starting when you're older is you know what good writing is, and you know you can't do it," she once said. "You have standards in your mind that can never be met." She was also nominated for a Governor General's Award for fiction for her short story collection, *A View from the Roof*. She is survived by her sons, Paul and Daniel.

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Play deals with friendships and politics

Continued from page 38

"Today, no matter who you are, you now have a relationship with the Middle East. When I was growing up, it wasn't like that."

He says his relationship with Israel has shifted in his adult life. More and more people are pro-Palestinian, and the perspectives are very black and white.

"In some ways, for me it has just made things less clear because Israel is a country I grew up learning to love and I've been to Israel."

Rubenfeld says that today a lot of Jews are becoming anti-Israel and he's not sure how he feels.

"I need to live in a world that I can still love Israel and not agree with everything its government does, but still believe it is a necessity to exist, because my family were Holocaust survivors. If there was a country back then, there would be a lot more Jews alive in the world."

Rubenfeld was instrumental in getting Nathanson's play published by the Playwrights Canada Press, which led to its Governor General Award nomination.

Rubenfeld is a 2001 acting graduate from the National Theatre School in Montreal. He is the co-founder and co-artistic director of Absit Omen Theatre with playwright Hannah Moscovitch. In 2008, he was hired as the artistic producer of Toronto's annual SummerWorks Theatre Festival.

Michael Rubenfeld

Rubenfeld plans to tour *The Book of Judith*, a play he created with Sarah Stanley, internationally. His body of work also includes *Present Tense*, *Spain* and *My Fellow Creatures*.

While rehearsing *Talk* this month, Rubenfeld spent his nights acting in *Yichud* at Toronto's Theatre Passe Muraille. He's currently working on a screenplay with Josh Reichmann, formerly of the band Tangiers, and finishing a musical with Moscovitch.

Talk, produced by the Harld Green Jewish Theatre Company and directed by Ted Dykstra, runs from March 3 to 20. For tickets, call 416-366-7723.

Canadian sitcom premieres its second season

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Sheldon Blecher is fat. Josh is a narcissist. Their father is abrasive and their mother is a pyromaniac.

And Marvin Kaye can relate.

Kaye is the co-creator of *Less Than Kind*, a Canadian television show based loosely on his life growing up in Winnipeg with his Jewish family.

The sitcom, which features the Blechers and their family-run driving school, premiered its second season on HBO Canada on Feb. 19 and is currently in development for its third.

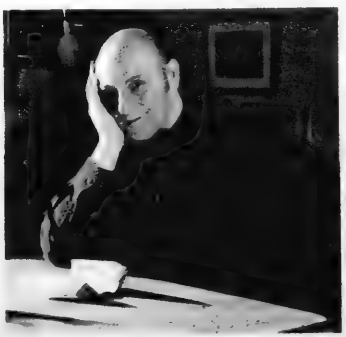
Although the show originally premiered on Citytv's in 2008, the concept was born in the mid 1990s as a one-act play, called *They Have Mayonnaise in Montreal*.

"The play was produced and had a pretty good run," Kaye said. "It just sort of sat on the shelf. Years later, I hit my mid 30s and me and my friend Chris [Sheasgreen, the show's co-creator] decided we needed to figure out what we'd do with our lives, besides be starving actors, which was becoming a little boring."

After pitching the show to various networks, Kaye and Sheasgreen ended up working with the production company Breakthrough Films and Television.

So far, the show has won two Canadian Comedy Awards and was nominated for nine Gemini Awards.

For Kaye, the key to a successful show is creating relatable characters.



Marvin Kay

"To give these characters heart, you have to give them a little bit of your humanity," he said. "Those characters were based on my life and growing up in Winnipeg and those family relationships."

Kaye, whose real life family owned a driving school, sees himself as Sheldon, played by Jesse Camacho, who's a smart, awkward overweight teenager that's constantly being made fun of by his handsome, self-absorbed brother Josh, played by Benjamin Arthur.

"I based it on my perspective," he said. "They're all these crazy family members and they have a tough time relating to each other, but the fact that their family is so strong...you forgive a lot of those foibles and mistakes."

The show's tone can be summarized by its theme song – *One Great City* by the Weakerthans. The theme song's last line is "I hate Winnipeg."

"It talks about the city in a fond way. It had a back-handed compliment. We kept coming back to [the song]. It seemed right. It had the same tone in it, it had a sentimentality to it, but it was kind of harsh."

The show may be a comedy, but the second season will get much darker than the first, Kaye said.

While *Less Than Kind* explores failed acting careers and dating disasters, it also delves into issues of mortality as Sheldon's father, Sam Blecher, played by Maury Chaykin, faces a near-death experience. Well, several near-death experiences, as he dies and comes back to life three times in the season premiere.

For Kaye, the show is about balancing the line between tragedy and comedy.

"I think life does that too. That was sort of our intention. The sweet spot was to get someone laughing and crying within several minutes of each other. If you can do that, that's a special spot to be in," he said.

While the show is based on Kaye's life, most plot lines aren't.

"The story eventually gets a life of its own. We have to wave reality goodbye," he said. "There's things that happened in the show that have never happened in my life, but we try to keep it rooted in a real human place."

Kaye, who has toured with the theatre company Shakespeare in the Rough and appeared in films like *The Perfect Man* and *Undercover Brother*, also worked on the production side of television in shows like *Puppets Who Kill* and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

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Norman Levine's last book

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

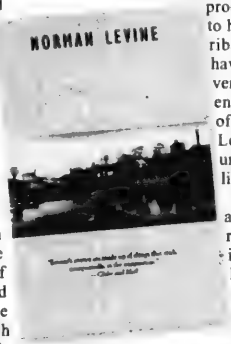
Norman Levine's career was among the strangest of the major postwar Canadian Jewish writers. Although he spent little time in Canada after his stint in the Canadian Air Force during World War II, and much of his fiction is set in England, he continued to be thought of as a Canadian writer, and in the last years of his life, he received the kind of attention and awards that evaded him in his more active years.

Norman Ravvin

Born in Ottawa in 1923, Levine was raised by his Polish-born parents in Lower Town, a French-speaking neighbourhood where Jewish peddlers like his father, selling from a horse-drawn cart, were a common sight.

Levine wrote his first novel, *The Angled Road*, while studying at McGill, and it was short-lived graduate work at King's College London that introduced him to the English creative milieu where he spent the bulk of his life. A summer in Cornwall proved a turning point, for it was there that he befriended painters – among them Francis Bacon – and writers, who influenced his fiction. Levine's career began in little magazines, but his stories found a home in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* in an era when short story writing was a feasible way to support a writing life and a family.

Levine's last book, *The Ability to Forget* (Lester & Orpen Denys), appeared in 2003, a few years before he died. Like previous collections, published to limited popular success, it is a remarkable book – sad, full of beautiful descriptive writing and crisply reported talk revealing his characters' disjointed lives. A number of the stories in the book are set around Cornwall, and they evoke the curious character of towns like St. Ives and Penzance, where British artists and writers went to pursue their work, finding themselves cut off from the broader English scene and surrounded by the trappings of a somewhat down-at-the-heels seaside tourist culture.



Levine often acknowledged the influence of abstract painters on his writerly craft, and it is in the coastal scenes in stories like *Tricks* that his ability to build a story around painterly images shines through: "On a bright morning I set off for an estate in West Cornwall. I took the train to Penzance. Then a green country bus. It went slowly up a steep road. At the top it levelled out. We were on an open moor. It was exhilarating. I could see for miles. A brilliant blue sky. Haunches of earth with gorse and bracken and scattered granite boulders. The only sign that people were about – a row of wooden telegraph poles, by the road, carrying a single wire."

But *The Ability to Forget* returns, in a number of stories, to material linked with Levine's upbringing as an outsider in Ottawa, to depictions of his narrator's aging mother, to the grown men who were his boyhood companions in Lower Town, so that the Jewish inflection of his personality and past come clearer than they have in previous collections.

It is fascinating to see how differently Levine handles material that has been made familiar by other writers: the hardscrabble downtown Jewish economy; immigrants and postwar refugees at a loss in their New World lives. *In Lower Town* mines Ottawa's vanished Jewish neighbourhood, where the narrator's father, who "knew a few words of English and a few words of French" sells produce from his red horse-drawn wagon to housewives who cannot understand his ribald Yiddish jokes. Many years later, having moved to England to "put all this very far behind," Levine's narrator experiences a change of heart: "Now that most of the fruit and rag peddlers are dead and Lower Town has changed – I find I am unable to stay away from it. It's become like a magnet. Whenever I can, I return."

Unlike Mordecai Richler, Levine almost never mines such material for rough humour or satiric ends. Often there is the pain of loss and a sense of rootlessness at the heart of his recollections, and Canada itself is depicted as a place where whole ways of life are swept away. At the end of *In Lower Town*, the narrator visits his mother and describes the walk he took to get to her apartment: "They're knocking the wooden houses down," he tells her. "And changing the streets. Soon there will be nothing left of the place the way it was." This pleases the narrator's mother, who admires the new highrise across her street and begs her son, "You won't write any more about fruit and rag peddlers?"

Norman Levine's final book makes great fictional leaps, between the sunsets at Penzance and the eclipse of an old style of Canadian Jewish life. The fruit and rag peddlers of his father's world – itinerant outsiders, ironists who tell jokes in a foreign language – begin to look like models for the kind of man Levine became, and for the characters who people his sharp, darkly suggestive stories.

Norman Ravvin's books include Hidden Canada: An Intimate Travelogue *and the forthcoming novel,* The Joyful Child. *He is chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.*

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Free speech at issue in campus Israel wars

By BEN HARRIS
JTA

NEW YORK — In the wake of the arrests of 11 University of California, Irvine, students for disrupting a speech by the Israeli ambassador to the United States, Shalom Elcott, the president and chief executive of the Jewish Federation of Orange County, Calif., threw down the gauntlet.

UC-Irvine has long been caught in the thicket of the Israel wars, its campus notorious in the pro-Israel community for the intensity and often confrontational quality of discourse on the Middle East. But while some Jewish groups have pushed the administration to condemn inflammatory speakers sponsored by Muslim students, the university previously had been willing only to issue generic condemnations of hate speech on campus.

This time, the Jewish community will "intensely monitor" the response of the university, Elcott told JTA.

"While it's nice to condemn hate speech in general, we expect a very specific response from the University of California leadership based on what transpired in that room," he said.

In addition to prosecuting the students "to the fullest extent of the law," Elcott told JTA he expects future activities of the Muslim Students Union to be closely scrutinized and would like to see their programming stripped of public funding.

Civil discourse on college campuses, or the lack thereof, has been a source of concern for some time. But two distinct strategies are now taking shape, seemingly informed by the recourse available to both sides.

Jewish groups increasingly are pressing their case directly with universities and relevant government agencies, serving notice to university leaders and major donors that they expect strict enforcement of campus codes of conduct. Some even have sought to have speakers disinvited whose views are deemed beyond the pale.

Meanwhile, Israel's critics have stepped up efforts to actively disrupt speakers defending the Jewish state.

The differing tactics in many ways reflect the methods that Israelis and Palestinians, by virtue of their power differential, have been led to adopt in their own confrontations.

Jewish groups, possessed of greater political and financial strength, have sought to exert pressure on an institutional level, seeking governmental investigations and leveraging relationships with university officials and their deep-pocketed supporters. Pro-Palestinian groups, generally outmatched at that game, have employed methods more reminiscent of guerrilla politics – disrupting speeches, creating political theatre on campuses and being arrested.

Last week, the Zionist Organization of America called for donors to stop supporting UC-Irvine and for Jewish and non-Jewish students not to apply there.

Such tactics have surfaced at other campuses as well.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement protesting an appearance scheduled for last week at New York University by Richard Goldstone, the South African Jewish jurist whose report on Israel's conduct of the 2008 Gaza war sparked vitriolic condemnations. In Philadelphia, several pro-Israel activists protested the decision by the Hillel chapter at the University of Pennsylvania to host an event organized by the group J Street, which backs U.S. pressure on Israel and the Palestinians. And across the state, in Pittsburgh, the roles were reversed: local J Street supporters initiated a campaign to stop the Hillel chapter from hosting a speech by Israeli hard-liner Effi Eitam.

Michael Oren

"There was a tremendous amount of pressure put on this organization, on a variety of levels, in an attempt to force us to cancel the event," said Aaron Weil, the local Hillel director in Pittsburgh.

For their part, pro-Palestinian students have repeatedly disrupted speeches by Israeli speakers, including one by Israel's deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, at Oxford University recently. At UCLA, a coalition of pro-Palestinian student groups affixed duct tape to their mouths and disrupted a lecture by another Israeli official on the same night as Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren was nearly shouted down at Irvine. And at the University of Chicago, hecklers made it exceedingly difficult for former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert to speak in October, interrupting his talk repeatedly with cries of "war criminal."

Even as they seek to disrupt Israeli speakers, the pro-Palestinian students are being cast, by themselves and by some supporters, as representing the cause of free speech.

The Muslim Public Affairs Council has called for an investigation into the arrests at the UC-Irvine campus of the students who disrupted Oren's talk. A spokesperson for the group, Edina Lekovic, told JTA it was unclear exactly what law the students broke, and that there appeared to be a "selected application" of university policy.

Lekovic declined to comment directly on the acceptability of disrupting a public university lecture. But the Muslim Council's executive director, Salam Al-Marayati, seemed to defend those arrested, saying in a statement that the students "had the courage and conscience to stand up against aggression."

The students, Al-Marayati said, were exercising their First Amendment rights.

UC-Irvine's Muslim Student Union has maintained publicly that although its president, Mohamed Abdelgany, was among those arrested, the group did not orchestrate the disruptions. The MSU, however, has not condemned the disruptions either, even though it has long been a target of the ZOA – a campaign the student group has described as an effort to obstruct its right to free expression.

"It is ironic that the university would honour the representative of a country that brazenly stands 'above the law' and punish the students who would rightfully protest his presence as a representative of Israel's illegal and inhumane policies, including documented war crimes," Hadeer Soliman, the MSU spokesperson, said in an e-mail.

Hillel president Wayne Firestone joined the Ocean County federation in its call for a harsh reaction from the university.

Firestone, who in 2008 presided over a discussion in Washington about civil discourse that featured UC-Irvine chancellor Michael Drake, said he has been satisfied generally with the administrative response to such incidents. But he would like UC-Irvine to "come down hard" to send a message about the importance of civility on campus.

"I do believe that strong disciplinary procedures by the university, whether or not they're prosecuted criminally, is in order here," Firestone said.

Firestone also condemned efforts within the Jewish community to disinvite or disrupt speakers, saying it makes it harder for the community to press the importance of free speech.

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Peer back in Israel after semifinal loss in Dubai

Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — American tennis star Venus Williams defeated Shahar Peer in the semifinals of the Dubai Championships last week, but the Israeli, back on home soil, can breathe easier after emerging from the near-hermetic security detail that blanketed her throughout her improbable tournament run.

Peer, currently ranked 22nd in the world, will most likely return to the top 20 following her impressive showing in Dubai. She fell to Williams 6-4, 6-1 last Friday.

Upon her return to Israel on Sunday, she was more than satisfied with her overall performance, which was largely overshadowed by the stringent security measures that forced her matches off the centre court.

Peer's movements in Dubai were restricted to the court and a hotel, due to the organizers' security concerns. The Israeli, who last year was denied a visa by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) authorities, was surrounded by guards and played on the most secure peripheral court all week. Despite this, she defeated three seeds, including No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki.

"It was quite an experience from a number of different standpoints," Peer said as she was enthusiastically welcomed by a crowd of well-wishers at Ben-Gurion Airport.

"From a tennis standpoint as well as a psychological standpoint, it was really an experience that I'll never forget. This was a dream week in which almost everything came together at the right time. If someone were to ask me if I would've been happy with this result a while ago, I would've gladly taken it."

"One can say that [last week] was insane," she added.

Peer said she didn't really know what to expect in Dubai, the epicentre of a diplomatic and criminal imbroglio touched off by the recent assassination of a Hamas operative, an act that many believe was committed by Israel.

"Even if I try to describe the atmosphere there, it would require a few hours at least," Peer said.

Her confinement to isolation in her hotel room – where she wasn't even permitted to see her doubles partner until they both reached the court – helped her "concentrate on the things are really important," she said.

"I can't even speak of what it must be like [for her]," Williams said after Friday's victory over Peer. "She played so well this week."

Williams agreed to defend her title this year only if the Israeli player was admitted to the UAE.

That earned gratitude from Peer.

"I told her I really appreciate her support this week and last year," Peer said, adding that Williams took the decision to move Friday's match to a side court gracefully.

Peer's defensive approach failed to slow Williams, who raced to a 4-0 lead in the first set. Peer won the fifth game against serve, but Williams quickly extinguished the Israeli's hopes of a comeback by taking the final two games to win the set in just 23 minutes.

In the second set, the players traded breaks early before Williams secured a decisive second break in the seventh game. The American then survived five break points in the following game to go 5-3 up, and served out.

"She started very strong. She was all over me," Peer said. "I think I played a very good second set. I missed one or two chances, but overall it was good tennis."

Peer downplayed the controversy that resulted in a $300,000 (US) fine for the Dubai tournament last year, saying she was pleased with how the week had gone.

"I think I achieved a lot in this tournament, professionally and mentally," she said. "I've been going through a lot and I am really happy how I managed this week. I learned I am a very good player and I can be there at the top."

Williams retained her Dubai Championships crown by defeating Victoria Azarenka of Belarus 6-3 7-5 in the final. It was the third-seeded American's 42nd singles title, putting her one ahead of Justine Henin at the top of the list of active players.

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Montreal girl is Paralympic torchbearer

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

Montrealer Alison Levine is going to be a torchbearer on March 4 for the upcoming Paralympic Games.

Levine, 19, will be one of 600 Canadians around the country carrying the torch for the Paralympics, which begin March 12 in Vancouver at the same venues used for the Winter Olympics.

The Cote St. Luc resident and graduate of JPPS-Bialik will be accompanied by her close friend Tamar Eliashiv. They will head to Quebec City, one of 10 Canadian "celebration communities" where the Paralympic flame will be lit.

Levine, who uses a wheelchair because of a neurological condition, was astounded when Vancouver called her with the good news.

About 20 per cent of Paralympic torchbearers have disabilities.

Levine and other prospective torchbearers had to submit a 250-character entry as part of a contest sponsored by the Vancouver organizing committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (VANOC).

The subject related to how being a torchbearer would "embody the Paralympic spirit," Levine said.

"I was really shocked," she said in a phone interview. "Shocked and very excited."

So were her parents, Roberta and Michael Levine, sister Amanda and other family and friends.

"Thanks for letting a proud Jewish mom share in her daughter's excitement," Roberta Levine said in an e-mail message to *The CJN* announcing the news.

Currently a special care counselling student at Vanier College, Levine said she would use a crutch under one arm and wield the Paralympic torch with the other. The Paralympic torch, which is manufactured by Bombardier, is exactly the same as the Olympic torch, except it's blue instead of white.

Levine is also being furnished with a Hudson Bay Company-issued, blue Paralympic torchbearer uniform, "which I get to keep," she said.

The uniform is emblazoned with the Paralympics symbol of three agitos (from the Latin word "agito," meaning "I move") and its torch relay emblem.

The Paralympic 2010 website says that "the Paralympic torch relay is one of the most important tools to increase awareness and communication for a Paralympic Games."

One main difference between the Olympic and Paralympic torch relays – which began in 1988 – is that the Paralympic flame "has no traditional starting place" such as Olympia, Greece.

For that reason, each relay team in each participating city or town is free to kindle the flame in its own way at its own celebratory lighting ceremony.

In addition, for the first time in its history, the Paralympic relay will be run in a "non-linear" way. The first lighting ceremony will have an aboriginal theme and take place March 3 on Parliament Hill in Ottawa with the participation of torchbearers representing each province and the territories.

Movies evoke memories

By MICHAEL GORDON

Most of us love movies. There's an international passion for film. The predicted demise of the movie theatre with the advent of television and DVDs has not turned out to be so. Every Monday, I hear on the radio a report of the top box office hits at movie theatres.

The Senior Side of Life

The constant flow of new movies, however, may hide the importance of old movies and their potential role in the lives of elders. In my geriatric practice, I often recommend to families that they play old movies they know their family member loved. This is a lot easier these days than it once was, with libraries and online means of ordering old movies.

My father, who is now 98, until recently when his ability to do so has waned, would watch certain movies over and over because he loved the story or the actors – one example is the 1995 movie, *The Bridges of Madison County*, even though this would not be classified as a truly old movie. He especially loved the role played by Meryl Streep.

I recently experienced the wonderful emotional power of old movies that I have a strong, positive memory of, and the powerful feelings that such movies can provoke. Two that I watched have strong associations because of my father.

After seeing the play *Still Life* by Noel Coward at this summer's Shaw festival, and *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand at Stratford, I was motivated to find the copies of the 1945 movie *Brief Encounters*, based on *Still Life*, and the 1950 *Cyrano* movie based on the second play. The copies I purchased online were not re-mastered to contemporary technical quality, but the impact that each of them had on me was profound and moving.

I saw *Brief Encounter* for the first time with my father in the 1950s and recall the quiet in the theatre and the beautiful music that accompanied the film. I recognized the music, from Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto, as that was the first 45 rpm record set we ever owned, when this format began to replace the 78 rpms that had reigned for decades. The records I recall vividly were red vinyl and were played on a small changer that dropped the discs, which had a large central hole. The changer plugged into a large radio that either already had the ability to act as an amplifier or that my father arranged through his engineering knowledge to act as the amplifier.

I listened to that concerto over and over and became so attuned to the pauses between records that when I finally, years later, bought a 33 rpm version when I had the ability to do so, I could not understand initially why there were no pauses at certain places in the concerto as the full-sized record played on uninterrupted.

The Academy Award-winning Jose Ferrer role in *Cyrano* was the first movie I attended with my father where I witnessed him crying during a performance. It is a habit I must have inherited from him, and my children have remarked at my doing this over the years when we have seen films together.

I recently watched each of the movies, and the memories and tears evoked reminded me of those wonderful, moving childhood memories.

Memory can do this, and all of us should use our wonderful memories of those we love to their utmost to bring back special experiences that often mean so much to us and help define who we are and how we bond with each other.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey, can be researched from his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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1 can	whole kernel corn niblets
2 cups	broccoli slaw (purchase in bag at grocer)
1 can	Sockeye salmon or white tuna
1/4 c	bottled Italian vinaigrette
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2	green onions, thinly sliced
1 box	grape tomatoes, cut in half

In a clear glass bowl, layer corn, carrots, green onions, broccoli slaw, salmon and tomatoes. Drizzle dressing over the top. Cover. Chill until ready to serve.

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Making sense of nutrition labels

Something people often find confusing is how to read a nutrition label and knowing what information to take away.

Nutrition labels contain a lot of information, but not all of it is relevant to everyone. Standards require that if you make claims about a vitamin, mineral or nutrient, then you must also include the values for others. So, what should you look at?

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

First, look at the serving size at the top to determine how many servings you are likely to eat. Then you know how many times you need to multiply the information, if at all.

Next, look at calories if you're trying to control your weight. And if you are trying to lose or maintain weight, or have heart health issues, look at fat, first total fat, then the breakdown. Avoid trans fat, but feel good about poly, mono and omega fats in moderation. Note: if there's a total of six grams of fat, and the breakdown of fats doesn't add up to six, something is hidden, usually small amounts of trans fat. It may say 0g, even if the product has up to 0.5g.

You may want to look at fibre content next. Your goal is 25g per day.

Depending on your health goals, look at the carbohydrates and sugar content. The total carbs will be a combination of starch, sugars and fibre. A serving of carbohydrates should be 15g. So if bread has 23g per slice, this slice is more like 1.5 servings.

Protein is another nutrient you may look at, though not all foods are meant to be high in protein.

Sodium is a big one. We should aim for only about 1,500 mg of sodium a day. Some foods are astronomically high, and the portion is very important to consider.

Lastly, look at vitamins and minerals, things like calcium, iron, vitamins C, D and A.

Choose the categories most relevant to you and focus on those.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Purim, balloons and hope

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Fortunately, a bubble can only burst once. Or can it?

I blew up a balloon for my son, Noah River. It was long and stringy, the type a balloon artist would use to create the wheels of an inflated car. We played balloon volleyball with it, tossing it about and watching as it bounced off cabinets, eventually landing on the point of a fork. Then boom! It burst.

URBAN WRITER

I picked it up to see if the shredded balloon might be salvaged. A little boy wanted the balloon to be awake again. Eventually, I succeeded in creating another balloon, albeit a smaller one with shreds of rubber hanging off of it.

Noah and I tossed it about again, hoping for a repeat of its former agility and liveliness. But alas! The new balloon flew, bounced and then quickly torpedoed downward rolling awkwardly and tiredly along the floor looking to forgo its responsibilities as a balloon.

Soon enough, it burst again – for a second time. Noah was again disappointed.

After the Holocaust, a depression took hold of the Jewish People as it did much of the world. Six million of our people were murdered, homosexuals were executed, the physically handicapped, the Roma, Soviets, Poles and German underground fighters were beaten and slaughtered. Millions were dead. Many unmarked graves, ugly holes in the cold floor of our earth, welcomed these poor spirits.

Humankind was devastated. With the death of so many, our bubble of hope exploded wildly, and oxygen of grief splattered all over the world.

Soon though, it inflated again – our hope bubble did – and humankind uttered, "Never again," allowing for a positive transformation and an invigorated belief in the possibility of civility and peace. Something inside of us understood we had to stymie the activities of the wicked – the Hamans – and we could no longer let murder en masse happen.

Then came Mao Zedong and the 50 million murdered in China. Then came Pol Pot in Cambodia and 1.7 million murdered. Then Menghistu in Ethiopia and a million dead. Then Joseph Savimbi in Angola, Idi Amin in Uganda and Charles Taylor in Liberia. Then the Balkans. Then Rwanda. Then the Iran/Iraq war. Then the Congo. Then Darfur.

Burst!

Darfur. Fracture, rupture… bust!

Explode.

Never again – words.

With all the activism, monies and helicopters committed to the well-being of Darfur's men, women and children, Esther never made it into Achashverosh's court. Darfur is lost. "Never again" is in shambles. What happened?

Jan Pronk, the former head of the United Nations mission in Sudan, said the country had realized it could "get away with anything." That's what happened.

Sudan, like Al Capone in the roaring '20s, and like Iran today, knew it could do what it wanted, when it wanted. Omar al-Bashir of Sudan laughed at petitions, UN resolutions and words like "unacceptable," "genocide," "must stop" – just like Pol Pot of Cambodia who couldn't care about protesters. We, the people, were letting them feast on blood, and they ate heartily.

Refill that balloon.

The only way to stop the next genocide – and there will be another – is for all good people and all "good governments" to fight the enemy hand-to-hand, eye-to-eye, brain-to-brain, and not simply rely on embassy marches.

Like Mordechai and Esther, we need to grab Haman, tie him down forever – and always and recognize evil where it stands and courageously counter it.

How tragic that a balloon can burst twice. Yet with all this bursting, we'll blow it up again – because humankind craves hope.

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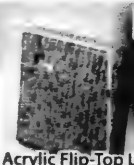

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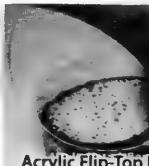

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The Canadian Jewish news

Section B

Live & Learn

All I really need to know I learned in Grade 6

Living & Learning

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

When I was talking to educators about the teachers who had a lasting impact on them – for an article that appears elsewhere in this supplement – I noticed some common threads.

The teachers who had a positive impact cared about their students and made learning fun. At the same time, they could be exacting, and knew how to motivate students to achieve. Their students, now working in the field of education themselves, remember them fondly. Not surprisingly, their teachers' influence played a role in their own career choices.

I couldn't help thinking of one of my own teachers – Carolea Macdonald (now Butters) – who taught my Grade 6 class at Wilmington Avenue Public School in 1966-67.

Mrs. Macdonald, who impressed us with her openness and vivacious manner – and her coloured bangles that matched her fashionable outfits – gave us more freedom and responsibility than we'd experienced before, having us sit and work in groups and telling us we didn't need to ask permission to leave the room, as long as we weren't disruptive.

I often think back to a lesson I learned in her class that has become more relevant to me as an adult. Incorporating organizational skills into an assigned project, Mrs. Macdonald had us embark on our research by making two lists: "What I know" and "What I want to find out."

I didn't bother, thinking I could make a go of the project without doing the extra work.

Only later did I realize that Mrs. Macdonald expected us to hand in our "What I know" lists as part of the assignment. I put one together after I finished the project, and she singled it out as a good example, posting it for other students to see.

But it wasn't until last summer, when I was in touch with her about a class reunion, that I confessed in an e-mail.

Editorial

Today, working as a reporter, I find that Grade 6 project often comes to to mind when I'm preparing for an interview or when kids ask me about my work.

In some ways, every article I write is like that project. I take stock of what I know, determine what I want to find out, and put the information together in a way that I hope will be interesting and informative.

Editing a supplement like *Live & Learn* is a more multi-faceted project.

This one includes an article on the use of exercise balls in the classroom for kids with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and another about a program that brings together Jewish students with their counterparts of other faiths. We also take a fresh look at Jewish supplementary schools, a subject of increasing relevance, given the high cost of day school tuition.

Our centre spread features *The CJN*'s annual Purim poster. Chag Samayach!

On the previous page...

Shabbat *ima*, Aliyah Kalfa, and Shabbat *abba*, David Azuelos, prepare for Shabbat at the junior kindergarten class of Or HaEmet Sephardic School.

Sarah Mamelak picks oranges in her class as part of Bialik Hebrew Day School's preschool trip to Israel.

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Jewish kids meet students of other faiths

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Examining the contents of a schoolkid's backpack seems like an odd way of breaking the ice, but for 17 students at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School meeting their counterparts at a Scarborough Muslim school, that's just what happened.

During a visit to the Islamic Foundation School recently, a facilitator from the Canadian Centre for Diversity (CCD) kicked off a joint program with a low-pressure, fun-filled exercise.

Prior to the start of the program, the kids from Paul Penna were nervous – but happy – about the impending experience, said Seth Goldsweig, a teacher at the school. "They were meeting new kids. Some had never met Muslims before."

But, there was also "an excitement to get out of our school and get to meet new kids."

The Paul Penna kids, drawn from the school's grades 7 and 8 classes, mingled with 23 Grade 8 Muslim students, observed a prayer service, toured their facility, heard an imam explain the basics of the Islamic faith and enjoyed a kosher meal.

"At times, kids mingled. At times, people went back to their own groups where they felt comfortable," said Goldsweig.

In the end, Goldsweig termed the event a success on a number of fronts. Many left with promises to continue their contacts on Facebook and with the knowledge that the Muslim students would pay them a return visit a month later.

The bridge-building program is held under the auspices of the Canadian Centre for Diversity (CCD), which has extensive experience knocking down barriers between children of different faith groups and getting them to see beyond stereotypes and labels, said Judy Csillag, director of community outreach for the centre, and Carla Wittes, vice-president of programs.

The Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT) and Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, Richmond Hill campus (CHAR), have participated in past years, as has United Synagogue Day School (USDS), Paul Penna and the Bnei Akiva schools. Also taking part in the programs are the Islamic Foundation School, which educates children from kindergarten to Grade 12, and St. Michael's College School, a Roman Catholic institution in midtown.

CCD's first event, in 2002, was to simply bring children to the place of worship of another faith group. USDS was one of the first to come on board, sending a group of grade 7 and 8 students to visit a mosque, a church and a Hindu temple, said Csillag.

Other programs followed, including a "discover diversity" day. It is the CCD's largest program and is so successful, it has been taken up by other schools in the GTA, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and Halifax.

The CCD also offers a "Quest" and a "Young Leaders" forum. The forum explores the theme "A World Without Stigma" in which senior high school students discuss complex social issues.

Jewish kids from CHAT have participated in the Quest program, a series of in-depth, interactive workshops, interacting with contemporaries from Muslim and Roman Catholic schools, said Wittes.

About 10 Grade 11 students from each school take part in five or six events throughout the school year, and, at the end of classes, nominate Grade 10s to take their place in the coming year.

Typically, the program starts with a lengthy first session and is followed by three events – one in each school – followed by a concluding session. CCD facilitators are involved in the first and last event, but the middle sessions are run largely by the students, Wittes said. Usually they talk about the holidays and traditions of their faith.

Do their discussions ever broach sensitive topics, such as the Israel/Arab conflict, suicide bombings and religious supremacism?

Continued on page B4

Beth Tzedec Congregational School's Grade 2/3 class made bracelets to sell as a fundraiser for Haiti. From left, in front, are Eva Cohen, Tal Cohen, Samuel Swadron, Sarah Swartz and Meredith Berr. Standing, from left, are students Abby Kaminker, Gabi Milner, Jacob Nepom, Daniel Nepom and Max Dolman with teacher Shoshanna Diamant.
[Danielle Rosenberg photo]

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Continued from page B3

"The only thing they're limited by are the ground rules," said Wittes. "Mutual respect, listening, confidentiality and to speak only for themselves. Anything can be asked, but ask it respectfully and listen to the answer with respect."

CHAT, CHAR and Bnei Akiva have all participated in the Young Leaders Forum, said Csillag. The event is generally held twice a year, in November and April. Students discuss gender issues, disabilities and discrimination.

One case study, usually addressed in smaller groups, looks at the reaction of a Jewish student who finds swastika graffiti at his school. Jewish, Roman Catholic, Muslim and Hindu students discuss how they'd react to such an event, Wittes said.

Rabbi Scot Berman, headmaster at Yeshiva Bnei Akiva, which includes boys and girls' high schools, said six students from each school attended a CCD program last fall.

"I made the decision [to participate] feeling this is an important experience for our students, to be exposed to a broad cross-section of society," he said.

"Not only to gain but to contribute," he continued, "through our presence and role-modelling that Orthodox Jews are intelligent, contributory to society no less than the rest of typical Canadian society."

CHAT has participated in two CCD programs, said Margaret Klompas, head of guidance at the north Toronto high school. CHAT students have interacted with pupils from St. Mike's and the Islamic Foundation School in the Quest program.

Although CHAT students don't enter the places of worship of other faith groups, they hear presentations about others' religions. Last month, CHAT hosted 30 kids from Catholic and Muslim schools.

Outside the confines of CCD programming, CHAT goes a little further in introducing the beliefs of other faith groups to students.

Samuel Kapustin, director of Jewish studies at CHAT, said the topic comes up during Jewish history classes in the context of Jews' interaction with other religions. It's also tackled in philosophy and ethics classes.

"We try to be objective," he said. "If there are points of conflict, we accept that."

Grade 2 students at Holy Blossom Temple Religious School show off their freshly made mezuzot after a family education program.

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Programs receive assistance from UJA Federation

'This is not your father's Hebrew school'

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Temple Emanu-El's Centre for Jewish Living and Learning doesn't put much emphasis on desks and chalkboards.

Students won't take notes for three hours at a time, but they may play with Lego, cook or listen to music during their lessons.

"We're finding that supplementary education is a venue of choice for families who want their [kids] to be educated, not a refuge from day school," said Dan Mendelsohn Aviv, the centre's director. "What we try to do here is provide flexibility, creativity and novelty in their program."

At Temple Emanu-El, a Reform congregation, students are organized in learning communities in which they can choose what they want to study, from the history of Reform Judaism to the revolution in Jewish worship.

This, according to Mendelsohn Aviv, is the future of supplementary schools.

"There are some axioms – what goes up must come down and that Hebrew schools generally suck," he said. "Parents and grandparents will tell you the same thing… a parent will turn to their kids and say, 'I went to Hebrew school and I was miserable, and now you're going to go.'"

But this is changing, and Temple Emanu-El, which opened its Living and Learning Centre three years ago, is proof. The centre, which has about 125 students, holds classes on Sundays and Tuesdays, as well as experiential programs on Shabbat afternoons.

"Our attendance has been the best we've ever seen. Some programs we offer have 99 to 100 per cent attendance," Mendelsohn Aviv said. "The stuff that's going on here is engaging."

By allowing kids to choose what they're learning, Mendelsohn hopes to change how students see Hebrew school.

"If you get to pick what you're learning, it'll avoid the Sunday morning fight in the driveway," he said.

Karen Goodis, principal of Beth Sholom Hebrew School, sees supplementary schools as the glue that connects Jewish kids to their community.

"It gives them… a sense of belonging to something else," she said. "There is always going to be a need for supplementary schools. Everybody's not going to choose day schools."

Goodis thinks this has to do with more than just day school fees.

"Even if [day schools] were free, there are still people who want their children in a public system rather than Jewish day schools," she said.

She agrees that supplementary schools are changing. "The role hasn't changed. The approaches are more creative. I keep saying to my parents [at Beth Sholom], 'This is not your father's Hebrew school.'"

Beth Sholom, a Conservative congregation affiliated with the Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues, provides two days of schooling and has about 100 students enrolled.

"The goal is still… to give kids a positive Jewish experience and connection to the synagogue community, as well as to each other. The programs are more active. It's not all sitting at a desk and reading Hebrew."

It's something that Laura Wiseman, director of York University's Jewish teacher education program, has noticed.

"I think that the supplementary schools, over a period of years, have realized the difficulty of educating students who are coming from a full day of other schooling," she said. "They are moving away from entirely formal education… they're integrating much more experiential education and informal programming and that's a… very positive measure on their part."

Wiseman has also seen the role of parents change.

"I think [supplementary schools] really have begun to see… their role as educating families," she said. "Over a period of the last 30-plus years, there's been much more realization that the voice that speaks the loudest is in the home."

It's something most schools have incorporated.

Beth Sholom's Hebrew school involves family education programming, in which parents learn with their children, as does Beit Rayim Synagogue and School, which is affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ).

"We're trying to integrate the parent as being both the teacher and the learner," said Rabbi David Eligberg, principal of Beit Rayim's supplementary school, which holds day-long sessions once or twice a year in which parents learn with their children.

"They help their children unlock the lessons for that day. That's a model that I see expanding as time goes by."

Another change supplementary schools have been forced to accept is a decrease in hours. About 50 years ago, students went to school five days a week. Around 10 years ago, this changed to three days a week. Now, it's more common to go two days a week for five to six hours in total.

At Beit Rayim, students in grades 2 to 7 attend Hebrew school two days a week for a total of five hours.

"There was a tremendous amount of pressure to reduce the number of days," Rabbi Eligberg said, perhaps because parents began to see the importance of extracurricular activities.

With the loss of a day, teaching Hebrew language skills has become a challenge, Goodis said.

"We need to be very efficient. We need to have very clear expectations about what [students] are going to learn and we need to make every session count," she said. "You cannot teach as much… We're teaching another language. There needs to be adequate time to teach kids how to read."

For Rabbi Eligberg, use of the Internet and computers has been an important change.

"We are already using computer-related learning for Hebrew language. That's enabling students to work a little more independently in a medium that they're familiar with," he said. "[Technology] will be a tremendously important piece of how Jewish education will move forward."

Rabbi Eligberg envisions a time when students will learn both at school and from home.

"I'm not sure when exactly we may get to a point where students will spend a certain amount of time in class and will log in to a group from home," he said, adding that this change is inevitable.

Temple Emanu-El already integrates blogs and the Internet.

"Kids will sit on their computer for days if you let them," Mendelsohn Aviv said. "The idea is to create content and encourage them to create content that will be meaningful."

Students and teachers at Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School paid $2 each for the privilege of wearing a hat in class. The day was part of a yearlong project to raise funds for Schneider Children's Medical Center of Israel.

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Students bounce to success at Temple Sinai

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The students at Temple Sinai's supplementary school don't use exercise balls to stay active. They use them to learn.

Ira Schweitzer, the temple's director of education, has been using exercise balls to help children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) concentrate while in class.

Unlike children with attention deficit disorder (ADD), who have trouble concentrating on their work, students with ADHD have trouble keeping still in class. The exercise balls allow these students to move around while staying seated.

Schweitzer, who completed a course with Jensen Learning, an American organization that focuses on conditions such as ADHD, discovered this technique seven or eight years ago.

"I got interested in starting to study about different ways that kids learn," he said. "It just spoke to me. I said, 'You know what... just because our faculties of education did something in the 1970s, we haven't modernized enough.'"

Through his research, Schweitzer found that exercise balls are helpful for kinesthetic learners, students who learn through actions and movement rather than words.

"Kids who learn best through movement and action, since they can't focus, often they just find themselves doing other things and letting their brains wander," Schweitzer said.

"My little bit of research shows [this initiative] has worked. It doesn't mean an hour... they will sit for 15 or 20 minutes and not need to wander and not need to bounce around. They will spend more time focusing on the task."

Through his research, Schweitzer discovered the concept of brain buttons. Some experts believe that the bottom of the spine is an area that, when stimulated, can send more blood up to the brain, therefore causing alertness and better concentration.

"It's a constant massage. It sends more of an awakening to the brain. If kids who had ADHD had a chance to move while studying, rather than sitting on permanent chairs, it would use some of that excess energy," he said.

This is something that Eric Jensen, the founder of Jensen Learning, has studied. While he doesn't discuss brain buttons, Jensen agrees that the simple act of movement can help children with sensory issues, like those with ADHD.

"Some kids who seem to have sensory issues, as in they are way more active, if they sit on [an exercise ball]... instead of a chair... it's a huge benefit," Jensen said. "What it does is it feeds their brain's craving for stimulation without it being disruptive... They get to have a little bit of movement, it keeps them happy."

But this technique only works for a specific demographic, Jensen said.

"Kids who have only ADD without hyperactivity would not find this helpful at all," he said, adding that this technique wouldn't work well for autistic children either, since they would feel out of control on the ball.

According to Jensen, children with ADD and ADHD share three qualities. They have short-term memory issues, are impulsive and have problems concentrating.

Exercise balls help students focus on work

Unlike students with ADD, children with ADHD will physically act out these qualities, Jensen said, adding that they'll hit other kids when upset or feel the need to get up and walk around in class.

The idea to use exercise balls in class came from the special education community, Jensen said.

"They have been sort of the group of teachers that have been saying, 'We'll try anything and see if it works.' They found kids really loved [exercise balls]," he said.

Beth Komito-Gottlieb, Temple Sinai's special needs counsellor, has seen positive results in class.

"I have definitely walked into classes where a couple kids are sitting on them. I know those particular students have a hard time focusing on the task. To my observations, I would say it's successful for those kids," she said, adding that the technique works best when kids are studying Hebrew, a subject that requires sitting and learning, rather than hands-on lessons.

"That's where it's been useful in Temple Sinai, in the Hebrew class. To learn the alphabet, they have to pay attention to it," she said.

Azrieli foundation collects survivors' memoirs

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

After prominent Canadian developer David Azrieli had his Holocaust memoirs published by Yad Vashem following a trip to Poland in 1990, he had a vision of helping other survivors get their own stories published.

The result was the Azrieli Foundation's Holocaust survivor's memoirs program, which collects and publishes the memoirs.

The Azrieli Foundation, a Canadian philanthropic organization, supports a wide range of initiatives and programs in the fields of education, architecture and design, Jewish community, Holocaust commemoration and education, scientific and medical research, and the arts.

Naomi Azrieli, foundation president, said that following the trip to Poland, it took her father 10 years to write the book. "Not only is it difficult to struggle with memories, my father is not a professional writer. It was a long process.

"When it was finally published, he realized that the vast majority [of survivors] have no publisher, no vehicle to get their works out there."

Before the foundation embarked on the memoirs project, she said, it did extensive research to discover if any organization was already doing this. "We learned that although there is a big demand for the memoirs, there were simply no resources. We also discovered that commercial publishers, as a rule, don't publish this type of book.

"We put out a call for submissions in 2005, by sending letters and e-mails sent to every synagogue and community centre in the country, and within six weeks we had 50 manuscripts.

"We planned the mailing to go out just prior to Rosh Hashanah so rabbis could announce it from the bimah. From that alone we got the 50 manuscripts, which had been written and were sitting around. It was exactly like my father thought. We now have close to 170, and we're looking for more. That's a lot of publishing to do."

The foundation has published two series of books to date, representing 11 memoirs.

The books, she said, are aimed at general reading audiences and are suitable for senior high school students. "We are careful to let the survivor speak for themselves. We don't edit, because we want to respect their voice. It is a first-person account, and it is not sanitized."

Especially for students, she said, first-person accounts can be very powerful. "They've read a lot of dry textbooks, and these stories put a face to what the students are reading.

"In their memoirs, these survivors were the age of the students are now, and I've received letters from students who said 'I felt like I knew them.'"

In Azrieli's introduction to the manuscript by Ann Szedlecki, titled *Album of My Life*, she said that "there are people you get to know on the pages of a book whom you wish you could meet in person. So it is with Ann Szedlecki."

Szedlecki begins her book, said Azrieli, by calling herself, "the daughter of nobody, someone with a past that has disappeared. And yet, as she draws us into the life she led as a girl and young woman during World War II, she brings this past to life."

In the preface to the second series of books, David Azrieli wrote that "in telling these stories, the writers have liberated themselves. For so many years, we did not speak about it, even when we became free people living in a free society. Now, when at last we are writing about what happened to us in this dark period of history, knowing that our stories will be read and live on, it is possible for us to feel truly free."

Naomi Azrieli said that from the moving letters the foundation received from members of other immigrant groups who identified with the stories, "we see that we've found a common ground amongst diverse populations.

"It turns out that we are touching people, and I'm beyond delighted and honoured to be doing this. It is truly meaningful work."

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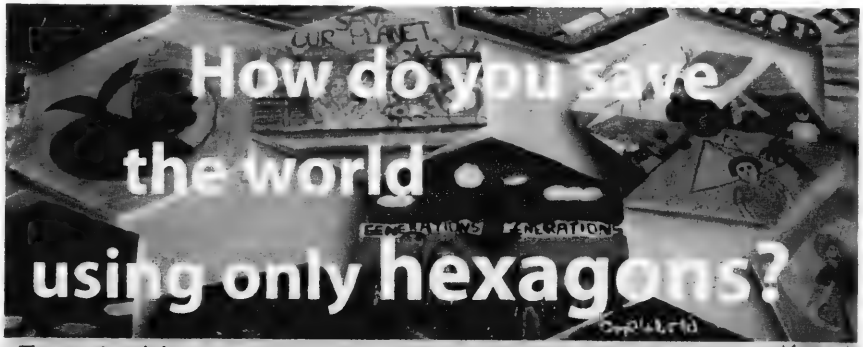

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Educators recall influence of their own teachers

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

A recent online search for sites that include both the word "teachers" and the phrase "lasting impact" yielded 126,000 results. Below, local educators recall teachers who had an impact on them.

Dorothy Hartman, vice-principal of Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School, remembers Jean Crack, her Grade 12 and 13 English teacher at William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute in the 1970s, and her "crazy" ways of helping the students remember grammar:

"To me Mrs. Crack seemed old, but somehow she made learning fun. That's why I studied English in university. The way she explained everything in depth – like Shakespeare – she really made sure everyone understood it. She was so prepared and so passionate. She didn't have favourite students. She was strict but fun... She was very clear, and you really understood the work. I knew she had our best interests at heart."

Seth Goldsweig, middle school co-ordinator and Grade 5 and 7/8 Hebrew and Jewish studies teacher, Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, says he has only positive memories of his Grade 5 teacher in Hinesburg, Vt., a small town outside of Burlington. Michael Bonavita died in the 1990s, about a decade later.

"He had an incredible knack for making learning fun. My mom tells me she never had to ask me what I did in school, because I would always come home and tell her what we had done. Having me work with a friend of mine who was hyper – enlisting my help – I remember a huge sense of accomplishment.

"Two things happened because I was in that class. I was always 'into' school, but it made me more into school. I remember for a long time thinking to myself I wanted to be a teacher – and a Grade 5 teacher – to do my best to reproduce the experience he gave me for my own students. He was a driving force for me to become a teacher."

Gail Baker, principal, Toronto Heschel School, became a history major because of her high school history teacher some four decades ago at A.Y. Jackson Secondary School – Norm Kelly, who went on to become a city councillor.

"We were studying Canadian history in Grade 11 – World War I and World War II – and we had to do projects. He said to me, 'How much Jewish history do you know? I think it would be really important for you to know who you are and understand your background and your place in history.' He started me on an independent project that lasted all year.

"He believed very strongly in me as a person and as a student. He always challenged me. He kept asking me questions.

"He really got us to explore and reach. It was the most difficult class I ever had. He challenged and supported us. It had great impact. Challenge and support were the two things that stayed with me, and I think that has influenced the way I work with my teachers and students.

"Also, I had to do a lot of self-reflection... It really got me to think about my place in history. That was very inspiring for me, and I've never forgotten it."

Shana Harris, head of school, Bialik Hebrew Day School, remembers two educators who had an impact on her – one in the classroom and one in an informal context – in her hometown of Witbank, South Africa.

"I had a high school teacher who influenced my becoming an educator. She was actually a Latin teacher who had a great passion for her subject. She made it really interesting, challenging and engaging, but more than that she connected with us as her students. It was very motivating. She made us feel she cared about us, that she knew us, and wanted us to do our best for ourselves... She pushed us to keep endeavouring to do better. I tried to be the same type of teacher.

"I also had an 'informal teacher' who had an impact. Derek Gavshon [now acting head of school at a Jewish day school in California] was my madrich in Bnei Zion [youth movement] when I was in elementary school in Witbank, a small town. He inspired in me this connection to Israel, Zionism, and pride in being Jewish. I bumped into him at a conference, and it was so wonderful – we hadn't seen each other in 45 years. It was such a pleasure for me to say to him, 'Here I am [working] in a Jewish day school."

Helene Green, principal, William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute, immediately thought of Neil Perkins, her music teacher for five years in the 1960s at Vaughan Road Collegiate, where she played the flute.

"He was a new, young teacher. He was fun, he was cool, and he was teaching me something I really loved. He was funny – he had a very light, quiet humour, but you were always listening to see what he would say.

"He went on to become the co-ordinator of music for the York Board of Education... Music is very important, and I love music. There are studies that show the connections between music and math, very strong connections.

"As an educator, what I learned from him is what I try to inculcate my teachers with – the use of humour, where it fits into the lesson – to engage kids."

Continued on page B9

Long-ago lessons remain relevant

Continued from page B8

Amanda Fingerhut, Grade 9 and 12 math teacher, Earl Haig Secondary School and winner of the 2009 *Canadian Living* Me to We award for her work with the Herbert H. Carnegie Future Aces Foundation (an organization that works with young people), remembers Isabel Pecorella, her role model as a teacher when she attended Forest Hill Collegiate in the 1990s. Pecorella died a few years after Fingerhut graduated.

"She taught me two subjects over three years. She was an unbelievable teacher and person... Every student knew she cared about each and every student. Everybody did their homework for her, because they thought they would actually hurt her if they didn't. I try to emulate things she did, but I haven't gotten there yet.

"She was fun. She took us to art exhibits. We'd go out to Italian restaurants and have to speak in Italian.

"She made us think we were choosing what we were doing... I'm sure she had that all planned. We just didn't realize it.

"More than that, she made our classes feel like families... She was real with us. We didn't feel there was a wall between us and her.

"She was always smiling. There was always laughter.

"The first day I was in Grade 9 Beginner Italian, she gave us words that she knew everyone would be able to spell – real Italian words that were extremely obvious, so people felt this was a class that they could succeed in. I walked away believing that teaching is about making kids feel good about themselves, and working with kids to make them feel valued and respected."

Deborah Epstein-Franks, middle school co-ordinator and English teacher, Leo Baeck Day School south campus, is back at the school she attended when Ellen Steck taught her Grade 7 English 24 years ago:

"And now I teach Grade 7 English. She was someone who really expected excellence and pushed you to do the best you could. She was super-organized and had a sense of humour. She was strict, but really fair, and I felt like I learned a lot from her.

"There were things she taught me that I still call on today, like ways to spell words. She was a real stickler for grammar. I try to model what I do with my students on her example... We had a ton of assignments, but she taught us really good organizational skills, so it was manageable.

"She exposed us to Latin and Greek roots of words, things that help you later in life... and then she would make it fun. She was big on vocabulary and the more structured aspects of language, and I think up until that point I had struggled with that... I gained the confidence I needed to achieve.

"As a teacher, I'm still a big grammar girl. I do have a structured, traditional grammar program. I'm a big stickler, and even in my spelling program, I purposely find things like Latin and Greek roots in our speller, and I make sure I cover those. I do focus on ones that help you be able to figure out what words mean by looking at the base or the prefix.

"And sometimes it's not concrete things you're left with, but the general feeling of what your teacher does for you. She was there for the love of teaching and making the difference, and you could feel it in everything she did... She left a real mark."

Rabbi Elliott Diamond, vice-principal Judaic studies, Netivot HaTorah Day School, who graduated from the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto in 1973, now considers his mentor and teacher, Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz, a friend.

"I first met Rabbi Sacknovitz as a student at the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, and I found him to be genuine, committed and passionate about his Judaism, but as I got to know him as a mentor and a teacher, I found his understanding of Judaism and modern Orthodoxy very engaging, and it spoke very much to me in a personal and religious way.

"I found his attitude compassionate as well as passionate. He was always willing to let his curiosity drive his belief. In other words, questions were OK. I found that to be a very compelling message... an incredibly important way of looking at Judaism. Some people find questions a little frightening and discourage them."

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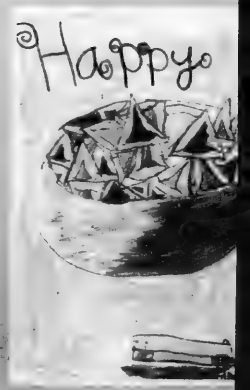

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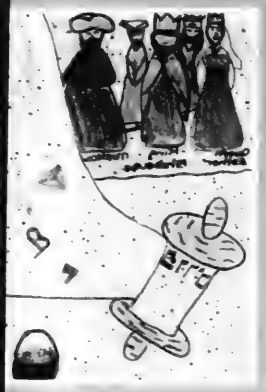

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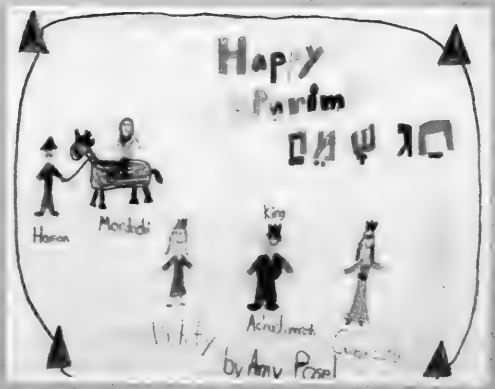

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Live & Learn

Avoiding 'one size fits most'

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

I often ask myself if I would still do things the same way if we had all the money in the world.

Shop at Value Village?

Compost in the backyard?

Rescue discarded kiddie cars at the curb?

Home school?

Since it became apparent last fall that our daughter, who turned five this month, is still hanging around at home with me and her two-year-old brother, people have started asking why we home school. And while the money that we're bound to save often comes up, that's only one answer, and a superficial one at that.

Momentarily insecure, I asked some colleagues – fellow Jewish home schoolers online – what I could say when people ask. It's not as if I hadn't thought about the question for years, but their responses helped coalesce my feelings.

Many of them offered variations on schools not meeting their children's special needs, but that doesn't really apply here. We've never tried sending our daughter to school. She'd probably love it.

Why we home school

Then, there were the snappy one-liners:

• "I wouldn't want her to be bored."

• "I was home schooled for a year – best year I ever had."

• "Why be a stay-home mom if you send your kids away?"

Most resonant, however, was a thoughtful reply from an adoptive mom in the United States: "When I became the parent of these children, I entered into a covenant with them that I would do everything in my power to make sure they were cared for properly and that they never had to doubt that I wanted what was best for them. Dumping them into a public school system which is overburdened, underfunded and overcrowded is not in their best interest."

Couldn't you say the same – at least a little bit – about the overburdened and underfunded Jewish education system here?

It's not that the schools aren't trying. But after 10 years of dealing with day schools, I have seen too many compromises: overcrowded classrooms; run-down or bleak facilities; high-tech gadgetry that schools feel pressured to buy but can't afford to maintain or train teachers to use; school playgrounds with no green space for kids to just run around; too few gym classes in too-cramped spaces; and schedules and curricula that would make most adults' heads spin, offering the best of both worlds, Jewish and secular, while overlooking that most magical world of free-range childhood.

I'll come clean: we have two older children in Jewish schools, and I'm very happy with both schools – at last. I believe most schools work pretty well, especially for average children who don't demand too much.

Yet it's a whispered truth in some circles that parents must often choose between Jewish studies and general studies. I haven't met a day school parent who has bragged that their school has found the perfect balance.

Then, too, you must factor in which schools match your family's outlook, religiously and philosophically, both in terms of Jewish philosophy and educational philosophy. In some cases, too, it's not enough to choose the school. The school must also accept your family. This narrows the field significantly. For most, it usually comes down to one or two choices (if you're lucky).

And then, what are the odds that either of those one or two is that rare school that offers excellence in every single area?

Returning to the original question of why we home school, several parents suggested the generic statement, "It just fits best for our family."

I like it.

The simplicity of it makes me happy, even while some of the truths about mainstream Jewish education sadden me deeply.

Shouldn't we be suspicious of a mindset where parents are encouraged to get their kids out of the house into "preschool" by age three or earlier? Dr. Spock's most quoted advice is "trust yourself" – perhaps too few parents trust themselves to educate their young children.

And why are some of the most sought-after preschool programs held in synagogues? Maybe they could help by offering more programs that encourage parents and their young children to stay together instead. I get tired of being the only parent in a sea of nannies.

Lest you think it's all about duty and textbook education, I must admit, we're mostly in it for the fun, and the freedom to learn wherever and however we happen to be at any given moment. The professionalization of early childhood has undermined parents' confidence to teach their own kids, but no matter what type of schooling we choose, we'll always be their first and most important teachers.

What about socialization? People often ask how home-schooled kids learn to line up, take turns, share nicely, raise hands to answer a question, get along with others and chat with their peers.

Continued on page B13

Live & Learn

Learning happens everywhere

Continued from page B12

Like so-called stay-at-home moms, home schoolers don't just hang around the house. Unless you shrink-wrap your kids to the sofa, they will spend time with other people. True, they might not all be the same age, as they would be in a classroom setting. But it's possible that an arbitrary classification – to place children in classes by year of birth, from January to December – actually puts many kids at a social disadvantage.

Jennifer Macleod, left, is homeschooling her five-year-old daughter Naomi Rivka.

Whether we're in line at the grocery store, pulling a wagon down the street, schlepping to dance or swimming lessons, hanging out at the library or making challah at home, my children are learning. And each moment is an opportunity to watch them, listen to them, share values with them and point out things that are beautiful – or ugly. Learning happens whether they're inside a classroom or not, and when they're home schooled, every moment can be a teachable moment.

If I had all the money in the world, maybe shelling out tens of thousands of dollars for one-size-fits-many Jewish education would sting a little less. Until then, you'll find me skipping the commute and carpools, schooling happily at home with my kids.

Students from Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Centre and Wallenberg campus play in a cross-campus volleyball competition.

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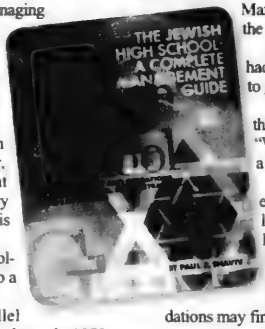
Shaviv writes the book on Jewish high schools

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Paul Shaviv has written the book on managing a Jewish high school. Literally.



His newly published tome – a hefty, 387-page softcover titled *The Jewish High School: A Complete Management Guide* – is, to the best of Shaviv's knowledge, the only one of its kind.

The material draws on his more than three decades of experience as an educator, and most recently his past dozen years at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, where he is director of education.

Since he arrived in Toronto in 1998, enrolment at the school has doubled from 750 to a total of 1,500 students on two campuses.

Shaviv, 60, began his career as a Hillel director in his native London, England, in the early 1970s, and has served as an administrator at five Jewish schools on three continents. Before moving to Toronto in 1998, he served for four years as principal of Bialik High school in Montreal. Last year, he was one of two recipients for the prestigious Max M. Fisher Prize for Jewish Education in the Diaspora.

In part, Shaviv wrote the book "because I had all of this in my head, and I felt I wanted to get it down."

But he also felt he should share the way things are done at TanenbaumCHAT, he said. "We had, as a team – as a school – developed a high standard of school process."

The book has an inherently limited readership – specifically, administrators and lay leaders of the approximately 300 Jewish high schools in the English-speaking world. As well, students and faculty of Jewish teacher training programs and people affiliated with boards of education and foundations may find it of interest, Shaviv said.

One of the ways in which Jewish schools differ from their non-Jewish private school counterparts – and which is addressed in the book – is the tendency of their boards of directors to be much more involved, said Shaviv. As well, he added, many students are grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Holocaust survivors.

Also, he believes that for many parents, the school has replaced the synagogue as "the major institution of Jewish family commitment." And, he said, "in a Jewish school, you have the whole issue of transmission of values and Judaism."

Shaviv said that *The Jewish High School: A Complete Management Guide* was "virtually self-published" by the Principal Press via createspace.com, a subsidiary of Amazon, as a "print-on-demand" book.

"It's very environmentally friendly," he said.

Copies are printed and shipped within a day, he noted, and can be ordered online at createspace.com/3413024. The book retails for $55.

Grade 4 student Matthew Gelgoot, at Leo Baeck Day School's south campus, shows off the model he constructed depicting the biblical story of Joseph's brothers throwing him into a pit.

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Book gives queer perspective on Torah

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Gregg Drinkwater has a unique interpretation of the Torah.

When reading the weekly passages, he sees the possibility of Adam being created as both male and female. And when hearing about the story of Jacob and Joseph, he can understand why some might call Joseph "the queerest of all Genesis characters."

Drinkwater, the executive director of Jewish Mosaic: the National Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity in Denver, Colo., is one of three editors who put together *Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible*.

The book is a collection of essays that analyze the Torah through a LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) perspective.

And it's also the inspiration for York University assistant professor Aviva Golderg's new four-week course.

The course, which is run through Congregation Shir Libeynu, Kolel, Kulanu Toronto, and the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre was formed after the Canadian book launch of *Torah Queeries* in November 2009. It ran every Tuesday in February and explores several essays and themes presented in the Torah, such as Leviticus and the story of Jacob and Joseph.

"I think it's revolutionary because there's been nothing of its kind until now," Goldberg said of the course and the book. "It has taken awhile, but the 'gay revolution' in a political sense is also taking place in a theological and religious sense."

Goldberg is the spiritual leader of Congregation Shir Libeynu, an inclusive and unaffiliated congregation in downtown Toronto. She sees the course as a continuation of the Jewish tradition.

"What we're seeing more and more are gay and lesbian rabbis who are bringing both traditional commentary [on the Torah] and expanding it through their own lens," she said. "I think it's part of our tradition, rabbis traditionally have said… it's our responsibility in every generation to examine [the Torah.]"

Sharoni Sibony, the interim managing director of Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning in Toronto, sees Toronto as a community that has room for improvement.

"It seems that the Toronto community isn't so open LGBT," she said, adding that this isn't necessarily the case in the United States.

"In the States, they have… gay congregations that have over time created a new way of liturgy, a new way of thinking about community," she said.

This is what she hopes will happen with *Torah Queeries*.

"It may start from queer readings or LGBT perspectives, but it's really asking us to think about… the lessons we can extrapolate from these readings that will make the communities much more inclusive," she said.

For Sibony, the course isn't just about education, it's about dialogue.

"If we can just sort of create a conversation where people actually listen to each other and understand the humanity in everybody and the Jewishness in everybody," she said. "People are always searching for that sense of belonging."

Sibony learned this at Kulanu Toronto dinner, Toronto's only Jewish LBGT social and education group, where she spoke to a girl who "said the Pride parade was the only day of the year when she wasn't embarrassed about being gay. That's just startling to me," Sibony added.

Torah Queeries initially started as a web project called Jewish Mosaic: Torah Queeries, Drinkwater said. The website features LGBT perspectives on Torah passages.

Eventually Drinkwater, along with Joshua Lesser and David Shneer, turned the website into a book.

"I think it serves two purposes. One is to bring more LGBT Jews to the text or to deepen their connection to the text," he said. "They're not really engaging with the Torah right now at all. It's one of my missions to change that," Drinkwater said.

The book's other purpose is to provide different perspectives to heterosexual Jews, Drinkwater, who is part of the LGBT community, said.

"The opportunity to work with LGBT people opens up a whole new realm of the Torah," he said.

From left, Daniel Tyberg, Matthew Cohen, Noah Ross and Aubrey Maltz (sitting), Grade 7 students at United Synagogue Day School's Bathurst campus, determined in a study of Cain and Abel how different disciplines contribute to the judicial system in deciding an appropriate punishment for crimes.

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School students Ethan Wilder and Aviva Penn explore the solubility of different liquids in an integrated unit called Mysteries in Our World.

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Schools face issue of sexual abuse

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

In the past six months, two Jewish high schools in Toronto have been forced to confront a difficult truth.

In September, Avichai Zehavi, a former shaliach at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, was arrested in Israel for alleged sexual abuse of a 14-year-old male student at a religious boys' high school there.

Just three months later, Jaskaransingh (Jask) Ramburn, a French teacher at Toronto's Bnei Akiva Schools, was charged with sexually assaulting a girl who was not a student at the school. Ramburn has been suspended, pending court proceedings.

Both were popular teachers, and Zehavi received a Teacher of Excellence award in 2002, a privately sponsored (and now defunct) award that used to be given to teachers in the Jewish day school system.

Paul Shaviv, TanenbaumCHAT's director of education, addressed the issue at a Jewish day school conference last month in New Jersey, in a talk entitled "Dealing with sexual predators – from a school management perspective."

Shaviv – who also wrote about the subject in his recently published book, *The Jewish High School: A Complete Management Guide* – told *The CJN*, "It's very clear nowadays – and it's a very good thing – that there's far greater awareness and far less tolerance, meaning zero tolerance, of improper exercise of authority and influence of teachers over students."

He believes it's incumbent on principals and school administrators to be aware of the issue of sexual abuse, try to prevent it, and deal with it when issues and allegations arise.

However, he said, "I don't think you can ever prevent it entirely, because human nature is what it is, and I think, as in every profession, there are aspects of the context of teaching that sometimes attract people with a darker side to their personalities."

Principals have to be prepared to "ask questions and to be suspicious in a discreet manner," he said. "I think that a good principal develops a sixth sense for noticing the tiny things that are out of order… and questions [as one example] why a particular door is open or closed when it shouldn't be."

If there is even a suspicion of an improper relationship, principals must be "absolutely insistent – and I would say even ruthless – about following correct procedure and ensuring that their students are not in any danger whatsoever."

"As soon as there is a suspicion that a child is, or has been, at risk or has been a victim of abuse, there is a legal duty to notify a recognized child protection agency," Shaviv said.

One issue that is specific to Jewish schools is that it isn't uncommon for students to be invited to teachers' homes for Shabbat dinner, as was the case with Zehavi, who, with his wife and young children, hosted up to half a dozen students at a time at his house on Friday nights.

Shaviv said that such evenings are part of "the experiential side of the Jewish programming" that students receive at school, and, as such, is "extremely important.

"Everyone understands that a very beautiful part of Jewish life is the home life," he said.

Shaviv suggested a few guidelines for such situations:

- Whatever the setting is, interactions between teachers and students always have to retain the awareness that this is an educational relationship and not a personal one.
- There should be a minimum number of students.
- There must always be a husband and wife hosting together.

As well, he strongly favours the creation of a "school ethos" so that students, teachers and parents know what is acceptable and what isn't.

"Ethos is one of the most precious assets a school can have," said Shaviv.

He said that schools "should make it easy and user-friendly to voice complaints or concerns about any person associated with the school in regard to improper behaviour of any sort."

Rabbi Scot Berman, headmaster of Bnei Akiva Schools – which has separate high schools for boys and girls, Yeshivat Or Chaim and Ulpanat Orot – told *The CJN* that schools must ensure "that the settings in which students and adults interact are open environments, and that there aren't areas in which students and teachers meet which are closed off, [such as] a room that doesn't have a window.

"It's very important to have those kinds of transparencies to protect all the people involved," he said.

Although such precautions – and background checks undertaken before staff members are hired – can reduce the odds of inappropriate behaviour taking place, Rabbi Berman said he doesn't think there is any "foolproof system."

In 2001, he was principal of a school in New Jersey when a teacher was arrested for molesting one of his students, a "much more complicated and tumultuous" experience than what happened at Bnei Akiva, where there were "no known situations between Mr. Ramburn and the students."

In the immediate aftermath of hearing the news, the Bnei Akiva schools' social worker "was able to touch base with all the students" to determine and address their needs, Rabbi Berman said.

"I think we were successful in creating an environment that was safe for students to come forward," he added.

In Shaviv's book, written before allegations surfaced against his school's former shaliach, he wrote, "It is sobering to understand how charm, charisma and talent can mask an altogether more sinister agenda."

But for every charismatic teacher who is a sex offender, there are probably "99, maybe more, who are just plain charismatic teachers," Rabbi Berman said.

"The charismatic piece by itself is not an indicator that the person is problematic," he said. "Every administrator would like every one of his teachers to be popular and charismatic, and capable of having the kind of magnetism to inspire students to learn and grow and develop."

A much more likely red flag would be "one-on-one private meetings between teachers and students."

But, said Rabbi Berman, "hopefully the protocols are clear that within a school that's not acceptable, and once that is discovered, steps can be taken to eliminate it, and to investigate if anything unhealthy has transpired."

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Lessons from pursuing an MBA in Israel

By JORDAN SCHAFFRAN
Special to The CJN

When deciding to do an MBA, I went through a process to select the school that would best fit both my needs and talents.

The benefits and advantages that you derive from an MBA program can be immeasurable in terms of preparing yourself to meet the challenges of today's evolving world. After spending several years working at investment firms in downtown Toronto, I decided to embark on my MBA to help catapult my career.

I knew it would be challenging to select the institution that would offer the best opportunities, as the options available were quite broad in range.

I came to the decision that completing my degree at Tel Aviv University's Sofaer International MBA (IMBA) program would be the optimal choice for me after speaking with academic director Prof. Simon Benninga.

He viewed the experiences I would gain from studying in Israel and immersing myself in Israeli culture as unsurpassable. Considering the business professionals I would be introduced to throughout Israel and abroad made it a simpler decision when settling on where to complete my post-graduate degree.

Embarking on my degree in Israel and being a part of the inaugural Sofaer IMBA class was one of the motivating factors that helped the program stand at the forefront of my decision.

Since October, when I began my studies, I have gained a tremendous amount of experience and knowledge from

Jordan Schaffran at Tel Aviv University

the courses I have taken and the professionals I have been exposed to. I am one of 55 students in my MBA class. My fellow students have diverse backgrounds, coming from places around the world that include Costa Rica, South Africa and India.

Together, we have tackled subjects such as financial accounting, leading a responsible public company, and marketing management.

The Sofaer IMBA program is helping me move toward a more focused direction as I select my goal path. Having conversed with the program staff on an ongoing basis, I have been making the necessary contacts in the Israeli business community to position myself to receive job opportunities post-graduation.

Tel Aviv University's Business School hosts business leaders throughout Israel and the business world on an ongoing basis. Being able to attend conferences and presentations dealing with issues such as the Chinese economy or the future of the electric car (which Israel has taken the lead on), I have networked with the Israel business community in hopes of assuring job prospects post-graduation.

The most compelling aspect thus far in being able to earn my MBA at Tel Aviv University and live in Israel has been the experiences, whether it be hearing such speakers as Stanley Fischer, the governor of the Bank of Israel, meeting with doctors and patients from Save a Child's Heart Foundation, or having lunch with Jon Allen, the Canadian ambassador to Israel.

What I have gained from being part of the Tel Aviv University atmosphere is immeasurable. I have visited Israel on many occasions and lived on a kibbutz for half a year, learning Hebrew, but never truly have been able to immerse myself into the Israeli culture as I have now.

From being introduced to fellow students at the university who study for their MBA in Hebrew to meeting professionals in the Israeli business community, I really have felt part of Israeli culture in ways I have not experienced before.

The most amazing thing about studying for an MBA abroad in Israel is seeing and hearing first-hand the innovation that is so often talked about in this country.

The innovation and entrepreneurship that Israel is known for was one of my motivating factors in coming to study my MBA in Israel. The lessons I have been able to gain from the business community in Israel, because of its drive for success and entrepreneurship, have taught me invaluable lessons that I hope to build on.

Continued on page B20

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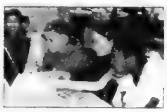

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Cont'd on B19

Live & Learn

Mackenzie student creates change at Copenhagen and beyond

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

Many Grade 11 students wouldn't be able to find Copenhagen on a map: Zack Bernholtz went there and back in December to bring his passionate environmental message to the 15th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP15).

For Bernholtz, climate change is not an abstract topic – it's a problem for us all, one he is working hard to solve.

Joining a delegation of 11 students from the University of Waterloo, the William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute student was among 200 Canadian youths participating in the summit, which took place from Dec. 7 to 18, although technically, he pointed out, youth is defined as "ages 18 to 30." At 16, he is too young to be considered a youth activist.

Zack Bernholtz, left, participates in a candlelight vigil in Copenhagen following a march for climate justice on Dec. 12.

That didn't stop Bernholtz, who's been involved with his school's extracurricular SWITCH (Solar and Wind Initiatives Towards Change) organization since he started there three years ago. With the help of influential friends that include David Suzuki, SWITCH has raised enough money to install 52 solar panels on Mackenzie's roof. The array began operating last fall, making the school one of the province's most eco-friendly.

With Bernholtz now on its executive, SWITCH is currently looking outward, aiming to roll out $200 million worth of solar panels across 2,000 Ontario schools.

Bernholtz's growth in environmentalism has been slow and steady, with lots of meticulous research. Far from drudgery, he said the process has been a pleasure. "When you find something you can connect with, you enjoy doing it. That's how I feel about studying the environment, learning… and creating change."

Creating change was what Bernholtz hoped for on his way to Copenhagen in December. "We were hoping for the developed governments of the world to realize that action is needed now… you can't wait another year until [COP16 in] Mexico …or two years and [COP17 in] South Africa. You need something that is legally binding now."

The summit was "completely hectic," said Bernholtz, who recalls arriving at Copenhagen's Bella Center swept up in a chaotic jumble of 45,000 representatives of governments and NGOs around the world, three times the anticipated number. The 1,500 youth participants, including Bernholtz, were divided into working groups to address various climate-related issues.

Bernholtz worked with members from a wide range of backgrounds within the adaptation working group, one whose message, he said, is especially urgent given our current unsustainable lifestyle: "People are going to have to change and adapt." That working group produced a document and also brought a 90-second speech summarizing its conclusions before the United Nations.

He also participated in protests, including Dec. 12 global march for climate justice, which brought 100,000 participants along a chilly route from downtown Copenhagen to the Bella Center.

He credits his parents' "great sense of community involvement" – his family founded and runs Chicago 58 Food Products – with inspiring him to get involved far beyond most typical high school students, and empowering him in "learning things for myself and researching them for myself and developing my own ideas."

Bernholtz returned home in December frustrated with the outcome of the summit – the Copenhagen Accord. "It proved the futility of a large government meeting where 192 countries try to decide upon something that is incredibly complex," he said.

"We wanted a fair, ambitious and binding climate treaty." Because the accord isn't legally binding, Bernholtz believes, it is essentially meaningless. "It is a complete waste of time," he said, a sentiment echoed on the world stage by representatives of many nations and the European Union, which has dubbed the accord a "disaster" and the summit itself a "great failure."

Far from giving up, Bernholtz has moved on to other environmental activities, including a global youth campaign to address world leaders, including Canada's prime minister, with a very personal message: "Can you, Stephen Harper, look into your children's eyes and tell them that their future will be different from today?… that hundreds of millions of people's lives will be in jeopardy because of your actions?"

Bernholtz said our country must take more of an active role, and that our current complacency is shameful. "Canada is currently seen by the rest of the world as one of the few nations that is stopping progress."

Driven by the science behind climate change, he believes the naysayers have no solid ground to stand on. "Animal species are being wiped out at a rate that is 1,000 times the natural rate… essentially the biggest extinction since the dinosaurs." This is basically our fault – and therefore, our responsibility, Bernholtz believes. "The last time that there was a warming this great was 126,000 years ago."

Though he described himself as a "glass half-empty" person, he's definitely hopeful that the world will come into line as scientists accumulate data over the long term, and "as emerging powers come to the global stage."

Without pinning down a specific career path, Bernholtz plans to continue his environmental research and activities beyond high school, including perhaps the Climate Change Conference in South Africa in 2011. Until then, he'll be raising money, putting up solar panels, speaking to other kids… and hopefully spreading his enthusiasm to a new generation of environmentalists.

The Jewish Connection

Through his involvement with NCSY (formerly National Conference of Synagogue Youth), Zack Bernholtz has come to believe that preserving the environment is more than a global value – it's a Jewish value. Before he went to Copenhagen in December, he and friend David Kadish wrote: "As Jewish Canadians, it's our responsibility to try and push our country into action and back to the front of the pack as a global leader. Of the many laws and customs that deal with treatment of the land, *bal tashchit* stands out in instructing against squandering precious natural wealth. The commandment to not destroy fruit-bearing trees from Deuteronomy has been interpreted by rabbinical sources as an obligation to not use more than we need.

"The predicted effects of a changing climate provide further imperative for Jewish action. Models show that some of those most heavily affected will be the world's least wealthy populations that, for the most part, have had little hand in causing the changes that they will experience. Judaism takes great lengths to ensure that the less fortunate are cared for, from traditions of giving tzedakah to laws about leaving the corners of your field for the hungry to harvest.

"We must help ensure that the corners of our global field are still available for those in need."

Directory of Live & Learn Advertisers

Cont'd from B18

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Program provides real life experience

Jordan Schaffran plays with a young patient connected with the Save a Child's Heart program.

Continued from page B17

To hear the achievements of the many small startup companies in this country is such a motivating factor for me, to want to be a part of Israel's numerous accomplishments in the future.

In choosing Tel Aviv University's Sofaer IMBA program, I chose a program in which I can get real-life experience that will help me regardless of what career direction I pursue on graduation.

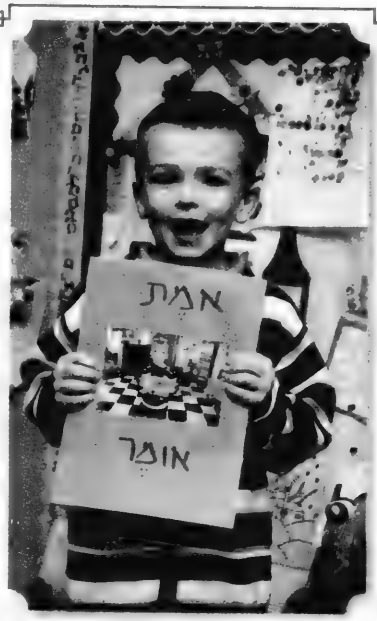
Being able to live in Tel Aviv and study at the university has truly been a dream come true for me. I have absorbed myself into the Tel Aviv culture to get a full sense of what it is like to live in Israel. The experiences I have garnered thus far from living in Israel will last me a lifetime.

I have new friendships that will carry way beyond the classroom once the school year ends. The professors who have taught me thus far have been extraordinary in helping me understand topics more clearly, to help prepare me for the business world.

I can only hope the rest of the remaining two semesters will be as rewarding as the first one in terms of the amount of knowledge and hands-on experience I have gained so far.

Our upcoming class trip to China in June to learn about the local economy and meet with business professionals should be a highlight.

I look forward to expanding on the knowledge and experience I gathered from being part of the Sofaer IMBA program. I know that upon graduation I will be able to immerse myself into any position with ease. I only hope that, in the end, I am able to give back to Israel a fraction (or hopefully all) of what it has been able to give me.



At Gan Netivot HaTorah south, Emet enjoys presenting his project in Hebrew as part of the Chalav u'Davash program.

[Rebecca Ansel photo]

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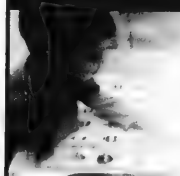

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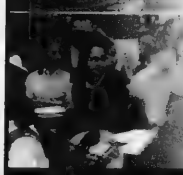

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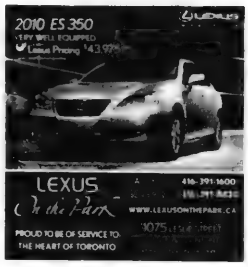

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National

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Heebonics

Former Mr. Israel imparts confidence to kids through judo. *Page 44*

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There's plenty of bubbly in Israel.

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Still fighting for his son

Noam Schalit carries the plea for his son's release to the people of Gaza. Schalit's son, Gilad, has been held captive in Gaza for more than three years. He stuck a message to his son's captors on relief goods en route to the Gaza Strip at the Kerem Shalom crossing. The message reminds Gaza's leaders that Schalit's release is a precondition for the improvement of the economic situation in Hamas-ruled Gaza. *[Flash90 photo]*

Congratulations to our Olympians

What a wonderful finish to the wonderful Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver. Our athletes pushed higher, farther and faster than ever before. Under conditions of unrelenting pressure, they pulled from the deepest reservoirs of strength, courage and determination. Ever Canadian, they did so with humility, grace and fun. That they also won more Winter Games gold medals than any other country had ever won and finished third among medal totals was a bonus. Congratulations and thank you. Our hearts glowed with pride.

It's not the Olympics but... Israeli peewees win in Quebec City

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — An Israeli team making its North American debut became the upset champion in its division at an international peewee hockey tournament near Quebec City.

Bat Yam surprised even their most ardent supporters by winning the gold medal in Division B of the 35th annual BSR International Peewee Hockey Tournament held in suburban Lévis. They won all four of their games in the division, which had 17 teams, mostly from Quebec.

The BSR is the little cousin of the Quebec International Peewee Hockey Tournament, now in its 51st year, which took place concurrently and includes 16 countries and over 2,000 players

In the final game Feb. 21, Bat Yam beat Edmundston, N.B., 8-7. Earlier that day, the Israelis, ages 9-12, won the semifinal game against the Brûleurs de Loups 1 from Grenoble, France, 3-2 in overtime.

Bat Yam, which is near Tel Aviv, stunned everyone with their 8-2 trouncing of the Husky 1 Chaudière-Ouest in their opener at the 10-day tournament, before going on to edge another Quebec team, the Aigles CBIO of Beauport, 3-2.

"It's unbelievable," said Jonathan Hawey, the Jewish Quebec City resident who was largely responsible for convincing the organizers to include Israel for the first time in the tournament, which drew about 130 teams from seven other countries.

Continued on page 50

The team from Bat Yam, Israel, the Division B champions of the 35th annual BSR International Peewee Hockey Tournament, pose with their trophy. At right is Jonathan Hawey, who helped get Israel into the tournament for the first time. *[Chantal Bourgault photo]*

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Son of Hamas leader was Israeli spy - please see page 38

The News in Brief

Canada

Rabbi Gets City Key

OTTAWA — Former Canadian Jewish Congress President Rabbi Reuven Bulka has been given a key to the city by Ottawa Mayor Larry O'Brien. The mayor made the Feb. 18 presentation during Kindness Week, which Rabbi Bulka helped establish to promote positive feelings in the city. Rabbi Bulka has been spiritual leader of Congregation Machzikei Hadas since 1967 and has written more than 30 books. He also hosts a Sunday-night talk show on CFRA Radio in Ottawa.

Nobel Nod For Matas

OTTAWA — MP Boris Wrzesnewskyj has nominated Winnipeg human rights lawyer David Matas and former Liberal MP David Kilgour for the Nobel Peace Prize for their work related to investigating organ harvesting crimes against Falun Gong practitioners in China. In his nomination to the Nobel committee, Wrzesnewskyj said awarding the prize to Matas and Kilgour "would help the world realize that liberty, human rights, and the rule of law can be won by determined peaceful acts of conscience."

World

Corries Sue Israel

JERUSALEM — The family of Rachel Corrie, a U.S. activist killed in 2003 by an Israeli army bulldozer in Gaza, is suing Israel. The case is to be heard in Haifa on March 10. Four witnesses who were with Corrie when she died will testify, the *Guardian* reported. Corrie, 23, of Olympia, Wash., was trying to stop a bulldozer from demolishing a Palestinian home when she was killed. An Israeli army probe found the driver couldn't see her and killed her unintentionally. The report accused Corrie of "illegal, irresponsible and dangerous" behaviour. Witnesses say she was visible to the driver and that activists shouted at him to stop before he hit her.

Man Avoids Ouster

PERTH, Australia — An alleged Nazi war criminal living in Australia has appealed to the Human Rights Commission in a bid to avoid extradition to his native Hungary. Charles Zentai's lawyer asked the commission to intervene on the grounds there was no guarantee Hungary can ensure a fair trial, especially in the absence of witnesses. Zentai, 88, of Perth, is facing allegations in Hungary that he helped murder Jewish teenager Peter Balasz in Budapest in November 1944. Zentai has denied the claim since he was first arrested by Australian police in 2005. The Human Rights Commission can't supersede the legal processes of his extradition but could help pay for his legal fight against extradition. His appeal is scheduled to begin March 31.

Mezuzah Hung

DOVER, Delaware — Jack Markel, Delaware's first Jewish governor, hung a mezuzah Feb. 23 at the governor's mansion in the capital, Dover. The mezuzah was given to him as an inauguration gift.

Star Trek Actor's Son Found Dead

Andrew Koenig

VANCOUVER — The depressed son of the Jewish actor who played Chekhov on the 1960s *Star Trek* TV series was found dead in Vancouver's Stanley Park last week of an apparent suicide.

Walter Koenig and his wife, Judy Levitt Koenig, had come to Vancouver to find their son, actor Andrew Koenig, 41, – who was best known for playing the character Richard (Boner) Stabone on the 1980s TV series *Growing Pains*. He was last seen in the city near Stanley Park on Feb. 14 and missed his Feb. 16 flight home.

He suffered from depression and had stopped taking his medication. He had also given away his possessions and gave notice to his landlord before heading to visit friends in Toronto and Vancouver, his father said.

The younger Koenig lived in Vancouver from 1989 to 1992, after having guest-starred on an episode of the TV series *21 Jump Street*, which was shot in the city.

Police focused their search on Stanley Park last week, because he was said to enjoy walking its paths and trails.

The last time he contacted his parents was Feb. 9. His cellphone last received a text Feb. 16, the same day there was "bank activity in Vancouver," his father said.

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Pro-Israel campaign says size isn't everything

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Sure, it's a little on the small side, but size doesn't matter to Rebecca Cherniak.

Cherniak, chair of Israel affairs and advocacy for the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS), helped organize the Size Doesn't Matter campaign, which uses videos, a website and a speaker series to highlight Israel's accomplishments in medicine, technology, science, business and humanitarian aid.

A centrepiece is the campaign's cheeky first video, which can be viewed on Facebook and YouTube. It shows a Canadian woman telling her Israeli boyfriend, who appears to be naked, that "it's small... I don't think I could go there."

The camera eventually pans to a map of Israel and ends with a website address.

"The video is provocative and risqué. It's meant to achieve a certain goal. The goal is that the video grabs attention and turns heads," Cherniak said.

"It causes people to be a little bit curious. That leads them to click on the link, once at the website, there's access to a huge amount of resources."

The campaign, which encompasses 23 Canadian universities and partners with local Hillels and Jewish Student Association groups, waslaunched before Israeli Apartheid Week, an annual event that began in Toronto and spread to 40 other cities.

"IAW is a week of intimidation and hateful speakers," Cherniak said. "By [launching early], we're not responding, we're able to set the terms... we create an attitude of positivity."

The campaign's website and advertising veers from the usual blue and white advocacy posters that typically plaster university walls. Instead, it uses bright colours and provocative images, including a scantily clad model.

Continued on page 32

The Size Doesn't Matter campaign aims to spread awareness about Israel at Canadian universities. Pictured, from left, are Jake Warren, Rebecca Cherniak, Atara Messinger, Adira Winegust, Daphne Jackson and Galina Goren of McMaster University's Israel On Campus group.

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Strengthening ties among young Jews

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"Our mission is service to the Jewish people and service to the world," Menahem Ben-Sasson, president of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Jan. 31, 2010).

• • •

In 1960, 37-year-old musician, scholar, educator David Kaplan came to Saskatoon from the United States to teach at the University of Saskatchewan. The future conductor of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra and future member of the Order of Canada brought rigour, substance and innovation to music-related education at the university, in the province and, indeed, in the country.

He also brought a six-year-old son, Jonathan.

Some 50 years after his arrival in Canada, Jonathan spoke to *The CJN* from an office on Mount Scopus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem about the Rothberg International School (RIS), of which he is the director of the division of undergraduate studies.

RIS is an administrative, teaching and social centre co-ordinating under one roof the various programs and activities that serve the needs of Hebrew U students from overseas. The precursor of RIS began its operations in 1955 when the one-year program for American and Canadian students was instituted. It opened its doors on Mount Scopus in an expanded programmatic form nearly 40 years ago, in 1971.

Ever since those first heady days of 1971, the school's programs have been continuously revised to attract and accommodate as many foreign students as possible to the university. Thus, today, there are programs for graduate and undergraduate students. The undergraduate program has two divisions. As Kaplan explained, one is geared to younger freshman, perhaps on their "gap" year; the other to students seeking more advanced studies.

The traditional curricular offerings at the school are courses in Jewish, Israeli and Mideast studies. But, flowing with our modern green times, the school has recently added courses in psychology, environmental studies and business.

"New programs are constantly being developed to match programs more precisely to the changing interests of the students," Kaplan said.

He emphasized that expanding the range of courses available to foreign students is part of the RIS central mission of helping foreign students feel at home at Hebrew U.

In distinct and deliberate echo of the mission of the university as articulated by its president, Menahem Ben-Sasson, RIS reaches out to and receives hundreds of foreign students each year from around the globe, most but not all of whom are from Jewish homes.

Jonathan Kaplan

For the academic year 2008/2009, 1,979 foreign students were enrolled at RIS. Of that number, 99 were from Canada. The largest contingent, not surprisingly, came from the United States. There were 916 Americans.

If the foreign students are enrolled in the undergraduate program, they will happily come under Kaplan's protective purview. And that's a good thing for them. For he is a congenial, gregarious enthusiastic individual exuding the warmth, friendliness and openness for which the Prairies are famous.

We spoke of one of Saskatchewan's favourite sons, Mr. Hockey himself, Gordie Howe. At the mere mention of Howe's name, Kaplan tumbled playfully back in time to his formative Canadian years and into a whimsy of nostalgia and reminiscence about his days watching and playing hockey.

Kaplan grew up in Saskatoon in "a very Jewishly committed home" as well as a devotedly Zionistic one. He was active in the Western Canada Region of Young Judaea and made aliyah in 1972. He fought in the Yom Kippur War, and after his army service, specialized in the study of Jewish history.

"One of the purposes of the varied program at RIS," Kaplan told *The CJN*, "is to strengthen – in a warm and caring atmosphere – the ties of young Jewish people to their history and to their roots." He emphasized that "RIS makes a large commitment to fostering Jewish identity and nurturing a strong belief in Jewish history" among the Jewish students at the school.

The expanded sense of Jewish self returns home with the students when they leave Jerusalem to continue their studies in Canada, or wherever they call home.

In strengthening their ties to their history and their roots, the RIS also strengthens students' ties to each other, to the friendships that are formed from the shared experiences of their year or more together and from the shared experiences of an ancient and modern peoplehood they have also discovered on Mount Scopus – in no small part, thanks to one of Saskatoon's finest sons, Jonathan Kaplan.

–MBD

To commemorate the 85th anniversary of the opening of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The CJN *was recently invited by Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University to travel to Jerusalem, visit the university, and meet and engage with some of its scholars, researchers, teachers and students.*

SeeJN

JUMP CELEBRATES ITS SECOND ANNIVERSARY

The Jewish Urban Meeting Place (JUMP) celebrated its second anniversary on Feb. 20, with a sold-out fundraiser that hosted 450 young professionals for a night of food and fun. Event sponsors include The Bay; Source Imaging; Spin Master; Rogers Communications; Scotia Bank, and Instore Products Limited. From left are Aron Kadis; Shlomo Buzaglo, JUMP's trips co-ordinator; event co-chairs Talia Soberano, Regan Tesis and Carrie Joelle Ostronoff; Sheri Becker and Chana Cohen.

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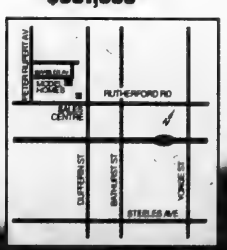

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Audit reports rise in anti-Semitic incidents

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Anti-Israel agitators, far-left groups and "Islamists" have "latched onto Nazi motifs and age-old anti-Jewish stereotypes" and are pushing up the number of incidents of anti-Semitism, according to a survey released last week.

"Anti-Jewish messaging is spiralling out of control with the resurrection of the old canards and calumnies of the past," states the 2009 Audit of Antisemitic Incidents by B'nai Brith Canada. "These have become the norm, not the exception, in many of the incidents classified in this audit."

In its survey of anti-Semitic incidents for the 2009 calendar year, B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights recorded 1,264 incidents, an 11.4 per cent increase over the year before. Nearly 70 per cent of the incidents were classified as "harassment," including verbal slurs, while 27.5 per cent were described as "vandalism" such as graffiti. Only 32 cases of violence were reported, or 2.5 per cent of the total.

The audit found that incidents of anti-Semitism have risen fairly consistently, from less than 300 such occurrences 10 years ago. Going back further, the rise in reported incidents is even greater: "When the League released its first audit 28 years ago, the number of reported incidents was only 63," B'nai Brith said.

The first three months of the year saw the largest number of anti-Jewish events – 16 per cent of the total in January alone – while an additional 268 events were registered in February and March. Those spikes coincided with tensions connected to Israel's military operation in Gaza and paralleled a similar jump in incidents during the 2006 war in Lebanon.

The elevated levels continued into February and March, largely due to "the aggressive atmosphere in campuses" connected to Israeli Apartheid Week, the audit suggested.

Another spike took place in September, when 105 incidents were recorded, coinciding with the High Holidays, "when across Canada, 10 synagogues were the subject of attack in that month alone. Four of them, in Quebec, had their windows smashed in what looked like a co-ordinated attack just before the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, Yom Kippur."

In releasing the report, Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith's executive vice-president, called it "a barometer of the times." Parents are calling B'nai Brith for advice on which campuses are safest for their children. Jewish students were chased to a club room by anti-Israel agitators at an event at York University last year while "hate-fests" on campus have led to Jew- and Israel-bashing, he said.

He was particularly critical of York University, which recently shut down a pro-Israel event after organizers could not meet onerous conditions, including paying for police security. Don't expect similar conditions to be placed on opponents of Israel, Dimant suggested.

Anticipating arguments that the audit is exaggerating anti-Semitism (the *National Post* ran an editorial saying the audit treats serious assaults on par with schoolyard taunts when compiling its statistics), Dimant said B'nai Brith is not "fear-mongering."

"We are living the anti-Semitism that is written in the [audit]. Not every Jew, but certainly enough who face the ugly face of anti-Semitism in this country."

He said Jews who hide their kippahs or Stars of David, who don't wear obviously Jewish garb or who avoid pro-Israel comments in social situations can avoid anti-Semitism.

He said education in core Canadian values such as tolerance is an antidote to the problem.

Anita Bromberg, B'nai Brith's national director of legal affairs, said 17 cases reported in the audit led to police charges. She suggested an absence of political will was limiting the number of criminal cases, while Dimant said police are reluctant to identify certain incidents as hate crimes.

Turning back to campuses, Dimant suggested the labelling of Israel as an "apartheid state" could be a red herring aimed at deflecting attention from a real issue.

"We need to emphasize what is the driving force for these groups on campus," he said. "The world is today fighting a very dangerous element of radical Islam, which is a threat to this country and is being ignored."

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Kudos to our students

There's no denying it. The web-based advocacy campaign on behalf of Israel organized and launched last week by the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS) called *Size Doesn't Matter* was provocative and – let's admit it – for people well past their student days, perhaps even uncomfortable.

As reported in *The CJN*, the centrepiece of the campaign is a sly, cheeky video that shows a Canadian woman in bed with her Israeli boyfriend conversing with overtly sexual allusions about a subject that eventually turns out to be the size of Israel. At the end of the suggestive banter between the two, the camera pans to a map of Israel. The map is an entry point to a website address that offers listings of cultural and other events from 23 Canadian university and college campuses regarding film screenings and a speaker series that highlight the many accomplishments of the tiny Jewish state – for example, in medicine, technology, science, business and humanitarian aid – that the organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) do not want other students to know about.

And that is the whole point of the CFJS campaign.

It brings the broader, more accurate message about Israel to a very wide swath of students who otherwise might simply accept the IAW calumnies unchallenged as truth, or simply not care to know anything about the Jewish state. Thus far, the campaign has been very successful. It is working. In merely its first five days, there were some 25,000 viewings of the video and more than12,000 entries from across the country into the comprehensive information site about Israel.

Rebecca Cherniak, chair of Israel affairs and advocacy for the CFJS, told *The CJN* that the campaign "is for the 80 per cent [of students] in the middle, not for students who love Israel or hate Israel, but for the students who can't even point out Israel on the map. It causes people to be a little bit curious. That leads them to click on the link. once at the website, there's access to a huge amount of resources."

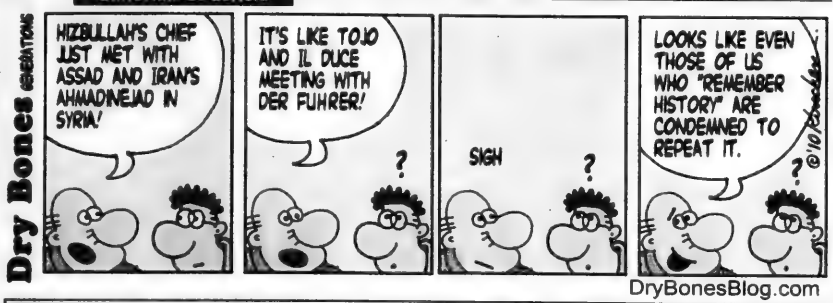
"Students were not satisfied with the way Israel was represented on campus, Cherniak added. "We took it into our hands to show the Israel that we know. It's a different way of looking at Israel."

Deborah Mechanic, a third-year kinesiology student at York University, may have spoken for a great many students when she told *The CJN*: "I've been at York three years and my experience with Apartheid Week is lots of fighting and lots of culture clashing. [The CFJS campaign] feels a little more refreshing than the traditional campaigning to defend our country… [it shows] not just how Israel isn't wrong, but how it's good."

Cherniak, her colleagues at CFJS and the communal organizations that helped enable them deserve high praise for their work. The CFJS may not have used the language or the methods of their parents, but they are doing what their parents cannot do as well as they do: reach their peers and communicate to their fellow students on campus the positive message that tiny Israel is a thriving democracy worthy of their understanding, if not active support, and also, that *Am Yisrael Chai*.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Nine hours after beginning deliberations, a 12-person jury found Toronto printer Ernst Zundel guilty of deliberately publishing lies about the Holocaust. Speaking to reporters from the prisoner's dock immediately after his eight-week trial, Zundel promised he would appeal the verdict.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LOOKS LIKE EVEN THOSE OF US WHO "REMEMBER HISTORY" ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.
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Campus pro-Israel campaign

After weeks of planning, the pro-Israel campaign took shape and has begun on campuses across the country. In an effort to present Israel in a perspective not usually seen by university students, Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA) assisted students in creating the "Size Doesn't Matter" campaign. The idea is to capture people's attention with the seemingly provocative slogan, with a subtitle that is customized for each campus. The University of Calgary Hillel adopted "Size Doesn't Matter: Israel, Small Country, Big Appetite for Peace." The campaign began without a hitch, and students were interested in the information available at the tables. The week is full of speakers, movies and events. Yasher Koach to CIJA and the United Jewish Appeal for excellent creativity and quality resources!

Aaron Silver
Calgary

* * *

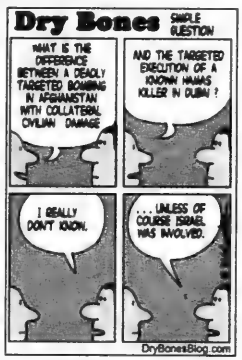
U of T anti-Semitism: don't assign blame

As a current social worker and former social work student I read "Anti-Semitic incidents at U of T condemned" (Feb. 18) with much gratitude, concern and hope. I commend dean Faye Mishna for clearly and forcefully declaring that there is no place for anti-Semitism or any other form of discrimination at the University of Toronto. Along with colleagues, I further applaud her for spearheading awareness and educational programs with a commitment to fostering constructive dialogue around the two specific incidents and explore ways to ensure that any form of hate will ever be tolerated within the classroom setting and beyond.

This process should not be about assigning blame, be it toward U of T's Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, including Prof. Rupaleem Bhuyan, who I believe is a fine teacher, social worker and human being, nor its learned students. What also needs to be acknowledged is that social workers live in a world where, unfortunately, hateful beliefs and practices, including anti-Semitism, are all too prevalent. No part of society is immune from expressions of hate, including institutions of higher learning and a profession committed to the principles of tikkun olam.

May members of this community be blessed with patience, insight and compassion to bring the ugliness of these incidents out into the light, and in so doing experience journeys of transformative learning and growth.

Leonard S. Molczadski
Toronto


Dry Bones
SIMPLE QUESTION
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A DEADLY TARGETED BOMBING IN AFGHANISTAN WITH COLLATERAL CIVILIAN DAMAGE
AND THE TARGETED EXECUTION OF A KNOWN HAMAS KILLER IN DUBAI ?
I REALLY DON'T KNOW.
... UNLESS OF COURSE ISRAEL WAS INVOLVED.
DryBonesBlog.com

* * *

One missing word says it all

I was sympathetic to Rabbi Reuven Bulka's concerns regarding the "conversion crisis," that haredi demands for exclusive control of the conversion process throughout the Jewish world have grave implications, including the invalidation of his own conversions ("Some observations on the conversion crisis," Perspectives, Feb. 4). But I read his article with chagrin, realizing that one missing word shows that he is to some extent complicit in his own predicament.

Rabbi Bulka describes how he reluctantly began supervising conversions because "no other rabbi in my area was willing to do this." I suspect, however, that there may have been at least a Reform or Conservative rabbi supervising conversions. By not specifying that there was no other Orthodox rabbi doing conversions, we realize where the problem lies.

In your Feb. 18 edition, in his letter, Rabbi Edward Elkin ably describes how non-Orthodox rabbis take a serious approach to conversion that falls within Rabbi Bulka's spectrum of halachic conversion. But we must nevertheless still warn our candidates that their conversion will be accepted officially by very few Orthodox rabbis.

Rabbi Bulka has done much to strengthen the Canadian Jewish community, but his approach to conversions, to some extent, is responsible for my pain, his own pain, and particularly for the pain of the converts I sponsor.

Since his own conversions are now potentially being called into question by the haredi establishment, I encourage him to work toward creating a unified beit din in concert with his non-Orthodox colleagues in our nation's capital.

Rabbi Jeffrey Ableser
Windsor, Ont.

* * *

Funding sources of Israeli NGOs

For the New Israel Fund to object to an attempt to clarify the funding sources of NGOs in Israel and to wrap this in the flag of democratic values is clearly an attempt at obfuscation ("Fierce debate in Israel over campaign against NIF," Perspectives, Feb. 18). Let the truth come out, as there is a "right to know" who are the funding sources of our moral beacons – both left wing and right wing.

Joe Kislowicz
Thornhill, Ont.

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Be happy it's Adar?

Not easy when Purim coincides with Israeli Apartheid Week

By NORA GOLD
Special to The CJN

This past Saturday and Sunday we celebrated Purim, and then on Monday, we faced the beginning of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW). For those unfamiliar with IAW, this is an annual, weeklong, anti-Israel hate-fest that started in 2005 at University of Toronto and now takes place in 40 locations around the world. Here in Toronto, U of T's main campus is in the downtown core, so for many of us, there is the feeling each year at this time that all of Toronto has been taken over by IAW.

Nora Gold

When I first noticed that there would be a convergence this year between IAW and Purim, I found this quite thought-provoking.

Purim, of course, is a holiday about the vagaries of history and the remarkable capacity of our people to survive in an unpredictable and hate-filled world. The proximity of IAW to Purim reminds us with vividness and immediacy that, despite all the differences between ancient Persia and present-day Canada, we still live in a world where anti-Semitism exists and we have enemies who seek to destroy us.

Even without Purim adjoining it, IAW is an intensely uncomfortable time for many Jews, and an agonizing one for those of us who love Israel. For me (an Israeli citizen and a passionate left-wing Zionist), this weeklong attack on Israel is a weeklong attack on me. I might feel otherwise if IAW were a week of honest, balanced critique of Israel, but this is not the case.

IAW uses the false analogy between Israel and apartheid South Africa to try and delegitimize, and ultimately destroy, the State of Israel. It thus becomes a true analogy to Haman.

So what can we do during this difficult week to respond to the old-new hatred of IAW? I found myself talking about this last week at U of T's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, after screening a film I made about my research on Toronto Jewish girls and their experiences of anti-Semitism. Afterwards, during the discussion, one woman said she is afraid to wear a pendant with a Jewish star on it in public because of the response she might get. I'd heard this kind of statement dozens of times before when conducting a national study with Jewish women from across Canada, and as I told this young woman, I understand her reaction. It is, after all, reality-based, because we live in an anti-Semitic time.

That said, one of the great lessons of Purim is that, given the choice between flight and fight, fighting is the better option.

Esther, with Mordechai's encouragement, fought back against Haman, and that's part of why we're here today. Furthermore, the strategies Esther used to defeat Haman were unorthodox and creative, and we must employ this same creativity in response to our enemies today.

To offer just one example: last week, coming out of a movie in a downtown theatre, I caught sight of a table with all sorts of flyers on it, and sure enough, along with all the others, was a pile of bookmarks advertising IAW. I was just starting to grumble to myself, when someone on the other side of the room called my name, so I turned away from the table to wave to her and say hi. Moments later, I turned back to the table, and to my astonishment, saw that all the IAW bookmarks were gone. There had been only one other person with me near that table – a woman whose distinctly patterned bright jacket I had happened to notice. Now I recognized her by the back of this jacket – this woman was striding quickly out of the theatre.

This poster from two years ago is typical of the anti-Israel messages delivered during Israeli Apartheid Week.

I don't know this woman and I'll never know her exact motive for scooping up all those bookmarks. But I do know the intense relief and elation that flooded me, knowing that at least at that theatre, none of those lying bookmarks would reach the dozens of innocent Torontonians going to the movies that evening.

I also found this incident startling, because it closely echoed something that happens in my (as yet unpublished) novel, *Exile*. Here, a university student stands for a long time in front of a poster that calls for a boycott of Israel, vacillating over whether or not to tear it down – in the end, she does. (This scene, by the way, can be read on my website: noragold.com.) So life imitates art, I thought, standing in the lobby of that movie theatre, watching my secret ally escaping out the door.

I am not, heaven forbid, advocating that any of us do anything that violates the rule of law or in any way dishonours ourselves or our community. But we must, each of us individually, try and do at least one thing this week that expresses our rejection of, and resistance to, IAW. The good efforts of our community's institutions to combat IAW do not absolve us from our individual responsibility to fight this vileness ourselves wherever we can. For inspiration, think of Esther. Think of her courage. This is the essential message of Purim.

So let's be happy it's Adar.

As we survived Haman long ago, we will also survive our current enemies. And in the meantime, as we struggle against them, let's remember to rejoice and be happy, because this is the true survival of our people. As we did a few nights ago, we will on Purim year after year – God willing – read the Megillah, eat a hamantash and drink until we can't tell the difference between Israeli Apartheid Week and Purim.

Nora Gold is a researcher, a prize-winning author and a co-editor of the soon-to-be launched journal Jewish Fiction Online. *She can be reached at noragold.com.*

And she tears the poster off the wall

From Exile, *a novel by Nora Gold*

Judith, a master's student waiting to see her professor Suzy, notices a poster calling for a boycott of Israel. Shocked, then furious, she inwardly rants for awhile.

Then, staring at the poster, Judith thinks: Someone should tear this down. This poster isn't a representation of freedom of expression; it's hate literature. It encourages everyone who sees it to hate one specific group of people and try to hurt them. Someone has to take it down. But who? I can't. I can't just tear down a poster.

Or maybe I can.

Judith peeks around the corner of the alcove. Out in the hallway there are two people ahead of her waiting for Suzy. I have at least 10 minutes till it's my turn, thinks Judith. She ducks back into the alcove and scans the poster top to bottom: on the top there's an invitation to an anti-Israel rally; below it, the call to boycott "apartheid Israel." This poster is obscene, thinks Judith. It's disgusting. Someone has to tear it down.

But she can't do it. It feels wrong. You don't go around ripping other people's stuff off walls, thinks Judith. If you do that, then you're no better than the people who put up this kind of crap. You've descended to their level. Posters are free speech. They're democracy, she thinks. If I rip down this poster, I'm ripping the fabric of democracy. I may not agree with what this poster says, but "I'll defend to the death its right to say it." Whoever put this up had every right to.

Yeah, thinks Judith. But then equally I have the right to tear it down. That's democracy, too: multiple voices, each expressing its own reality. The person who put up this poster may perceive Israel as the most scumbag country in the world. But I have a right to disagree. I also have the right to speak. With my lips. Or with my hands.

But violence, thinks Judith. Violence... Not only is it wrong, it's illegal. This poster is university property, it has the university stamp on it, I could get into trouble for tearing it down.

Now Judith sees herself standing in front of the poster and hesitating – to tear or not to tear – and she laughs at herself. She's being ridiculous. Throughout history, Jews have performed acts of courage, for instance in the Warsaw Ghetto. Risking their lives every day to help others. And she can't even pull down a stupid poster. Her and her namby-pamby left-wing sensibilities. Keeping her from doing what she knows she should.

Now Judith thinks of her name. Judith in the Bible lopped off Holofernes' head without even batting an eyelash. With less hesitation than she has now over tearing down a poster. Come on, Judith tells herself. Be strong like your name. Doubt, dither, deliberate all you want first, if it makes you feel like a better person. Agonize to your heart's content, like Raskolnikov. But then in the end, act. Sartre was right: ultimately there is nothing but action.

Judith reaches out her hand. Act, she thinks. Do it. Have some impact on the world.

And she tears the poster off the wall.

Opinions

Religious revival?

A new Masorti (Conservative) prayer book in Israel had been on the country's bestseller list. As Orthodox worshippers use texts that reflect their own background and customs, they aren't likely to buy this one. The number of Masorti Jews who attend synagogue services is too small to account for the sales. It seems, therefore, that most of those who have acquired the new siddur are Israelis who don't describe themselves as religious and will probably never take it to services.

Rabbi Dan Marmur in Toronto

But though they may not pray, they want to know. The book has interesting commentaries and explanations for people eager to learn about Judaism, even if they don't practise it. They may not pray, but they'll read the book by themselves or, more likely, study it in one of the many informal groups that have come into existence in recent years to explore Jewish tradition in depth. They may choose a prayer book instead of a biblical or rabbinic text, because they want more than intellectual insights.

The distinction between religion, which doesn't have a good name in Israel, and spirituality, which is something that many seek in Judaism and may have learned about in the course of their travels in the Far East, challenges the conventional division between religious and secular. Although many Israelis put themselves in the latter category, they're nevertheless in search of what's beyond the material and the social. That's what makes a new liturgical text intriguing and attractive.

Organized religious movements may see here an opportunity to acquire adherents. Though some secular Jews do become "born again" and join one or other haredi, often chassidic, group, most will only get involved when celebrating life cycle events, because these are individual and personal – "spiritual" rather than "religious."

Until a few decades ago, virtually everybody would choose Orthodox institutions for such occasions, assuming that only these are authentic. Nowadays, however, both Reform and Conservative congregations are in considerable demand for bar and bat mitzvah celebrations and wedding ceremonies. And some who take advantage of non-Orthodox synagogues stay to pray. It accounts for much of the steady growth of the two movements.

It's too early to predict the future of Judaism in Israel and, through Israel's influence, in the Diaspora. But these developments point to a possible religious revival. Some of it may work in favour of existing institutions, but most will manifest itself in settings without the benefit of clergy. The new trend is bound to be post-denominational and post-halachic. Schools that now train rabbis take note.

The Jewish calendar revealed

In this period between Purim and Pesach the Hebrew calendar seems to take on special significance. For one thing, we're commanded in the Torah to take special note of the month of Nisan. God instructs Moses and Aaron that Nisan will be considered the first of the months. The children of Israel will witness things in Nisan that they'll never forget, and they'll be asked to participate in those events proactively, in a way unlike anything they'd experienced in their previous lives as slaves.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

They are to sacrifice a lamb and eat all of it, as would a privileged free person. They are to "borrow" precious objects from their Egyptian neighbours and keep them. They are to witness tragedy all around them while they stay safe. They will leave their slavery behind them and walk into the wilderness. They are to hear from Moses of future generations that will mark this month with annual celebration. Slaves for whom days, weeks, months and years had little significance are taught to see the new moon of Nisan as the beginning of their new history as free men and women.

In addition, we're more aware of the season, since Pesach requires so much preparation. I am always amazed at how supermarkets in Jewish neighbourhoods begin to sell Pesach foods immediately after Purim. Our Hebrew calendar, which serves such a tiny percentage of the world's population, has affected the marketing tactics of huge supermarket chains. And this is North America, where just a few decades ago it seemed like Jewish life was doomed to a very minor role in the larger magnetic society.

Our calendar thrives in all of its uniqueness. Have you noticed the differences between our calendar and others around us? People think of the Christian calendar as solar and ours as lunar. That's not precisely true. The Christian calendar is solar, and the Muslim calendar is lunar, but the Hebrew calendar is lunar/solar. Our year is lunar, but we add a month from time to time in order to keep the festivals in their proper solar season. Nisan and its Pesach will always be in the spring of the northern hemisphere. The Muslim calendar, which is completely lunar, has feasts and fasts that move throughout the solar year. Ramadan travels from winter through summer across the solar years.

Another interesting difference is what we name and what we don't name in our calendar. Both the Christian and Jewish calendars name years (2010 and 5770) and months (March and Nisan), but the Christian calendar names days of the week and ours doesn't. Wednesday in Hebrew is *Yom Revii*, but originally it was *Yom Revii la'Shabbat*, the fourth day toward Shabbat. Only one day in our week has a real name, while the others are just counting up to Shabbat. Most importantly, though, the week, which is an artificial construct of the Creation story, has no name in the Christian calendar, but a very significant name in the Jewish calendar. The week that ends with Shabbat is named after the portion of Torah that we read on Mondays, Thursdays and Shabbat. And that name is much more than a mere label. It flavours the entire week with its narrative, its laws, its values, its memories and its sacred history.

For example, this week is Ki Tisa, a rich portion from the book of Exodus. It brings to mind the half-shekel census, Bezalel the artist, the sin of the Golden Calf, Moses' argument with God, intimacies of Moses with his brother and with God, and the restoration of the tablets of the covenant. The Torah portion in all of its detail, the many commentaries, and the accompanying Haftorah are the values-content of each week in the Jewish calendar.

Ever since the commandment in Exodus 12 to note the month of Nisan, time itself has become a sacred medium of Jewish life.

Veiling men

The blogosphere is abuzz with reports of a new item in the haredi marketplace: a "personal mechitzah" designed to protect its bearer from the spiritual hazards of air travel. The story originated in the *Jerusalem Post* and was quoted verbatim and at length on both Orthodox and liberal Jewish blogs and fora, where the item was criticized, praised and analyzed.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

A mechitzah, of course, is the physical barrier separating the sexes in traditional prayer services. Citing the "Rabbinical Council for Public Transportation," reports describe the personal mechitzah as a compact nylon device designed to create a small, private enclosure around one's head, attaching with velcro to one's airplane seat. Promoted as a solution to the dual dangers of airline films and immodestly dressed fellow passengers, it permits its bearer to study sacred texts or pray free from forbidden distractions.

Bloggers and forum comments are divided between taking the story seriously and taking it as a Purim hoax. One blog – obviously working on the latter assumption – posted what is purportedly an exclusive advance photo of the mechitzah in a new El Al ad campaign. It shows a man and woman seated side by side in executive class airline seats (not the kind that go flatbed). The man's head and upper torso have disappeared into a cylindrical mesh laundry basket. As of this writing, no other photos have surfaced.

Many online commentators take the story seriously, either bemoaning it as another example of *chumrot* gone wild, or mulling its possibilities for enhancing spirituality or adherence to Halachah. (A *chumrah* is a stringency that isn't required by Halachah.) Interestingly, many who are sympathetic to the idea saw the personal mechitzah as an educational device to shield children from things deemed harmful to their development, although the initial story said the target market was adult haredi men.

Time will tell whether the personal mechitzah is for real, and if so, whether it will find customers. But the concept caught my attention and – in one respect – I embrace it. To my mind, it reverses the responsibilities and positions assigned to genders – and not only in Judaism, but in other religions, too.

The focus on *tzniyut*, or modest dress, for women and the segregation of the sexes are said to protect the dignity of women from the lascivious gazes of men, and to protect men from the distraction of female sexuality, especially (but not only) during prayer and sacred study. Either way, the concern is with what men can see. What I find innovative (perhaps unintentionally) about the personal mechitzah is that rather than cloaking women, it shields men's eyes.

I imagine the personal mechitzah, which is said to extend closely around the face, to resemble a burqa or niqab, only it's more radical, because here the eyes, too, are blocked completely. The woman is veiled because she might distract or entice men. The man is veiled, as it were, because he doesn't want to be distracted.

You might say that the personal mechitzah connotes taking responsibility for one's own spiritual welfare, rather than foisting it on someone else. In other words, it's up to the distracted and distractable ones, not the distractions, to control themselves.

Imagine the possibilities for halachic innovation. Instead of separate realms for men and women that take women away from the spiritual action, traditional shuls might allow people to sit where they choose, but have them wear mechitzot. At last a solution to the barring of women's minyanim at the Kotel – objectors can simply wear the mechitzah.

But other spaces are also potential venues: the mall, subways, buses, university classes. Unlike a woman's veil, always required in public – because who knows when someone, upon seeing a woman, might have unwanted thoughts – the personal mechitzah could be donned and doffed at will, when necessary. Its uses would be determined by both external circumstances and internal conditions. It opens new possibilities for tolerance, as the focus of behaviour is aimed inward – how the self responds and reacts – rather than outward – what the other does.

I can already imagine product names: Porta-chitzah. Mechitzah-me. My-chitzah. Manveil. I jest, but only somewhat. Whether or not it's a viable product, I like the gender flipping inherent in the concept: governing oneself, restricting oneself, and not the other.

The Kirshner File

Israel's 'Superman'

The Jan. 19 assassination of Hamas commander Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai – a statelet in the United Arab Emirates – was a classic cloak-and-dagger operation worthy of a crackling spy novel by, say, John le Carré. The incident featured a shadowy hit squad whose members carried fraudulent British, Irish, German and French passports and were attired in tennis shorts, hats, false beards and wigs and glasses.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Suspicion immediately fell on the Mossad, Israel's national intelligence agency, since Israel had a compelling motive to kill him. Aside from being implicated in the 1989 kidnapping and murder of two Israeli soldiers, Ilan Saadon and Avi Sasportas, Mabhouh was supposedly a key figure in procuring Iranian arms for Hamas, which has controlled the Gaza Strip since June 2007.

By coincidence, Mabhouh's murder took place as Israeli Minister of National Infrastructure Uzi Landau attended an international conference on alternative energy in neighbouring Abu Dhabi.

In keeping with its policy of ambiguity in such cases, Israel at first neither confirmed nor denied its involvement in the murky affair. Later, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman claimed that there is no evidence to link Israel to the murder. Dubai's police chief, however, said he was 99 per cent certain the Mossad was behind it. Meanwhile, Israel's ambassadors to Britain, Ireland, France and Germany were asked for an explanation and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he would launch a full investigation.

Meir Dagan

The fate that befell Mabhouh cast new light on Israel's covert policy of targeted killings and on the Mossad's current director, Meir Dagan.

It is no secret that Israel has resorted to morally ambiguous assassinations as a response to terrorism. In 2006, Israel's Supreme Court sanctioned extra-judicial killings as a legitimate form of self-defence under certain conditions.

During the early 1960s, when Israel was in a state of war with Egypt, the long arm of the Mossad went after German scientists helping the Egyptians develop long-range ballistic missiles. These rocket experts, having honed their skills in Nazi Germany, were the targets of letter bombs directed by one of the Mossad's most legendary operatives, Wolfgang Lotz, who operated in Egypt under cover as a German horse breeder and bon vivant.

In the wake of the Munich massacre of 11 Israeli athletes at the 1972 summer Olympic Games, the Mossad embarked on Operation Wrath of God. The targets were Palestine Liberation Organization figures such as Abdel Wael Zwaiter and Mahmoud Hamshari, who were directly or indirectly involved in the hostage-taking drama. They were killed in a succession of cities in Europe. Munich's alleged mastermind, Ali Hassan Salameh, was assassinated in Beirut in 1979.

In tandem with Operation Wrath of God, the Israeli army, in Operation Spring of Youth, landed commandos in Beirut under the command of Ehud Barak – Israel's current defence minister – to eliminate three leading Palestinian officials close to PLO head Yasser Arafat, Mohammed Najar, Kamal Adwan and Kamal Nasser.

The first operation was the subject of a book by Canadian writer George Jonas, *Vengeance*, as well as a TV movie, *Sword of Gideon*. The first batch of assassinations and the Beirut raid were recreated by Steven Spielberg in a feature film, *Munich*.

In 1988, Israeli commandos hunted down and killed Khalil al-Wazir, a founder of Fatah, in Tunis. The raid was apparently spearheaded by Moshe Ya'alon, currently a cabinet minister in Benjamin Netanyahu's government and a former chief of staff of the Israeli army. In 1990, a Canadian engineer and ballistics expert who had been developing a supergun for Iraq, Gerald Bull, was gunned down in Brussels.

The Mossad was blamed for his murder.

The secretary general of Hezbollah, Abbas Musawi, was killed in 1992 when Israeli helicopters fired missiles at his car in southern Lebanon.

Fathi Shikaki, the leader of Islamic Jihad, was fatally shot in Malta in 1995 by assassins said to be Mossad agents.

Yahya Ayyash (The Engineer), Hamas' most accomplished bomb maker, was killed in 1996 when his cellphone exploded in his hand. Hamas fingered Israel as the culprit.

Imad Mughniyah

Khaled Meshal, a top-ranking Hamas official living in Jordan in exile, was the object of a Mossad assassination attempt in 1997. The Mossad agents, carrying forged Canadian passports, were captured. They were released after Israel supplied an antidote to save Meshal's life and freed Hamas' spiritual leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, from prison. The incident strained Israel's strategic relationship with Jordan and forced the director of the Mossad to resign.

With the eruption of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000, the Israeli army and the Shin Bet – Israel's internal security agency – launched what would be a concerted campaign of targeted assassinations to wipe out the leaders and foot soldiers of the revolt (an event that hardened Israel's perception of the Palestinians). The first Palestinian leader to be killed was Hussein Abayat, a 34-year-old resident of Bethlehem. His vehicle was struck by a laser-guided rocket fired from an Israeli army helicopter on Nov. 9 of that year.

From 2000 to 2008, Israel killed 234 Palestinians associated with the uprising – notably Yassin and his successor, Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, and the founder of Hamas' military wing in Gaza, Salah Shihada, who died after an Israeli F-16 jet dropped a one-ton bomb on his house.

Since 2002, the Mossad has been directed by Dagan, who commanded an undercover unit in Gaza in the early 1970s and an armoured brigade in the 1982 war in Lebanon. During the 1990s, he advised the director of the Shin Bet and the general staff on terrorism. Dagan was appointed to his present position by Ariel Sharon, the prime minister of the day. In an unmistakable sign of the esteem in which he is generally held, Dagan's tenure has been extended three times by two prime ministers, Ehud Olmert and his successor, Netanyahu. Only two of Dagan's predecessors, Isser Harel (1952-1963) and Yitzhak Hofi (1974-1982), have served longer.

Dagan's longevity is no mystery. Widely regarded as an unusually tough taskmaster, he has been extremely effective. "In my opinion, no terrorist should feel immune, anywhere," he said in an interview 12 years ago.

Aggressively acting on his beliefs, Dagan has reportedly foiled three major Islamist attacks on Israeli embassies in Africa and Asia. In addition, he has directed a clandestine campaign against Iran's budding nuclear project. Indeed, Iran blamed Israel for the recent assassination of nuclear scientist Massoud Mohammadi in Tehran. Writing in *Al Ahram*, Egyptian columnist Ashraf Abu al-Haul dubbed Dagan "Israel's Superman," claiming that the Iranian nuclear program "would have taken off years ago" had it not been for "this man."

Credited with ordering the killing of two pivotal Hezbollah officials in Beirut in 2003 and 2004, he allegedly played a central role in Israel's decision to bomb Syria's incomplete nuclear facility in 2007. As well, he is said to have ordered the 2008 assassination of a Syrian general, Muhammed Suleiman, who apparently funnelled weapons to Hezbollah. Last year, Dagan was reportedly involved in an Israeli air strike on a Hamas convoy in Sudan transporting Iranian arms to Gaza.

In his greatest known coup, Dagan is said to have worked on the assassination of Imad Mughniyah, one of Hezbollah's most important and dangerous commanders. He was killed by a car bomb in Damascus on Feb. 12, 2008. Having accused Israel of murdering him, Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secretary general, has vowed vengeance.

Dagan is unlikely to be deterred by such threats, which should be taken seriously.

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Trustee wants TDSB to condemn Apartheid Week

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

James Pasternak, the school board trustee for York Centre, has drafted a motion asking the chair and director of the Toronto District School Board to condemn Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), held annually at the University of Toronto and other institutions.

Pasternak's motion urges chair Bruce Davis and director Christopher Spence to sign a joint letter to U of T president, David Naylor, stating that the TDSB's education partners should share "ideals of respect, tolerance and the promotion of peace."

In an interview with *The CJN*, Pasternak noted that the university trains future teachers and works with the board in areas such as programs, research, recruitment and staffing.

The motion says the letter should urge U of T to ask IAW organizers "to find space elsewhere and ensure that [they're] forbidden from trying to undermine TDSB policies and setting up in TDSB schools."

Pasternak's concern is based in part on past "recruitment of TDSB high school students," the motion says.

> ***Concern based on past 'recruitment' of high school students***

Two years ago, a teacher at the Student School, an alternative school affiliated with the TDSB, organized information sessions and brought students to an IAW event organized specifically for high school students, Pasternak said.

"We were very effective in working with the Student School and blocking any further activity," following a student's complaint, he added. "There was no real balance to the discussion of the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We have to present an honest and balanced dialogue in the search for peace. [IAW] merely demonizes Israel."

Pasternak also noted that some IAW events are hosted at U of T's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, "a teachers' college and a think tank, and many of the people end up working at our schools. I don't consider that a healthy environment."

IAW, which takes place this week and is now in its sixth year, encourages boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns, and promotes the idea that Israel engages in "ethnic cleansing." It started in Toronto, but has spread to more than 40 cities including New York, Johannesburg, Melbourne and Pisa, as well as Canadian centres such as Edmonton, Guelph, Halifax, Kingston, London, Montreal, Ottawa, Peterborough, Vancouver, Waterloo and Winnipeg.

Pasternak, who plans to bring his motion to the TDSB board on Mar. 10, told *The CJN* last week that it's "our responsibility as a school board to make sure [efforts to bring in younger students] stop."

In a statement, he said, "This event is not a sincere and honest attempt to find common ground and peace in the Middle East. It presents one-sided misconceptions and distortions about the challenges in the Middle East. The title and content of this event is disparaging and demonizes."

He told *The CJN* that board members "value the relationship" the TDSB has with U of T. But, he added, "what we don't want is a situation in which organizers are trying to come into our high schools to spread this insidious ideology that is a contradiction of our policies."

Spence, the TDSB's designated spokesperson, was not reachable for comment by the time *The CJN* went to press.

Naylor was also not available for comment as *The CJN* went to press, but in a Feb. 24 letter about freedom of expression and diversity, which is posted on his website, he wrote that "when members of our community tell us that events or discussions may have violated university policies, we will assess those complaints quickly and take whatever actions are necessary to restore a safe environment for producing knowledge and discussing ideas."

Without mentioning IAW directly, Naylor wrote that freedom of speech is "a core value for any university in a democratic society." He also said the university wouldn't hesitate to intervene if there are safety concerns, or if speakers "migrate from advocacy to hate-promoting speech."

As well, he added, senior university staff will monitor events if they have reason to believe they could be used to target members of the community.

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Ontario Legislature condemns Apartheid Week

The Ontario Legislature voted unanimously last week to condemn Israeli Apartheid Week, based on a motion introduced by Peter Shurman, Conservative MPP for Thornhill.

Peter Shurman

Passage of the resolution "sends a clear message to Ontarians and the rest of the world that use of the term 'apartheid,' in relation to the state of Israel, borders on hate speech, and... the events staged during Israeli Apartheid Week have no place in Ontario, particularly on its university campuses," Shurman said in a statement.

"'Israeli Apartheid Week' is just code for 'We hate Israel, and we don't want it to exist,'" he told *The CJN*.

Shurman, who is Jewish, said he doesn't object to criticism of Israel, and "that type of discussion should take place, with all sides represented... with respect to peace going forward, and people living together in harmony."

In a draft statement that was to be released Monday morning, national Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff also spoke out against Israeli Apartheid Week. The final version of his statement was not released until after *The CJN* went to press.

– F.K.

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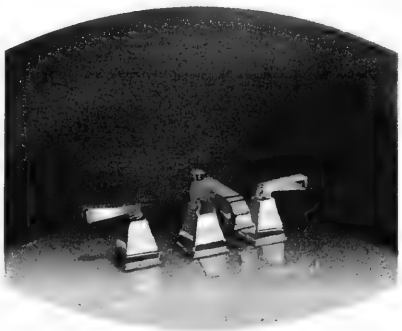

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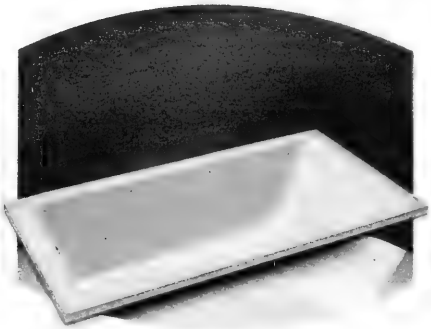

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Passover food drive needs volunteers, donations

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

The co-chairs of this year's Passover Food Drive, run by National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section, expect a lot more people on their recipient list to be from the middle class.

"The recession is now a few years old, and many people who have lost their jobs have used up their savings. This is resulting in a 10 per cent increase on our list," said Debbie Wasserman, who is co-chairing the 27th annual drive with Karen Fenwick.

Wasserman said that out of about 200,000 Jews in the Greater Toronto Area, 11 per cent live in poverty.

According to Statistics Canada, the 2006 low-income cut-off for a single person was about $17,570 after taxes, and for a family of four it was $33,221 after taxes.

She said that "this is a sad year, because we'll see recipients that do not necessarily fit the demographics of the program."

Fenwick said that referrals are accepted from agencies, synagogues, schools, service groups and chaplaincy services, and recipients include individuals living in poverty, recent immigrants in need, and individuals with disabilities and inadequate financial resources.

Debbie Wasserman and Karen Fenwick

Kosher for Passover food items are also made available to people in Jewish group homes, as well as to kosher food banks, Jewish homeless and incarcerated Jews.

Basic box ingredients include wine, apple juice, matzah, a jar or can of gefilte fish, vegetable soup, chicken soup, macaroons, tuna, jam, apple sauce, tea, crackers and oil, as well as a Haggadah and candles.

Fenwick said that when putting together their recipient list, organizers are respectful of people's privacy. "We only accept people who have agreed to receiving a box. Needing food is a very emotional experience, especially for those who have never needed it before.

"We stress to our volunteers that they should not judge people by where they live. Recipients could live in a house, but have no money.

"We have volunteers add greeting cards to the boxes, because we want them to know that they are packing the box for a specific person, not just a statistic."

Organizers are appealing to the community to turn up on delivery day, March 21 from 8:30 a.m.to noon, to help deliver boxes, and to make monetary donations to the drive which runs until March 18. Wasserman said "We do encourage donating food, because of the mitzvah of giving, but we can buy food wholesale, so our money goes a lot further."

If volunteers want to help out on delivery day, but have no means of transportation, they can always help out loading the cars with boxes, she said.

This year, as in past years, the community has been generous, she said. "This is a self-contained program, and the money that comes in funds the project. People have responded to our pleas and have given whole-heartedly."

About 1,500 people help out by sorting, packing and delivering boxes, a number of senior homes have raised money for the drive, and schools have placed bins so students can donate food, said Wasserman.

Three local Revera retirement residences are collecting kosher food and monetary donations.

Fenwick said that since last year's drive ended, organizers have been trying to create partnerships and find possible sponsors.

"We've asked the North York Harvest Food Bank to try and help us find Jewish clients, and hopefully they'll help us out with filling our boxes."

***Using up chametz before Passover*, please see cjnews.com**

University of Waterloo

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LUMINOUS AND VEXED – BENEDICT XVI AND THE JEWS: A CONTORTED ALLIANCE

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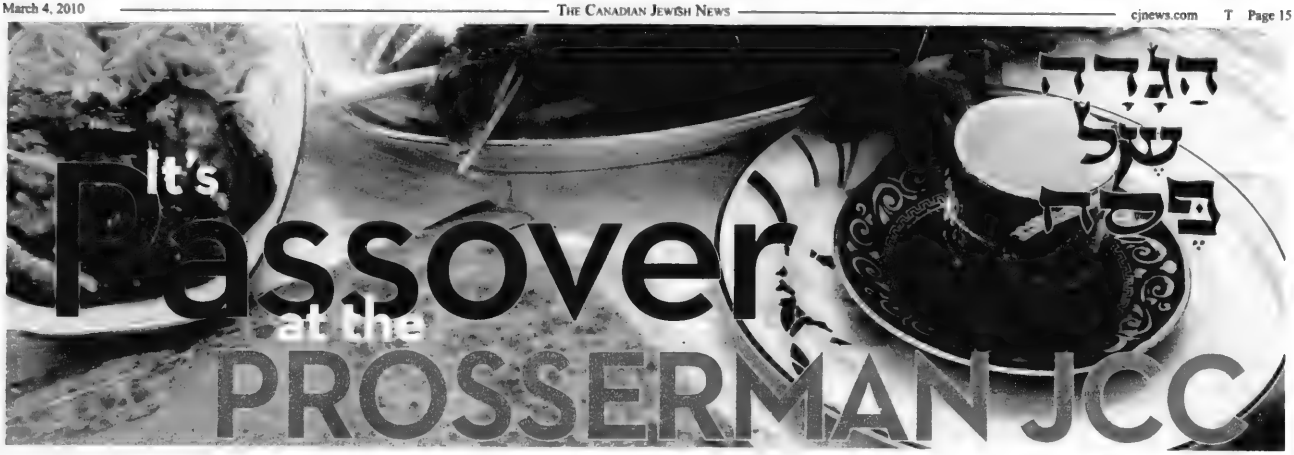
Better Communities Foundation — **Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Chair** — **Alan Kerbel Memorial lecture**

Free Admission — *Parking in Lot A after 7:00 pm* — *Everyone Welcome*



FEATURE PROGRAM

crEATivity CLUB: THE SEPHARDIC SONGS OF THE SEDER

With Cantor Aaron Bensoussan

Wednesday, March 24 **12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Enjoy an interactive presentation of Sephardic Pesach songs and customs with Moroccan-born Cantor Aaron Bensoussan, senior cantor of Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. Join us at the crEATivity club and learn how to inject a little Moroccan flavour into your Passover seder! As always, don't forget to bring your lunch. FREE! Presented with the Koffler Centre of the Arts

OTHER FEATURED PROGRAMS & EVENTS

LUNCH N' LEARN

Friday, March 5 **12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

Prosserman JCC lounge

The Prosserman JCC's monthly lunch & learn takes place the first Friday of each month. This month, Rabbi Moshe Stern will discuss the holiday of Pesach and the week's parsha, which will be discussed relative to the issues of today. FREE! Please bring your own lunch – coffee and tea are free.

A SEPHARDIC PASSOVER

With Chef Margie Arosh

Wednesday, March 10 **7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

Learn how to prepare a traditional Sephardic Passover meal. We'll start with a creamy seven vegetable soup and move on to chicken with olives and preserved lemons and meatballs with artichokes and peas.

$60 members/$65 non-members

TEN TIPS FOR A GREAT SEDER

Wednesday, March 10 **7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.**

Rabbi Lori Cohen gives practical advice on how to make your Passover seder meaningful while sharing the history and philosophy behind this holiday. FREE!

A VEGETARIAN PASSOVER: MOUTH-WATERING RECIPES

With Nutritionist/Chef Aviva Allen

Wednesday, March 17 **7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

Having vegetarians at your seder? Learn how to make tasty vegetarian dishes, including vegetarian soup with spelt matzah balls, quinoa-stuffed acorn squash and roasted root vegetables. $50 members/$55 non-members

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The Prosserman JCC is located on Sherman Campus at 4588 Bathurst Street, just north of Sheppard.

Renewable energy centre reaches out to Canadians

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Advocates for The Eilat-Eilot Renewable Energy Technological Center are promoting the advantages of collaboration between Canadian and Israeli researchers.

"We're very eager to see greater co-operation between Canadian entities and Israeli entities in renewable energy specifically," said Jonathan Levy, the consul for economic affairs and trade commissioner at Israel's Economic Mission to Canada, in a phone interview.

The centre, which will be established this year in the Eilat-Eilot area, is a partnership between the Israeli government and private companies who specialize in renewable energy research and technology.

The government finalized plans for the centre in 2008 and will cover 50 per cent of its expenses. The ministry of industry, trade and labour will choose an entrepreneurial company to run the centre, which has a five-year commitment from the government and will partner with Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

The Canada Israel Chamber of Commerce hosted an information session on Feb. 23 for Canadian businesses and potential investors in the Eilat-Eilot centre. The session included talks from representatives of Israeli-based industrial groups who support the centre including Ben-Gurion University, Israeli investor Ligad Rotlevy and entrepreneurs Shai Schiller and Baruch Adiv.

The information session came following an International Renewable Energy Conference & Exhibition that was held in Eilat and run by the Eilat-Eilot Renewable Energy Administration, which is setting up the centre. The conference was run with support from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, UIA Federations Canada and organizations including the Israel Energy Forum and the Israeli Clean Energy Alliance.

Israel is known for its work in environmental technology, Levy said.

"Israel has a lot to offer, especially in the area of solar energy. We have technologies in wind, we have geothermal technology that's quite successful."

According to Levy, the Eilat-Eilot Renewable Energy Technological Center will create an international hub of technology in Eilat.

"When you have such a centre, there are cross-benefits," he said. "The fact that you have brilliant people sitting side by side, that is what the centre aspires to be – one of the global centres for alternative energy."

Levy added that the time is right for a centre committed to renewable energy.

"I think, overall in the world, there's an understanding that there's a need to move from fossil fuels and develop new sources of energy," he said.

Howard English, the vice-president of corporate communications for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, agrees.

"Research into renewable energy means independence in many ways for many developed countries that are so heavily reliant on oil right now," he said.

While the federation isn't supporting the centre financially, it's spreading awareness, English said, adding that investing in the centre is a natural step for Canadian companies.

"Canada has in every way a long and warm association with Israel on a research level and on a trading level," he said.

This is a chance for Israel to spread its knowledge worldwide, he added.

"Israel has a lot to teach international companies about renewable energy," English said. "I guess it's an opportunity for Israel to share with the world and to participate in projects."

For more information on the centre, contact Keren.Segal@CanadaIsraelChamber.com.

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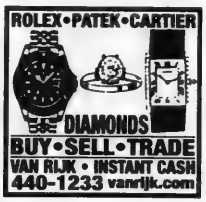

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Sam Ross ל"ז

1925-2010

Sam Ross' commitment to Baycrest was deep and longstanding. A former member of the Baycrest Board of Directors, Sam served as chair of the Building Committee for the Terraces of Baycrest and the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre.

In 1976, he was honoured as Man of the Year by the Men's Service Group and in 2003 was appointed an Honorary Director of Baycrest. In 2004, Sam was among the inaugural inductees of the Treasures of Baycrest.

A leadership gift from Sam and his beloved late wife Ida in 2005 enabled Baycrest to establish the unique Sam and Ida Ross Memory Clinic as part of its focus on brain health.

He will be remembered as a true friend of Baycrest. "Sam is a man of conscience who's always deeply concerned with the rights of individuals and the well-being of the community," former Baycrest CEO Sam Ruth once said. "He's a true gentleman."

Baycrest's sincere condolences go out to the entire Ross Family. May his memory be for a blessing.

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Jewish Life

A tribute to Israel's rescue team

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

Under the motto, "Saving those who can be saved, honouring those who cannot," Zaka, Israel's volunteer emergency response organization, has quietly and quickly established its international credentials as a unique organization, respected and recognized around the world.

Born in 1995, the product of a macabre combination and outright contradiction – on the one hand, terrorist bombings; on the other, Judaism's stance on the dignity of the human form. Nothing could be further from respect of our humanity than those indiscriminate bombings. The result was not only the numerous casualties that ensued, but also the task of collection, identification and burial of organs, flesh and bones, and, indeed, every retrievable body part. After each of these unspeakable assaults against human dignity, volunteers would be seen, plastic bags in hand, at this gruesome task.

Today Zaka boasts 1,500 trained volunteers, 34 vehicles and 162 specially equipped motorcycles, all ready to deploy at a minute's notice 24/7.

Zaka is involved in every sort of emergency response, including fire, first aid, search and rescue. There are canine units, rappelling units, and recently, a unit of divers.

Because its volunteer efforts have been seen worldwide, Zaka, a non-governmental organization, was recognized by the United Nations in 2005 as a national humanitarian organization.

Anywhere there's a crisis, natural disaster or accident, its trained and highly motivated volunteers are dispatched immediately to lend a hand. These have included the tsunami in Thailand, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the Columbia Space Shuttle crash site and terrorist attacks in Turkey and Mumbai.

In last month's devastating disaster, Haiti's earthquake claimed nearly a quarter of a million casualties, countless others were left homeless and handicapped, a country's infrastructure was destroyed, and its remains lay deep under rubble. Among the first international efforts was that of Zaka.

Tragically, a group of Zaka volunteers was on location at the time in Mexico City responding to the helicopter crash of community leader, builder, teacher and philanthropist Moise Saba, his wife, son and daughter-in-law. The Saba family had just returned from a simchah. Because of of security concerns resulting from Mexico's infamous kidnappings, they boarded the family's helicopter for the short flight from the airport to their home – a trip interrupted by a freak accident that killed all four passengers and the pilot. Moise Saba, was also part of Zaka's International Presidium and had recently allocated substantial funds of his own for Zaka to train and establish a Mexican branch.

An Israeli Zaka team was dispatched to the crash scene. As the world was still reeling with word of the loss of one of its finest families, news of the Haiti disaster broke. The team in Mexico was able to immediately co-ordinate with the Mexican Jewish community for planes to airlift them to Haiti with their massive tonnage of first-aid supplies.

The rescuers were assigned to a set of collapsed buildings on the University of Port au Prince campus. Work continued night and day and throughout Shabbat – lives were literally at stake.

The sight of visibly Jewish men heroically and selflessly at work was picked up and broadcast by the international media. Particularly poignant was the scene where the men led the Haitians in the singing of *Hevaynu Shalom Alaichem* – We have brought you peace.

A more incongruous a sight would be hard to find. A small, beleaguered state far, far away, Israel, bringing relief, peace and a sense of humanity to Haiti, a people not particularly renown as champions of human rights.

A vegetarian Passover

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

For many people, a seder meal wouldn't be right without a hard-boiled egg, a steaming bowl of chicken soup and a nice piece of brisket. But vegetarians prefer to celebrate the festival in a meatless manner.

According to Richard Schwartz, vegetarianism and Passover share a special relationship. "Just as we were strangers in Egypt and freed from our slavery, animals need to be freed from their slavery, suffering, torture and untimely death, in order to feed the whole world with the spirit of compassion, love, life and liberation. Meat begins with violence; meals don't have to! Vegetarianism offers compassion, respects the stranger, reduces suffering, and saves lives every day." **[bit.ly/psch1]**

Rabbi Benjamin Blech, a professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University, disagrees. He says the idea that all of God's creatures have the same right to live out their years is "a noble thought, ethically motivated, and yet – supremely un-Jewish!... Jews do eat meat. In fact, the Talmud teaches, that's what transforms an ordinary meal into a Sabbath or holiday feast... Animals, says the Midrash, were created before Adam so that they would be available for his table, just as a king prepares food in advance for his most favoured guest." **[bit.ly/ psch32]**

Let's just set that debate aside and focus on some recipes. At JewishVeg.com, there are classics such as Matzah Balls, Tzimmes, Vegetarian "Chicken" Soup and Strawberry Rhubarb Compote. And for something different, try Brazen Raisin Pesach Stew with Baked Sweet Potatoes, Sesame Baked Eggplant and Dried Plum Butter. **[bit.ly/psch33]** At Vegetarian Fat-Free Passover Recipes, you'll find out how to make healthy Brownies, Cabbage Soufflé Pudding and English Trifle. **[bit.ly/ psch36]**

Rather than suggest assorted vegetarian dishes, the VegSource site goes one better and recommends complete Ashkenazi and Sephardi seder menus. Sephardim can enjoy Date Charoset, Lemony Leek and Mushroom Soup and Sabbath Rice Pilaf with Saffron. Ashkenazim can go with Mock Chopped Liver, Charoset and Mushroom Matzo Farfel Pie. **[bit.ly/ psch35]** (Please note that one of the Ashkenazi recipes calls for string beans. Traditionally, Ashkenazim refrain from eating beans, legumes and rice on Passover.)

This doesn't mean a couple of days into the holiday you'll want to eat another piece of matzah. That's why the appearance of quinoa has been so significant. It's not very often that a new kosher for Passover food appears in the supermarket, let alone one that is actually good for you, too (high protein, good source of dietary fibre and high in magnesium and iron). Although quinoa may look like a grain, it's actually a member of the goosefoot family and is related to beets, spinach and tumbleweeds (yum). Before the rabbis agreed to certify its acceptability, they applied ancient Halachah and modern tests to make sure it's kosher for Pesach. It is. But as with any food, care must be taken that no chametz grains are mixed in. **[bit.ly/psch6]** Search jewishfood-list.com and you'll find recipes for Quinoa Tabouli and Quinoa Vegetable Soup. **[bit.ly/psch7]**

Now that we have decided what to eat, let's go back to the beginning – how do you set out a vegetarian seder plate? Maror (bitter herbs such as horseradish), karpas (vegetable such as celery), chazeret (bitter vegetable such as romaine lettuce) and charoset (apple, nut, spice and wine mixture) pose no issues to herbivores or omnivores. But then there is the question of that shank bone and roasted egg. Vegans may wish to swap the egg for olives and grapes, or a beet and avocado seed. As for the shank bone, which symbolizes the sacrificial lamb, Elizabeth Bauchner's family uses a long, skinny yam. "My mother-in-law says that we replace the Pascal Lamb with the Pascal Yam." **[bit.ly/psch38]**

Next week, Passover and food allergies.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

Student advocates for Israel on campus

Stacey Bocknek is a University of Ottawa student and an Emerson Fellow.

She took some time out of her busy schedule to discuss the fellowship with *The CJN*. "The Emerson Fellowship is the fellowship for North Americans sponsored by the American organization Stand With Us. It deals with Israel advocacy," she said.

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

"Basically, they choose leaders across North America who have demonstrated their ability to advocate actively for Israel. Throughout the year, the Emerson Fellows organize events, bring speakers, and just hold events to advocate for Israel."

Bocknek has worked tirelessly to promote Israel on both the University of Ottawa and Carleton University campuses.

She arranged for Egyptian American Nonie Darwish, the founder of the group Arabs for Israel, to speak on campus. Darwish's father was an Egyptian soldier who was killed by Israelis. Darwish spoke about how she blamed Israel when she was a child, until she realized why exactly it had happened.

She is an interesting speaker and provides information that many Jewish students, who obviously do not share a similar upbringing, may not be aware of.

Another speaker – Israeli-Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh – is primed to take the students by storm. Toameh writes for the *Jerusalem Post* and is known to be an Israel supporter. Bocknek said that Toameh wrote for the Palestine Liberation Organization but left because he wasn't allowed to write what he wanted to write. He prefers to write for Israeli papers because there is no censorship.

"He tells it like it is and has done extensive work in the West Bank and Gaza. He is very pro-Israel, so it is refreshing to see his perspective as an Arab who is living in Israel," Bocknek said.

By bringing in speakers such as Darwish and Toameh, Bocknek is doing an excellent job of providing students with information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Bocknek will be presenting a book reading in Ottawa. *Light Behind the Darkness* is a collection of short stories that was co-written by two men from Ottawa: Claude Weil, an Israeli, and Raouf Omar, a Palestinian. They met in Ottawa and developed a friendship.

The book is made up of short stories about random acts of kindness from both sides. "I think this is important, because you usually don't hear any good stories coming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Bocknek said. "I think a lot of Jews are looking for something that promotes peace and is a little more forward-thinking."

Bocknek's presentations have some major themes in common. Two of the them, and the most obvious, are pro-Israel sentiment and pro-peace sentiment.

What I find the most impressive is that Bocknek has managed to put on multiple events focusing on important topics that many Jewish students discuss and read about daily in various sources. These events enlighten the students who attend, as well as provide them with new information.

Truly, Bocknek is doing an excellent job as an Emerson Fellow and has yet to show any signs of slowing down.

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Safeguarding freedom of speech

Freedom of speech is not something to be taken lightly. In the last few weeks, my inbox has been flooded with e-mails urging me to watch the YouTube video of Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren speaking at the University of California, Irvine. The video, titled Uncivilized Tactics, has gone viral, with nearly a half a million views in just a few weeks.

The video depicts a cycle repeated 10 times during Oren's speech. First, a pro-Palestinian supporter stands up, to great applause shouts an undecipherable pejorative and is escorted from the room by security. Next, a university official calls for decorum and chastises the protesters. Finally, Oren, in a calm voice, continues his speech. In all, 11 students were arrested.

Class Act
By Daniel Held

The e-mails have unanimously decried the protesters' attempts to strip Oren of his right to free speech. They are correct. Oren has a right both to share his personal opinion and to publicly offer the State of Israel's position. This right was threatened by the protesters and defended by the university official and security personnel. In the same e-mail, however, some have called for protesters to shut down Israeli Apartheid Week, which will hit Canadian campuses in the coming days. One explicitly urged adopting the tactics of the Irvine protesters to shut down controversial speeches.

While there is no doubt that Israeli Apartheid Week spews propaganda and lies, adopting the tactics of the Irvine protesters would deny the rights of free expression. Rights that we, as Jews, should hold especially dear.

I began my university career a few short weeks after the Durban debacle equated Zionism with Racism and Israel with apartheid. The second intifadah was in full swing, and Palestinian supporters were emboldened by the United Nations' tacit condemnation of Israel. I had just returned from a year of study in Israel and quickly realized that my academic pursuits would be overshadowed by advocacy efforts.

I was involved in postering and letter-writing campaigns, raucous debates and endless advocacy training. Under the aegis of Hillel, I invited controversial speakers to campus who sparked protests. We, in turn, protested pro-Palestinian speakers. I wrote op-eds and letters to the editor, became involved in campus politics and rallied my peers. While I was an advocate for liberalism and tolerance, I believe that many of our actions escalated tensions on campus. In retrospect, I believe that our tactics are partially responsible for the current hostilities on campus.

The secret to campus activism, which I learned only after finishing my undergrad, is that the vast majority of students on campus don't care about Israel or Palestine – they just want to go to their classes, write their papers and graduate. The yelling and screaming across the hallway, the protest and shouts of outrage, and the increased police presence on campus only serve to further alienate the silent majority of ambivalent students who find the conflict more of a nuisance than a debate of ideas. By engaging with the devout pro-Palestinian students, I was not only wasting my own efforts, but also ostracizing those who should have been my real audience – those who just want to go to class. Only softer tones and cooler heads can convince the silent majority.

Michael Oren is the star of the UC Irvine video. He remained calm and collected. With each outburst, he took a step away from the microphone and waited for decorum. He refused to engage with the protesters, and instead ensured that his speech was delivered and his right to speak upheld. Few will remember the content of Oren's speech; many will remember his right to speak.

As Israeli Apartheid Week approaches, student leaders are challenged to follow Oren's example and find tactics that will at once safeguard freedom of speech – even of those whose ideas are anathema to our own – and at the same time speak to the silent majority.

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Comedy film festival founder filled a niche

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Toronto's annual World of Comedy Film Festival, which gets under way this week, is a reality thanks to Carla Nolan.

Nolan, whose Russian-born grandfather Israel Miller performed in Yiddish theatre in Edmonton, founded the festival in 2003 to fill a yawning need.

"At that point in my life, I realized that what I needed was more laughter," she said. "So I thought, 'Why not start a comedy film festival?'"

After doing research, she discovered that there were only two such festivals in the world, including one in Montreal, the Just for Laughs Film Festival.

"I realized there was a niche to be filled," said Nolan, a graduate of the University of Alberta who majored in theatre.

By that juncture, Nolan had been an in-house producer at YTV, the children's television channel, for about a decade and thought it was time for a change.

In launching the festival, she faced such difficulties as financing and public awareness.

Nolan, who had been an administrator in the Alberta government's performing arts branch and one of the founders of the first women's film and video co-operative in Edmonton, garnered support from colleagues and friends.

"The first year was more successful than I hoped it would be. We received great media coverage and filmmakers came in from as far away as Australia," she recalled. "We screened 70 shorts and features. Even a horrible snowstorm didn't stop audiences from attending."

Carla Nolan

This year's festival, which runs from March 5-7 at the Innis Town Hall Theatre, showcases 59 shorts and feature films from Canada and the United States and from an assortment of countries ranging from Norway to France.

One of the offerings, *Mendel's Tree*, is a zany, surreal and improbable seven-minute short about a haredi Jew who frantically tries to dispose of a Christmas tree in his living room after learning that his mother is coming to visit him. It hails from Australia and is directed by Fin Edquist.

Realizing that comedy is a very subjective genre, Nolan, the festival's director, always tries to create a lineup that appeals to different tastes.

"I think that's why our programs of shorts are so popular," she explained.

If you don't like one, you may like another. "Our films cover the whole gamut of the genre, from romantic comedies and slapstick to mockumentaries and political satire."

Asked whether she has a special affinity for comedy, given her Jewish background, she replied, "Jews love joy. They love to tell stories and laugh. Our humour became a coping mechanism to help us survive difficult times."

Nolan, whose father was a pharmacist and whose mother was a piano teacher, was influenced by her parents, who were both interested in theatre, music and visual arts.

While attending Talmud Torah, she performed in Chanukah and Purim plays. And in high school, she joined the drama club.

"I became immersed in Edmonton's vibrant theatre scene, acting, directing and producing and directing children's theatre classes at the Jewish community centre."

After moving to Toronto, Nolan joined YTV, working on Gemini-nominated programs. Seguing into filmmaking, she produced two shorts, *The Red Clog* and *Roy*, which were broadcast on various networks and cable stations.

More recently, she was part of the development team for the Canadian Film Channel, a proposed national specialty TV service.

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German, Polish consuls praise Shoah education

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Historical memory in the service of combating anti-Semitism and fostering dialogue in the wake of the Holocaust was the theme of a panel discussion at the consulate of Poland late last month.

The event, co-sponsored by the German consulate in Toronto, was part of this year's Mark and Gail Appel program in Holocaust and anti-racism education, "Learning from the Past, Teaching for the Future."

The program, an initiative of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies and the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies at York University, explored the topic of "Cultures of Memory in Canada, Germany and Poland."

In the audience were, among others, 32 Canadian, German and Polish university students selected to take part in the program and expected to forge careers in education and journalism in their respective countries.

They arrived in Toronto on Feb. 11 and left Canada on Feb. 21 after attending seminars, lectures and workshops, visiting a synagogue, churches and Islamic and Chinese community centres and going to Niagara Falls and a resort in Muskoka.

The Polish consul general in Toronto, Marek Ciesielczuk, kicked off the proceedings by recalling the "culture of mutual inspiration and enrichment" in pre-World War II Poland – which was home to 3.3 million Jews – and by stating that the Holocaust should not be treated as "an incidental incident."

Sabine Sparwasser

Observing that the participation of Polish students in the program was rendered possible by the 1989 democratic revolution in Poland, he said they would plant "the seeds of truth and reconciliation" in the battle against xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism.

Sabine Sparwasser, Germany's consul general, said, "The Holocaust was an event of unparalleled evil. To know that the crimes were committed by one's own fellow citizens has been a terrible burden to bear, not just for Germans of the wartime generation, but for all succeeding generations as well."

Praising German university students of the late 1960s for raising painful issues and thereby changing the way Germans relate to their past, she said the study of the Holocaust has become "a central feature of school curricula and university research" and a focus of the mass media.

Lorna Wright, York University's associate vice-president of international affairs, described the program as "one of the most successful and innovative" in terms of its global reach.

Bartosz Wisniewski, who studies modern languages, literature and Hebrew at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland, spoke for his fellow students. In an apparent reference to Nazi concentration camps, he said, "We were in places that shouldn't have existed."

Calling the program "a wonderful experience" whose lesson is tolerance, he said it gives young Poles like himself the strength to deal with the future.

Michael Brown, former director of York University's Centre for Jewish Studies, said the culture of memory should be no less important in Canada than in Europe, given Canada's shameful record in admitting Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s.

Brown said *None Is Too Many* – a path-breaking book by Irving Abella and Harold Troper published in the 1980s about Canada's former immigration policy – left a deep impression on Canadians.

"We can see that education helps, and that's a good lesson for us," he noted.

Peter Trummer, a Heidelberg University historian specializing in German history, genocide and remembrance and a recruiter of students to the program, said that Germany has a well-established culture of memory in the form of memorial sites and monuments and school curricula.

But in the last decade, in a new development, various "victim groups" have begun competing for government funds, he said. Among them are Jews who were persecuted during the Nazi era and Germans who were displaced after World War II and suffered under communism in the former East Germany.

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Golda Koschitzky ז"ל

who together with her late husband Israel Z"L were founders and pioneers in the vision of our schools and many other institutions throughout the world. They remain an inspiration to all of us.

May the family be spared any further sorrow and may they take comfort from the knowledge that Golda's and Israel's shared legacy lives on with each of our students.

Rabbi Scot A. Berman, Headmaster
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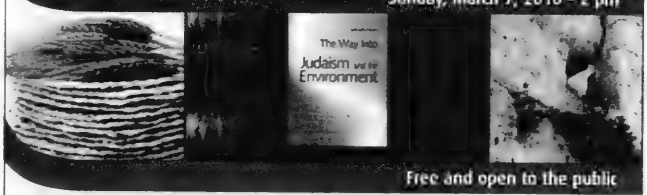

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CLOWNING AROUND: The north and south branches of Gan Netivot, Netivot HaTorah Day School's preschool, came together to celebrate Purim at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. Pictured with DooDoo the Clown are, back row from left, David and Elai, and, front row from left, Ronen, Maurice, Avigail, Noa and Maset.
[Rebecca Ansel photo]

PURIM PARTY: The Newman Family – from left, Allan, Michelle, Jessica, Ryan and Joelle – and DooDoo the Clown enjoy the second annual community-wide Preschool Purim Party hosted by Leo Baeck Day School. Parties took place at Leo Baeck's north and south campuses, with more than 400 families attending.

PURIM BASKETS: As part of a school-wide tikkun olam project, students at the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School created Purim baskets to be distributed to families in need through Jewish Family and Child. Pictured, from left are senior kindergarten to Grade 2 students Noah Ripstein, Yuval Grofman, Bella Piafsky, Andrew Dayton, Alice Ackerman, Nomi Danzig and Edie Levine-Barnoff, along with Grade 2 teacher Rena Markus.

Gaza photo exhibit gets reprieve

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The owners of the property housing Cinéma du Parc withdrew their demand that the cinema remove an exhibition of photos taken in Gaza, apparently mostly in the aftermath of Israel's military offensive over December 2008 and January 2009.

The exhibition, which is described by the Quebec-Israel Committee (QIC) as "offensive, manipulative and dishonest," is now slated to tour across Canada.

The exhibition's organizer, Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), said Feb. 22 that the cinema had received an e-mail from Lieba Shell, the legal representative for the landlord Gestion Redbourne PDP Inc., that the exhibition could continue until its scheduled closing Feb. 28.

The exhibition, entitled "Human Drama in Gaza," consists of 44 large-scale photos said to been taken before, during and after the 22-day conflict between Israel and Hamas by professional photographers from Israel, the Palestinian territories and western countries.

It opened Jan. 15, and partly coincided with the independent cinema's screening of the French-Israeli documentary *Rachel*, about the 2003 death of young American activist Rachel Corrie while protesting the Israeli army's presence in Gaza.

The exhibition was open for a month before Redbourne demanded that it be taken down immediately, under penalty of legal action. The order cited a clause in the lease with the cinema that the space is for "purely cinemagraphic use."

The owners were apparently responding to complaints from the public that the exhibition was anti-Israel. The cinema is located in the Place du Parc shopping centre on Park Avenue, and the exhibition was viewable without having to be a client of the cinema.

CPJME's lawyer Mark Arnold countered that a photo exhibition did constitute such use, and that another clause in the lease states that the tenant may host "presentations, meetings, viewings or other similar activities."

The cinema, which is owned by Roland Smith, also pointed out that it had hosted almost 40 other photo exhibitions, some related to social or political issues, over the years, without complaint from Redbourne. Most of the photos depict everyday life in Gaza amid the destruction after the conflict. Some are disturbing: one, for example, is of a child's burial and many are of people suffering.

CPJME spokesperson Grace Batchoun said the organization bought the rights to the photos from the news agencies Reuters, Agence France-Presse and Getty Images.

This was the Canadian première of the exhibition, and CJPME plans to show it next in Ottawa at a venue being finalized, she said. The intention is to continue the tour in Toronto, London and the west. QIC executive director Lucian del Negro said that, while the QIC finds the exhibition morally reprehensible, it does not believe it crosses any legal lines and therefore did not make any objection.

OUT OF THE COLD: Middle school students at Associated Hebrew Schools packed 100 lunches as part of an three-part volunteer project spearheaded by their student council. The project also included a drive for clothing and toiletries to be distributed to homeless people. Pictured, from left, are Ethan Levy, Jaron Brown, Samantha Moses, Ben Isaak, Aaron Subel, Samantha Rosenzweig, Jared Hyde and Brendan Heisler.

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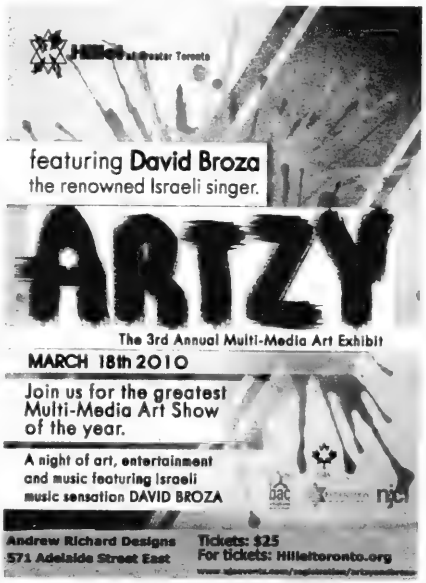
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Rejectionism, not settlements, is why conflict lingers

In his Feb. 19 *Globe and Mail* opinion piece, "The latest U.S. Mideast position: lots of noise signifying nothing," Michael Bell argued the following points, which express a widely held view in the West about the current diplomatic impasse in Israeli-Palestinian affairs:

• The Americans have abandoned their previous demand that Israel halt all settlement activity, much to the delight of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

• The Palestinians, having demanded an end to all housing construction as their condition for a return to negotiations, therefore, feel dejected.

• Only sustained U.S. pressure on Israel short of threatening the stability of his coalition, including cutbacks on diplomacy and loan guarantees, might induce Israel to be more pliant toward the Palestinians.

Although Bell framed the third point as the expression of "frustrated policy wonks" one might fairly assume that Bell counts himself among them, especially since nowhere else in his article does he mention any factor other than settlements as an issue impairing the resumption of negotiations.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Bell omitted to mention that Netanyahu did what no previous Israeli prime minister – including Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, Ehud Barak and Ehud Olmert – has done: he ordered a 10-month moratorium on settlement activity in the West Bank (he excluded housing activity in east Jerusalem, which the majority of Israelis view differently). But such is the cynicism about Netanyahu in many western circles that even this step can be simply overlooked as insignificant.

What also underlies the cynicism is the assumption that if only Israel would cease all settlement activity, the peace process would unfold in a way the Palestinians are anxious to see. This assumption is as false and misleading as it is pervasive.

We must recall that former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat negotiated with Israel (1994-2001) during the Oslo process, despite the fact that Oslo did not bar settlement activity, yet some progress was made in negotiations (Israel relinquished land to the Palestinians) until Arafat rejected Barak's offer of Palestinian statehood. His rejection was not over settlements – a complicated but resolvable issue.

Arafat's successor, Mahmoud Abbas, negotiated with former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert during the Annapolis talks (2006-08) under the same conditions (of settlement activity). While Olmert's offer of Palestinian statehood was reportedly even more generous than what Barak had offered to Arafat, Abbas, too, spurned the historic chance for statehood. Like Arafat, Abbas arguably could not put an end to the conflict by accepting the legitimacy of Jewish sovereignty and giving up the "right of return" of Palestinians to Israel. These principles, not settlements, are the core issues on which the Palestinians have refused to compromise. And this refusal to compromise is why the conflict lingers.

Journalists and pundits who write constantly only about settlements but who ignore or sidestep the deeper, seemingly intractable problems are telling just one part of the story, and not even its most vital part. Yet their preoccupation plays into the reigning narrative that views Palestinians as helpless victims of Israeli greed and triumphalism.

In a news story in the *Globe* just days before Bell's piece appeared, GLORIA Center head Barry Rubin was cited as saying that U.S. President Barack Obama has adopted former president George W. Bush's policy, one he previously ridiculed. The context was that, to the delight of Netanhayu's officials, Abbas is being squeezed to return to a form of negotiations by having to accept less than a total settlement freeze which Obama previously promoted.

What was not reported, however, is Rubin's central argument: that there can be no genuine peace process, because the Fatah leadership "is still radical, more eager to reconcile with Hamas than to make peace with Israel. T[heir] world view is extremist and geared toward total victory. PA media and clerics encourage violence and teach that Israel is temporary and illegitimate" ("Quick, look busy!" *Jerusalem Post*, Feb. 14).

Unless and until that attitude changes, no Israeli-Palestinian agreement will be possible. And until assorted experts and reporters pay attention to this attitude, western understanding about what's at issue will remain severely constricted.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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May the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

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Two men arrested in N.S. cross-burning incident

By JOEL JACOBSON
Atlantic Correspondent

HALIFAX — The RCMP made a quick arrest and charged two men with public incitement of hatred, mischief and uttering threats in connection with a cross- burning incident in Nova Scotia on Feb. 21.

Shayne Howe and Michelle Lyon, a married interracial couple, were the victims of the heinous crime, which horrified people across Canada and evoked condemnation from Jewish groups as well.

The two men, ages 20 and 19, both from Avondale, in Hants County, are alleged to have placed a large wooden cross on the front lawn of the couple's home in Poplar Grove, near Avondale, and lit it on fire, reminiscent of Ku Klux Klan racial hatred in the southern United States.

Before leaving, while the cross burned, one man yelled, "Die nigger die."

RCMP spokesperson Sgt. Bridgit Leger said the two accused and the victims are known to each other, and the incident was not a random act of violence.

Jon Goldberg, executive director of the Atlantic Jewish Council (AJC), decried the incident. "I hope this is just two people being jerks and doing something on their own, and not a resuscitation of events that happened 20 years ago" when, prior to the advent of the Internet and e-mail, hate messages were sent to the AJC and others via fax.

In a statement issued by Canadian Jewish Congress and the AJC a day before the arrests were made, Goldberg said, "We urge the RCMP to investigate this intolerable incident with a view to pursuing the potential hate crime dimension of any criminal charges that may be laid."

Howe, concerned for the safety of his wife and five children, aged two to 17, was thinking of moving if the perpetrators were not caught. He expressed gratitude for the overwhelming support he received from friends, neighbours and others. A Facebook site generated almost 1,700 members expressing their outrage over the incident.

"People I don't know are offering their support," Howe, who is black, said before the arrests. "They have pulled together to make us feel so welcome. Staying or leaving is completely dependent on the capture of the individuals.

"If those who did this remain at large, we'd leave. If they're caught, I'd stay. And everyone is telling us not to leave."

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Coast to Coast

Winnipeg student on gold medal debating team

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — While all eyes were focused on the Winter Olympics in Vancouver last month, another Canadian team was winning a gold medal in a venue about as far away from snow as you can get.

In Doha, Qatar, a team of Canadian high school students won the gold medal at the World Schools Debating Championship. This was Canada's first gold since a Canadian team won the inaugural competition in 1988.

One of the members of the winning team is the Winnipeg Jewish community's Sarah Levy.

The daughter of Moe Levy, the executive director of the Asper Foundation, was the only Winnipegger to make the team as well as the only Jewish member of the team. The other eight team members, she notes, included three students each from Halifax and Vancouver and two from Calgary.

Levy is a Grade 11 student at St. John's-Ravenscourt School, a prestigious private school. She enrolled in Ravenscourt last September after attending the Winnipeg Board of Jewish Education's Gray Academy to the end of Grade 10.

The star debater began to debate through the Gray Academy's debating program when she was in Grade 7. Last December, she finished in the top 10 in individual debating in the annual Asper Cup International High School Debates in Winnipeg. She and her partner were also finalists in the pairs competition.

She has previously debated internationally in England and Scotland.

Levy notes that the selection process for the all-Canada debating team begins at the provincial level. The top three debaters from each province compete for the nine spots on the team. The decision is made based on participation in debate tournaments as well as through an interview process and debate resumes. The team members are chosen 14 months ahead of the world championships.

"There was a lot of training and studying involved," Levy notes. "We had online assignments. We had papers to prepare. We had to read a lot of books and follow the news. And we did tune-up debates and practice rounds every so often in different cities."

Sarah Levy

The world tournament took place in Doha from Feb. 8 to 18.

"It was amazing to see so many debaters from so many countries," Levy says. "There were almost 60 countries represented, 10 times as many as in 1988 when the first world tournament was held."

Among the toughest competitors, Levy says, were teams from England, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Singapore and Pakistan. The Israeli team finished in 15th place.

In the finals, Levy's team was up against the team from England. In that debate, the Canadian team had to defend a resolution that big companies should never receive government bailouts. The Canadian debaters won by an 8-3 score.

Levy has nothing but praise for the tournament's Qatari hosts. "The royal family funded the tournament," she says. "I had a very positive impression of the Qatari people. Everyone treated us very well. They seemed grateful that we were there."

Since her return from Qatar, Levy has participated in a debate in Winnipeg and is looking forward to the national tournament in Victoria in April. She already knows that she will be representing Canada again at the next world championship, which is scheduled for August 2011 in Dundee, Scotland. After finishing high school, she is planning to enrol in arts at McGill University, with the ultimate goal of earning a law degree.

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on the loss of his mother
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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy first birthday Abe.
Love, Mommy & Daddy,
Vivian & Aaron Levine; Dedko
& Bubka, Tibor & Lydia Ringwald;
Opa & Bubbie, Roger & Debi Finn.

Gertie Cohen (Bernetsky),
mazel tov on your 100th birthday.
We love you and are so lucky to
have you in our lives.
Love, from your family.

Mazel tov to Harvey & Grace
Freedlander as they celebrate
their 60th wedding anniversary.
Happy 80th birthday to Grace.
With love from your family!

Mazel tov to Joan & Alan Dessau
on their recent celebration of
their 50th wedding anniversary.
Love, your children,
grandchildren, extended
family and friends.

David & Jodi are engaged!
Delighted parents are Marilyn &
Teddy Lazarus, and Faye & Murray
Major. Grandparents, Milton Berger,
and Molly & Isadore Lazarus.

Sadie and Ozzie Ginsler are
thrilled to announce the birth
of their baby sister, Penny Julia.
Born Jan. 3. Proud parents,
Yael & Brian Ginsler.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

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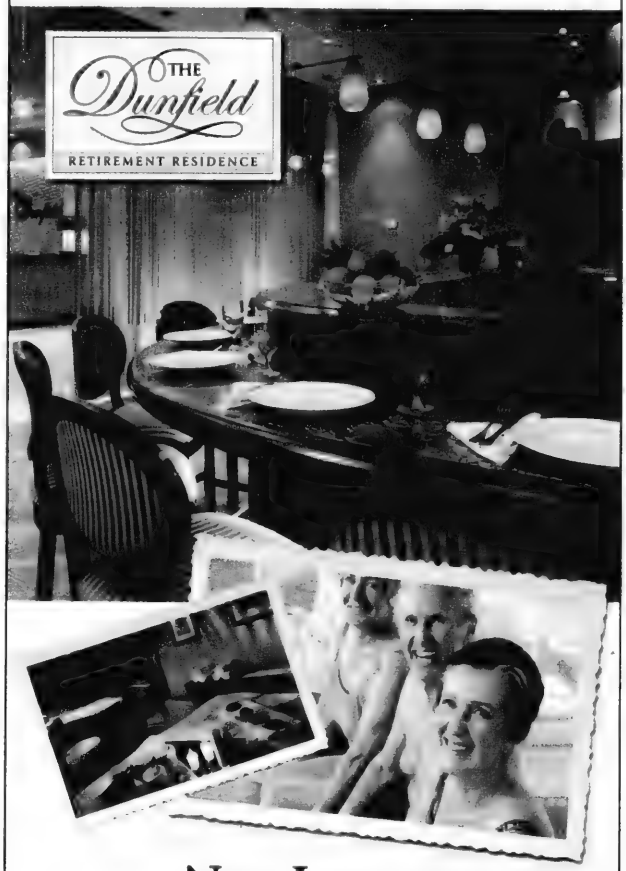

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @
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What's New deadlines: The deadline for the March 18 issue is March 8, and the deadline for the March 25 issue is March 15. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Friday, March 5

SHABBAT ACROSS CANADA

Am Shalom Congregation, Barrie, is hosting the Barrie Jewish community in the 14th annual Shabbat Across America/Canada. Service 6 p.m., followed by complete seudah. 705-792-3949 to register for meal. No charge. www.amshalom.ca

Saturday, March 6

BATTLE OF THE BANDS

BBYO and Canadian Young Judaea's Battle of the Bands is raising funds for Free the Children, 7:30-11 p.m., Dufferin Clark Community Centre, 1441 Clark Ave. W. Tickets $12. 416-398-2004 or info@bbyo.ca.

PARTNERSHIP MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan, meets at Reena Centre. Shiur, 9 a.m., services 9:30 a.m. Kiddush follows. tpmnorth@gmail.com.

SHABBAT SHIUR

Prof. Daniel Schwartz, Hebrew University, will give a shiur, "Altar, Tabernacle, Temple: On Sites of Worship in the Bible and the Second Temple Period," 4:30 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 416-789-3213.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah's Torah class, 10-11 a.m., *Ki Tisa*, everyone welcome.

Sunday, March 7

BLOOD SERVICES

Blood donor clinic, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. 1-888-2-DONATE for info and to book appointment.

FILM SCREENING

The New Klezmorim, Voices in the Revival of Yiddish Music will be screened, 7:30 p.m. Presented by director **David Kaufman**, Darchei Noam Congregation, 864 Sheppard Ave. W.

BREAKFAST MEETING

Shaar Shalom Brotherhood breakfast series presents **Rebbetzin Frances Saltzman**, who will discuss her stint in the RCMP. Shacharit 8 a.m., breakfast 8:45 a.m., speaker 9:30 a.m. No charge, donations welcome. **David**, 416-224-9494.

ENVIRONMENT

Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies' Leonard Wolinsky Lectures on Jewish Life and Education presents **Martin Yaffe**, **Hava Tirosh-Samulson** and **Jeremy Benstein**, who will speak on "Environmental Challenges in Contemporary Jewish Perspective," 2 p.m., Robert R. McEwen Auditorium, executive learning centre, Schulich School of Business, York University, Keele campus. No charge, 416-736-5823 or cjs@yorku.ca.

HEALING SERVICE

Jewish healing program, 3-4 p.m., Beth Radom Congregation, facilitated by **Cantor David Rosen** and **Yehudit Judy Shier Weisberg**, sponsored by Jewish Family & Child. Wheelchair accessible, 416-638-7800, ext. 287.

HOLLYWOOD AT CHAT

TanenbaumCHAT hosts its first annual Night at the Oscars, 6 p.m., Centennial Ballroom. Hosted by **Debbie Van Kiekebelt-Ross**, and featuring a performance by **Adrian Marchuk** of *Jersey Boys*. Includes cocktails, dinner and Academy Awards telecast. Proceeds benefit the Wallenberg campus' interdisciplinary studies and communication technology. Tickets $180 per person, $5,000 for sponsorship reserved tables. Call 416-636-5984, ext. 359, or skipper@tanenbaumchat.org.

Continued on page 29

PLEASE HELP US HONOUR ONTARIO HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem is seeking nominations for Ontario Holocaust Survivors
To be Honoured by Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty
For their Outstanding Achievements and Contributions to the Province of Ontario

MONDAY, APRIL 26TH, 2010 - 11:00 AM

In the last decade, hundreds of Holocaust survivors have been recognized by the Premier of Ontario in conjunction with the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem for their remarkable achievements in rebuilding their lives and bettering our society. Survivors have shown remarkable courage and resilience in building new families and contributing to Ontario's family life, culture, business, community affairs and /or politics. Survivors have also demonstrated a commitment to Holocaust Education and Remembrance (Zachor), educating and passing the torch of Holocaust Remembrance to future generations.

Please send all recommendations, including name, background of survivor & full contact information to:

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem
970 Lawrence Ave. West, Suite 211
Toronto, Ontario M6A 3B6
Email: klara@yadvashem.ca
Tel: 416-785-1333
Fax: 416-785-4536
Submission deadline: March 15, 2010

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About Yad Vashem
Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Remembrance and Education Centre in Jerusalem is the universal guardian and imparter of the Shoah's (Holocaust's) legacy and the protector of human values. Visited by over 1 million people annually, Yad Vashem is internationally recognized as being at the forefront of Holocaust commemoration, education, documentation, and research.

About The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem
The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem is one of Yad Vashem's largest and most prominent of its 28 representative bodies worldwide. The Society supports Yad Vashem's initiatives and implements its important vision across Canada. Through its educational and commemorative activities, the Society carries out Yad Vashem's mission of ensuring that the Holocaust and its lessons are forever engraved in the memory of humankind.

Yad Vashem

Continued from page 28

Monday, March 8

AGUNOT

Jewish divorce issues, "Why as a Community Are We Failing Our Agunot," with **Rabbi Chaim Strauchler** and **Sharon Shore**, family law practitioner. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 8 p.m. No charge.

Tuesday, March 9

BOOK REVIEW

Temple Har Zion's daytime program committee presents **Sharon Wiesenfeld**'s review of *Caspian Rain*, by **Gina Nahai**. 1 p.m., at the temple, 7360 Bayview Ave.

WEIZMANN WOMEN

Weizmann Women and Science presents a panel discussion about the key advances in genetics, as well as the differences between the male and female brain. Moderated by **Liza Fromer**, 7:30 p.m., PI Fine Art, 1180 Caledonia Rd. $54, $18 students includes kosher dessert reception. RSVP, 416-733-9220 or joan@weizmann.ca.

Wednesday, March 10

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Tonight's program, "Recovering." No charge. 416-633-3838.

Thursday, March 11

BUILDING BRIDGES

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am continuing education committee presents "Building Bridges Over Troubled Waters," with **Avri Kadmon**, JNF head of river rehabilitation in Israel. Co-sponsored by JNF of Canada, 7:30 p.m., 416-633-5500.

WINE TASTING

Na'amat Canada's Club Aviva, hosts its 5th annual wine tasting, 7:30-10 p.m., Borochov Centre. Tickets, $18 in advance, $25 at the door. 416-636-5425.

ORAYNU CONGREGATION

Adult education series led by **Rabbi Eva Goldfinger**, "New Halachah: Contemporary Pathways on Old Roads," non-members welcome, 18 Wynford Dr. **Roby**, 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org.

OTHER NEWS

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

MELTON MINI SCHOOL

Registration now open for Melton Mini School graduate classes. Jewish Denominations: Challenges of Modernity begins March 4 at Beth Tikvah, 10 sessions. Western Art, Music from a Jewish Perspective begins March 3 at CHAT, 8 sessions. Call 416-789-7400 for information and registration.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m. followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m. followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com for info on the following groups.

Birthday's, Hockey Games and Holidays: Making It Work After Divorce, March 8, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

High Conflict Divorce, for parents wanting to develop strategies to deal with high conflict situation. Active participation, not for those in an abusive situation, March 10, 6:30-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Adolescents and Divorce focuses on helping adolescents cope during transitional time, March 11, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

When You're About to Separate, What to Tell the Kids, March 24, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 6:30-9 p.m.

Develop a Successful Business Relationship with Your Child's Other Parent, March 25, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

Effective Parenting: four-session group for parents of children 2-11 years, begins March 25, 7-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, suite 313.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, friendly atmosphere in beautiful surroundings: Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, March 4, 1:30 p.m., lecture with music: "Early Yiddish Tin-Pan Alley New York 1890-1920" features **Jordan Klapman**, 416-924-6211 ext. 155.

Beth Tzedec Congregation Haverim program, March 8, 1:30 p.m.: teacher and book reviewer **Sylvia Goldenblatt** discusses *Ten Green Bottles: Vienna to Shanghai – Journey of Fear and Hope*, Nathan O & Roey Hurwich boardroom. $3.

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave.. W., 416-225-2112.

Diabetes risk screening, March 9, 10 a.m.-noon. Call **Nadya** for appointment, ext. 126.

Lecture, "A Jewish Scientist's Journey from Traditional Atheism to Uncommon Faith," with **Arnie Gotfryd**, March 9, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

Wellness lecture, "Is Exercise Helpful or Harmful for People with Chronic Conditions," March 11, 1:30-2:30 p.m., free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Lunch and Learn with **Rabbi Moshe Stern** from Shaarei Tefillah Synagogue, March 5 12-1 p.m., room 107. Bring your own lunch.

Inquire about new programs at the culinary arts studio including Food for the Soul series with **Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner** of Yeshiva University Torah Mi Tzion, March 8, 1-3:30 p.m.; "A Vegetarian Passover: Dishes So Delicious You Won't Want to Share with Others!" March 9, 7-9:30 p.m. Ext. 4235 for information or to register.

KOFFLER CENTRE, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, ext. 4228.

Painting instructor and artist **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** and chef **Ellen Grossman** lead workshops to highlight the fluidity between food and art, March 17, 9:30-a.m.-1:30 p.m., $110 plus GST. Ext. 4269 to register.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m. and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Al Green Theatre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation present from Israel, *Odysseus Chaoticus*: clown theatre for adults/teens March 4 and 6, 8 p.m. Al Green Theatre. General admission $18, students (ages 13+ only) and seniors $12.

Tickets and info at www.algreentheatre.ca. Ext. 0

Exploring Israeli Society, Mondays, March 8-22, 6-8 p.m. with **Dina Roginsky**. $15 drop-in fee, jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

Media Mondays: Hollywood and Society with **Shlomo Schwartzberg**, March 8, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Drop in, $12. film@mnjcc.org, ext. 606.

Cooking Together in Hebrew: Mediterranean Kitchen, March 11, 7-9:30 p.m. with chef **Avinadav Levy**. $25 members, $30 non- members. ext. 0, jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

BLACK TIE AND PEARLS: Na'amat Toronto held its gala recently to benefit Na'amat Canada's technological high school in Hadera, Israel. The school serves hundreds of teenagers in Israel who cannot cope with the regular high school environment. From left, standing and seated, are co-chairs Mariel and Irwin Michaels, and Laurel and Gary Wiseman.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 34

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Marsha Brandston	Feb 13/10	130 Neptune Dr
Bernard Teichman	Feb 14/10	18 Lower Village Gt
Helen Weinzweig	Feb 11/10	33 Castlefrank Rd
Esther Mainemer	Feb 17/10	3000 Bathurst St
Esther Wine	Feb 16/10	89 Skymark Dr
Fanny Silberman	Feb 17/10	15 Lilywood Rd
Marlene Beck	Feb 18/10	52 Acton Ave
Irma Ziskin	Feb 19/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Bernard Novack	Feb 18/10	18 Lower Village Gt
Alexandra Mercer	Feb 18/10	827 Manning Ave
Mucie Kaplansky	Feb 18/10	240 Heath St W
Shirley Kirsh	Feb 18/10	32 Braeburn Dr
Joseph King Grupstein	Feb 20/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Oscar Appleton	Feb 19/10	259 Hillcroft St
Sam Hennick	Feb 19/10	58 Chriswell Cr

HEBREW BASIC

Millicent Pitt	Feb 15/10	541 Finch Ave W
Jaffa Stern	Feb 18/10	49 Ladysbridge Dr

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Mulcamal, Ezra	Feb. 12/10	300 Ravine View
Black, Bernice	Feb. 11/10	3131 Bridletowne
Sturm, Olga	Feb. 11/10	3636 Bathurst St
Rosenberg, Edward	Feb. 12/10	Private
Bromberg, Marilea	Feb. 12/10	47 Coldstream Cr
Cohen, David	Feb. 13/10	6 Belwood Blvd
Koschitzky, Golda	Feb. 13/10	57 York Downs Dr
Levi, Hannah	Feb. 13/10	2 Glenbury Dr
Sapojnikov, Lioucia	Feb. 14/10	Private
Satov, Sarah	Feb. 14/10	3560 Bathurst St
Gottlieb, Paul	Feb. 14/10	Private
Zochowski, Stanley	Feb. 15/10	
Kernerman, Barry	Feb. 15/10	34 Carscadden Dr
Fink, Stanley	Feb. 15/10	61 Bernard Ave
Hesselson, Isaac	Feb. 16/10	Private
Moalem, Yacob	Feb. 16/10	
Kozlovski, Iouzef	Feb. 15/10	Private
Joseph, Helen	Feb. 16/10	
Canes, Sylvia	Feb. 17/10	6151 Bathurst St
Sanders, Judith	Feb. 17/10	3560 Bathurst St
Rachshtul, Abraham	Feb. 17/10	Private
Leibovitch, Joseph	Feb. 17/10	Private

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STERN, Jaffa - On Thursday, February 18, 2010 at North York General Hospital. Beloved wife of the late Leslie Tzvi. Loving mother of Amnon Stern and Cynthia Feldman, Gilad and Anne Stern. Devoted grandmother of Tiffany. Jaffa was a Holocaust survivor and a pioneer of Israel. Service was held on Sunday, February 21, 2010.

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Obituary

Ken Narvey had passion for war crimes dossier

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

With his rumpled suit, frayed pants and dishevelled appearance, Ken Narvey always looked like someone who had just woken up at his desk after an all-nighter researching some arcane point of law.

A freelance legal researcher with a passion for the Nazi war crimes dossier, Narvey died recently in his hometown of Winnipeg from a heart attack. He was 66.

A self-trained legal researcher who never completed law school, Narvey nevertheless was one of the most well-informed experts on war crimes and bringing Nazi war criminals to justice. It's a subject he had been researching for nearly 25 years. Over the course of his career, he gained intervener status in various cases involving war crimes on behalf of student groups and the Coalition of Concerned Congregations, a Montreal organization.

He had a passion for the law, and in the early years of his research he was part of a group of advocates who insisted there was nothing to prevent a Canadian legal solution to bring Nazi war criminals to justice. This view was at odds with the accepted wisdom that little could be done domestically regarding foreign crimes committed many years before.

Lawyer David Matas, who remembers Narvey from their days as undergraduates at the University of Manitoba, said Narvey played a significant role during the discussion leading to adoption of the Charter of Rights. Narvey's research helped ensure the Charter contained a provision that would not preclude retroactive prosecution for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Winnipeg lawyer Gerry Posner said that "Ken flew under the radar. I suspect most people didn't know about him. But his research was as good as any lawyer. He was so bright."

"This was a guy with his idiosyncrasies, but if you knew anything about him you'd know how brilliant he was," said Posner, the executor of Narvey's estate.

Narvey grew up in Winnipeg, but lived much of his life in Montreal. He graduated from the University of Manitoba with a degree in arts. He received a Rhodes Scholarship and travelled to Cambridge to study economics. Narvey also studied at MIT, but never completed a degree and left U of M law school after a week or two, his sister, Janice Afruma, said.

Matas said before turning his attention to the war crimes file, Narvey had been researching the legal aspects of the flooding of Indian lands in Quebec.

Narvey joined him and law professor Irwin Cotler in studying the war crimes issue in the late 1970s, Matas said. They researched the legal basis for an intervention application in the extradition case of Helmut Rauca, an SS sergeant wanted in Germany for murdering 11,584 Jews.

"Ken was always a freelance activist and researcher, but his focus was this issue. It kind of became his life's work," said Matas.

Narvey supported his research by fundraising within the Jewish community, he added.

Narvey, who suffered from diabetes for many years, is survived by his father Fred, sister Janice Afruma, niece Anya DeMontigny and her son Naryan Schindler, nephew Michael Afruma, his wife Katy and their daughter Ryan Elizabeth.

Obituary

She'arim supporter gave 'quietly, with dignity'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Sam Hennick, a Toronto businessman who will be remembered for his support of Jewish communal causes – most notably students with learning disabilities – died Feb. 19 of a heart attack. He was 78.

Sam Hennick

The son of Polish immigrants, Hennick was born in Toronto and attended Harbord Collegiate. He was "very much like his mother – strong-willed with a fierce sense of loyalty to family and friends, a peacemaker, always there when you needed him," his daughter, Ellen Turkienicz, said in a eulogy.

Hennick never complained about the state of his health in recent months, she said. He had undergone surgery for lung cancer, but remained strong and independent, his son Jay told *The CJN* last week.

Sam and his wife, Sara, who died 10 years ago, raised their four children with laughter, love, honesty, common sense and Jewish tradition, Turkienicz said. Married in 1956, they were "a team from the start."

The Dr. Abraham Shore She'arim Hebrew Day School, Sara and Sam Hennick Education Centre – which closed in 2008 because of financial difficulties – was named in their honour. As well, Sam supported several special needs Hebrew schools and "countless" other causes, his daughter said. Among them were Baycrest, Mount Sinai Hospital and Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue.

He gave charity "quietly, with dignity, and without judgment," Turkienicz said.

Shortly before She'arim closed, Hennick told *The CJN* he had established a fund at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Jewish Foundation, the proceeds of which helped the school.

Hennick was in the jewelry manufacturing business for many years and co-founded First Service, a diversified real estate services company, with his son, Jay.

As a grandfather, Hennick had an individual bond with each of his 13 grandchildren, his grandson, Beryl Sitzer, said at the funeral. "He was a kid at heart."

Grandson Bradley Hennick, who also delivered a eulogy, said he had written in an application for an MBA program about how his grandfather inspired him.

His grandfather's example taught him that success is "the result of hard work, learning from failure, staying loyal to family and friends who have helped you along the way, and continuously striving to be a better person," he wrote.

As well, he said, Hennick's lessons to his grandchildren included the importance of kindness and the power of a positive attitude.

Rabbi Howard Morrison, in his eulogy, said that Hennick "was about modesty, about being humble."

Before She'arim moved to the Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, She'arim was housed at Beth Emeth, where Rabbi Morrison is spiritual leader – and where the Hennicks were early members under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Joseph Kelman, a founder of the school.

Hennick is survived by his children Jay Hennick, Resa Sitzer, Ellen Turkienicz and Adam Hennick; 13 grandchildren; one great-grandchild, and siblings Harry, Nathan, Frances Kleinberg, and Ethel Pasternak. His brother, Irving, predeceased him.

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- Kishke
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- Handmade Egg Noodles
- Seder Plates
- Charoses

SALADS
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- Pickled Beets
- Tossed Salad
- Cucumber Salad
- Fresh Fruit Salad

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On Campus

Website features Israel's club scene

Continued from page 3

The campaign's website also features pictures from Israel's club scene and areas such as Mount Tabor, in Lower Galilee.

"Students were not satisfied with the way Israel was represented on campus. We took it into our hands to show the Israel that we know. It's a different way of looking at Israel," said Cherniak, explaining that, in the past, there were two types of awareness campaigns: soft-core campaigns that featured Israel and the West's "shared values and falafels" and advocacy campaigns that responded to anti-Israel sentiments.

"The hard-core advocacy looks reactive. And it is, because you have to respond to lies," Cherniak said. "The soft-core campaign looks irrelevant."

The Size Doesn't Matter campaign aims to combine the two in a light, but thought-provoking way.

The campaign is directed at apathetic students who know little about Israel, Cherniak said.

"This is for the 80 per cent [of students] in the middle, not for students who love Israel or hate Israel, but for the students who can't even point out Israel on the map," she said.

The website, www.sizedoesntmatter.ca, contains facts about Israel, as well as a list of various pro-Israel speakers and events at universities across Canada. Its tagline is "Israel. Small country. Big appetite for peace."

The campaign's final phase is its speaker series, which delves into topics such as obstacles to peace in the Middle East and minority groups in Israel.

"The speaker series goes a little further. We move [from] the most superficial to the deepest ideas," she said.

So far, the campaign's video has had about 25,000 views and the website has had around 12,000 hits.

For Deborah Mechanic, a third-year kinesiology student at York University, the video is definitely attention-catching.

"I saw it on Facebook first and was surprised that it was so in your face. The Israel campaigns before weren't that out there," Mechanic said. "Even the colours are pretty extreme. It strays from the usual blue and white, and it kind of brings people in to find out more."

Mechanic sees the campaign as a good way to learn about Israel.

"It's great for drawing people in to find out more about it… It's pro-Israel, but it's not overwhelming with the blue and white, and it's edgy enough that if someone takes a card or button, they might actually go to the website," she said, adding that the campaign was launched at a good time.

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שישאר בינינו

גידי קורן וחברים

ונקובר-החוויה הקנדית

כמו רבים מיכם, גם אני תוהה מזה שנים רבות על מהות הזהות הקנדית. בניגוד לארה"ב, שלא לומר ישראל, אפשר להימצא פה שנים רבות מבלי לחוש זהות מקומית. יד על הלב- בפעם האחרונה שהרגש משהו גדול באויר שקשור לזהות לאומית קנדית- היתה זו ההצבעה בקוויבק על ההצעה לעזוב את קנדה, הצעה שגרמה לדמיקוס לב, כעס וסך הכל-להרגשת פיצול וקונפליקט. במשאל עם שנערך בשבוע שעבר ענו רוב הקנדים שהפעם האחרונה שהם הרגישו נאווה זהות לאומית היתה בליל הנצחון ההיסטורי בהוקי על רוסיה בשנת 1974.....
כל זה עד שהגיעה אולימפיאדת ונקובר.
אני מוצא את עצמי יושב מול הטלביזיה ומתרגש. וכן, גם מרגיש זהות לאומית. ולא רק כשהקנדים מנצחים אתלטים אחרים, אלא גם מהסיפורים הקטנים עצמם: נערים ונערות מעיירות קטנות הוכפים לאלופים אולימפיים אחרי שנים של עבודת פרך, וכל העיירה מתנגסת באירוע ההוקי לצפות בניצחון ולהזיל דמעת אושר. אין ספק- האולימפיאדת הזו היא נצחונה של הרוח הקנדית בעיירות הקטנות ("שמול טאון קנדה").
אבל הסיפור הגדול ביותר שהמחיש לי את כוחם של משחקי ונקובר לזהות הלאומית הקנדית הוא זה של ג'יאני רוסט. שלושה ימים למני השתתפותה בתחרות ההחלקה האמנותית מגיעה אמה לונקובר ומתמוטטת בגמל התעופה מהתקף לב ולרופאים לא נותר אלא לקבוע את מותה. ג'יאני ממשיכה להתאמן וזוקדת נפלא ביום התחרות הראשון. אך בסיום הריקוד מורצת הנערה היפה מקוויבק בבכי קורע לב, וכדברי השדרן בטלביזיה- באותו רגע בכו עשרים מליון קנדים מול המסך הקטן. הרגשת הזהות היתה רבת עוצמה מאין כמותה.
ומנגד היה הקטע השראלי. ישראל יוצגה על ידי אח ואחות ממוצא רוסי שביצעו החלקה אמנותית מרשימה שזיכתה אותם במקום העשירי המכובד. אלא מה- הם בחרו להחליק לצלילי השיר "הבה נגילה", כשאת השיר מבצעת זמרת במבטא רוסי כבד ששיבשה את המילים, כדרכם של זמרים שאין להם מושג מה הם שרים. לכאורה- ממש לא חשוב, אבל בעיני זה היה מאוד סימבולי לכך שצוות מחליקי הקרח הישראלים לא ייצג את החוויה הישראלית, אלא את אמא רוסיה. לכאורה אין בזה רע- א בל אולי מוטב שמדינה שאין בה חורף אמיתי לא תשתתף באולימפיאדת החורף.
אבל שישאר בינינו.

מעשה בסוסה

גבר חזר עייף מהעבודה ומתיישב מול הטלביזיה. ניגשת אשתו מאחוריו וחובטת בחוזקה בראשו עם מחבת גדול. כשהוא מתאושש הוא שואל אותה: על מה זה בדיוק היה!
עונה לו האשה: זה עבור הפתק שמצאתי בכיס שלך ועליו כתוב "מרי".
כועס האיש ועונה לה: אתמול הייתי במירוץ סוסים וקיבלתי טיפ על הסוסה מרי, ואכן היא זכתה!
מתנצלת האשה וחוזרת לעבודות הבית.
כעבור יומיים חוזר האיש מהעבודה, ובישובו מול הטלביזיה מגיעה אישתו עם מחבת כפול בגודלו ומורידה לו על הראש. האיש מאבד את הכרתו וכשהוא מתעורר מעלמוז הוא שואל אותה: מה הפעם!
עונה לו האשה:
הסוסה מרי צלצלה....

עונת האוסקר

אם אתם אוהבים להתרגש בזמן טקסי האוסקר מסרטים וכוכבים שאתם מכירים, הינה שני סרטי חובה שיש להם קו משותף:
The Blind Side מספר את סיפורה האמיתי של משפחה אמריקאית עשירה שאימצה ילד כושי מחונה שנחשב היה למפגר, והוא הופך לכוכב עוצר על בפוטבול האמריקאי בזכות משפחתו המאמצת. סנדרה בולוק עושה התפקיד נפלא שהעניק לה מועמדות לשחקנית השנה. שמונה בשולם קורן.
Precious הוא סיפורה הנוגע ללב ומזעזע של נערה שחורה מהארלם שהכל עובד נגדה, עד שהיא פוגשת אנשים שאכפת להם. סרט מושלם, עשר בשלם קורן, אבל שישאר בינינו.

On Campus

Yiddish not a dying language, professors say

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Anna Shternshis doesn't see Yiddish as an ancient language. She sees it as a link to her heritage.

"If a language dies, it's the death of a civilization," said Shternshis, who was born in Russia and is an assistant professor of Yiddish and transnational and diasporic studies at the University of Toronto, and the associate director of the university's Centre for Jewish Studies.

"It's not just about vocabulary, it's a whole culture… It's important to keep it alive, and translation alone will not cut it. Yiddish provides access to wonderful literature [and] to a vibrant culture."

Shternshis hopes to prove that this week during a symposium devoted to Yiddish, which she helped to organize. The symposium, called "Ethnography, Culture and Oral History of Yiddish Speakers in Contemporary Eastern Europe," will include presentations from various researchers who have visited eastern European shtetls, or towns, where the language and Jewish culture has persevered.

"The idea was to highlight this very exciting research that is going on now on finding the last Yiddish speakers of the 20th century who never left eastern Europe," Shternshis said. "Most astonishingly, they all speak Yiddish. There are some places in Moldova and western Ukraine where you can still go and see people speaking Yiddish in the street."

Jeff Veidlinger has seen this first-hand. Veidlinger, the director of the Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University, will speak at the symposium about his work on the Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories oral history project, a collection of about 800 hours worth of Yiddish-language interviews.

The project, which was started in 2002, has taken Veidlinger and his fellow researchers to Ukraine, Moldova, Slovakia and Hungary.

"When I first went to the shtetl, I expected it to look like those old postcards. These are real places with real people," he said.

Most of the people that Veidlinger interviewed were born between 1900 and 1930 and knew very little about Jewish history, he said.

"Jewish religious practice was very difficult since the 1930s. Most of the people we interview know very little about Jewish religious practices or Jewish history, so their one link to their identity [is Yiddish]," he said.

Mikhail Krutikov, an assistant professor in Judaic and Slavic studies at the University of Michigan, has also done field work in eastern Europe. Through his research, Krutikov, who will be presenting at the symposium, learned that Yiddish is not a dying language, he said.

"There's this idea that Yiddish would be gone anyway with assimilation. Jews would just stop speaking Yiddish. What we observed there is that, even now… [Yiddish] still survived.

"Yiddish was able to maintain itself up to well into the 1990s… I think this disproves the point that Yiddish was dying."

Krutikov sees Yiddish as a way for Jews in the Diaspora to connect to one another.

"When I write in Yiddish, I can address people in Australia, New York, Poland," he said. "Each country is becoming more and more entrenched in its own culture. Yiddish is one of the few languages that is still transnational."

The symposium takes place on March 7 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the U of T's Robert Gill Theatre. Psoy Korolenko, a singer and songwriter from Moscow, performs Virtual Nostalgia, Second Degree, a concert of Soviet popular hits and post-shtetl songs in Russian, Yiddish and Moldavian at 8 p.m. to mark the conclusion of the daylong symposium. For more information, contact anna.shternshis@utoronto.ca.

Anna Shternshis, an assistant professor of Yiddish at U of T, helped to organize an upcoming symposium that will feature the latest research on Yiddish speakers in eastern Europe.

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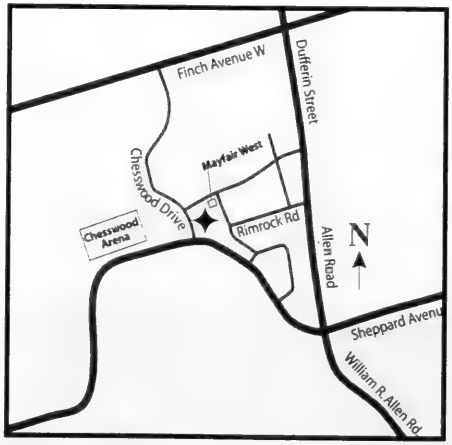

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Show brings multiculturalism to campuses

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

What do you get when you throw a Jew, a Muslim, a Korean, a Jamaican and a Filipino on stage?

Comedy gold. And maybe a little cultural understanding.

At least, that was Alex Kojfman's goal when he started *The Colours of Comedy* standup show in 2007.

"I was performing at the old Laugh Resort [in Toronto] and there would be four comics on the bill, three of them were Jewish. We were all white-looking," Kojfman, a Jewish comedian, said.

"We're in Toronto, one of the most multicultural cities in the world... by creating *The Colours of Comedy*, I wanted to bring different comedians on stage with different ethnicities and backgrounds."

While there are comedy shows aimed at African-American or Jewish audiences, there weren't many shows that brought the groups together, Kojfman said.

"Sometimes people go to certain niche shows. Jewish audiences will go to a Jewish night. If you brought all these people together, we could mix everybody," he said. "You know what it's like?... It's that platter appetizer that has a bit of everything."

This year, Kojfman brought his show to York University on March 2 in partnership with the students involved with Parallels for Peace, a weeklong campaign that encourages peace in the Middle East, and Hillel.

The show is on at the University of Toronto on March 4, presented by Hillel, the Multi Faith Centre, the Muslim Students Association and the Pakistani Students Federation.

Kojfman's goal for his latest shows is for the audiences to reflect the diversity onstage.

"Laughter is the greatest tension breaker. You get Jews, you get Muslims, you get African-Americans, Catholics, the Irish, you get everybody in a room and it just completely disarms them," he said.

"I don't think my show will cure the Middle East conflict... [but] despite what [students] may think beforehand, if you disarm them with comedy, they can approach each other and say, 'That was really funny.'"

Kojfman's show, which includes comedians such as Zabrina Chevannes, Alex Faisal Butt, John Ki, Gilson Lubin and Ron Josol, is a chance for students of all backgrounds to socialize, he said.

"They're students. They want to laugh, they want to be social. That's where comedy comes in. I think that's what peace is all about," he said.

Nathaly Schneider, who is an organizer of the Parallels for Peace campaign at York, which started on March 1, agrees.

"It's a good idea to bring the community together and to embrace your culture," she said. "Everyone can laugh at themselves, it's a great way to break the tension on campus."

Ishraq Alim, the communications director of the Muslim Students Association at U of T, sees the show as a good way to embrace Toronto's multiculturalism.

"The thing is, we live in a multi-ethnic, multi-faith society. Sometimes, it's important for us to meet different communities on our campus," he said, adding that the show provides an opportunity for Jewish and Muslim students to relate to each other.

"Jews and Muslims love to laugh. I think comedy and laughter is something that's universal. Everyone likes a good joke," he said.

The Colours of Comedy show at U of T takes place at the Robert Gill Theatre, Koffler Centre, on March 4 at 7 p.m. Proceeds from the York U show went to the Red Cross, and proceeds from the U of T show will go to Doctors Without Borders.

Kojfman will also host a *Colours of Comedy* show on March 20 at the Great Hall in downtown Toronto. Doors open at 8 p.m., and tickets are $10 in advance, $15 at the door. For more information, visit www.coloursofcomedy.com.

Comedian Alex Kojfman started *The Colours of Comedy* standup show in 2007.

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Something to laugh about

Compiled by CJN Staff

Whoever coined the adage – "laughter is the best medicine" – must have been a doctor, or a clown, or both.

Clown doctors have travelled the globe healing and bringing laughter to thousands of patients, and this week three of the world's experts in the field are in Toronto for a symposium called A Healthy Dose of Laughter.

"Medical" clowning is practised in healthcare settings and has proven to be a vital part of patient recovery by minimizing stress and pain through the use of gentle play and humour.

Presented by the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre (MNjcc) and the Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation, in partnership with the Therapeutic Clown Program at the Hospital for Sick Children and Baycrest, the symposium brings together artists and healthcare professionals to engage in the practice of therapeutic or "medical" clowning.

Dr. Peter Spitzer, Australia's most famous medical clown doctor and co-founder of the Humour Foundation; Dr. Atay Citron, founder of the Dream Doctors Medical Clowning degree program at Haifa University; and Canada's Dr. Bernie Warren, founder of Fools for Health in Windsor, Ont., along with Israeli actors/clowns Noam Rubinstein, Yolana Zimmerman and Fyodor Makarov, are participating in the weeklong symposium, which ends on March 6.

This week, the five clown doctors are sharing their knowledge at forums, workshops and presentations designed for healthcare professionals and artists working in Toronto hospitals and pediatric and geriatric facilities. The Dream Doctors will spend a day with the clowns at the Therapeutic Clown Program at SickKids.

The culmination of the conference is *Odysseus Chaoticus*, a clown/cabaret show presented by Israel's award-winning ISH Theatre, starring Zimmerman and Rubinstein and Russian-Israeli clown Makarov. *Odysseus Chaoticus* combines Homer's *Odyssey* with an eccentric Italian multi-generational family, packed like sardines into a small home. The show has toured Israel, Germany, eastern Europe and India.

"We are thrilled to be hosting this very special weeklong event," said Harriet Wichin, director of programming at Miles Nadal. "Upon seeing the show *Odysseus Chaoticus* in Israel, we learned that these talented clowns were hospital clowns... For the MNjcc, it's a natural fit – underscoring the importance of art, wellness and creativity at every age."

Odysseus Chaoticus has its Canadian première on March 4 at the MNjcc, Al Green Theatre, 8 p.m., with a second performance on March 6 at 8 p.m. For tickets, $18 for adults and $12 for those over 13 and seniors, visit www.algreentheatre.ca or call 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

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"People often have the misconception that planning a wedding, bar or bat mitzvah has to be a stressful and tedious experience," states Marla Kay, organizer of "A Celebration of Stars," a trade show which assembles a large variety of party professionals serving the Jewish community.

"As a bridal and party consultant over the past 20 years, I know how wonderful it is to plan a simcha. There are so many details to be looked after. For the past 10 years at each of my shows, I have brought together over 60 professional "stars" of the party industry to display their wonderful products and services."

This year, the Celebration of Stars Wedding, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show will take place on Wednesday, March 10, 2010 at Meron Banquet Hall. It starts at 6 p.m. and runs until 10:00 p.m.

When you attend the Celebration of Stars Show, all of your entire party needs will be represented and you will be able to meet our party's finest on an informal basis. Each of the various stages of party planning will be available and by having more than one company displaying their unique talents in a particular category, you have the choice of which individual will suit your needs. You may choose from a variety of party professionals who will strive to maintain the highest standards of excellence in their particular area of expertise. You will be offered bridal and party consultants, catering (Kosher), invitations, florists, make-up artists, personalized party favours, photography, videography, cakes, creative room decor and centrepieces, orchestras, DJ's, and jewellery & giftware. Some of the "stars" are very well known in the simcha industry and there will also be some new faces as well.

"Every Celebration of Stars Bridal, Bar and Bat Mitzvah Show that I have organized has proven to be so successful for both guests and exhibitors that as soon as I finish one, I begin plans for the next one," says Kay. "Organizing a party is what I do best and I think that it is certainly reflected in my shows."

Come and see for yourself that the Celebration of Stars has got it all and is one show that you don't want to miss. Admission and parking is free. For further information ... contact Marla Kay at **905-669-0777.**

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Bone marrow transplant may save mother's life

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Shari Ichelson Silverman has found her miracle. And it was all because of a cheek swab.

Ichelson Silverman, 34, was diagnosed with leukemia last summer and told that, without a bone marrow transplant, she would most likely die. Since then, it has been her mission to find a bone marrow donor not just for herself, but for everyone in need of a transplant.

This is how Shari's Mission, an organization that tries to find bone marrow matches through community drives, was born.

And on Valentine's Day, surrounded by friends, family and volunteers, Ichelson Silverman and her father, Mike Ichelson, announced that they had achieved one of their goals. Ichelson's daughter had found a match.

"We knew for about two weeks before that, but we wanted to get everybody together because so many people have put in so much effort," Ichelson said.

"It's everything we've prayed for. Everything [Shari] has prayed for. We were very worried that we'd never find a match on time. It's an everyday worry: am I going to live or not? Now she knows she has a chance to survive."

Since learning about his daughter's illness, Ichelson has been organizing drives, with the help of volunteers. At the drive, community members aged 17 to 50 are asked to swab the inside of their cheeks. All swabs are tested, and if a match is found, the person is called in for a blood test.

It will be about a year before Ichelson will know whether the successful swab was from one of his drives.

"It may not have been from ours. It could have been from Australia. We have no idea, and we won't know for a minimum of a year," he said, adding that, regardless of how the match was found, his daughter was ecstatic at the news.

"She has a chance to see her daughter grow up," Ichelson said. "We're incredulous. We're thrilled. We're also scared."

While Ichelson Silverman now has a good chance of beating her cancer, the transplant is risky.

On March 4, Ichelson Silverman will begin an intensive chemotherapy treatment, and on March 10, she will receive the bone marrow transplant. If the transplant is successful, then she'll get graft-versus-host disease, meaning that the cells in the new bone marrow will recognize the recipient cells as foreign and begin fighting them. While this is an important part of the process, it can result in severe consequences, such as the loss of her sight or the use of her tear ducts.

Shari Ichelson Silverman and her daughter Ashley-Ann

"She might have to be on dialysis, either temporarily or for life," Ichelson said. "These are things we don't know… we're praying she's not going to have severe long-term effects."

Even with these risks, Ichelson Silverman's family has been given hope. And they plan to do the same for as many people as they can.

"We are definitely continuing Shari's Mission. We have to pay it forward," Ichelson said, adding that he held a drive last month, from Feb. 26 to 28, at Vaughan Mills shopping centre.

"Somebody, somewhere [was] a match for Shari. We've got to find 870 matches for Canadians."

Ichelson recently learned that a New York man may have found a match through Shari's Mission.

"We're absolutely thrilled," he said, adding that nothing is official yet. "We didn't expect to hear anything maybe for years. To have found something so quickly is really heartening."

Because Ichelson Silverman is an Ashkenazi Jew, her family reached out to Toronto's Jewish community.

"The Jewish community has shown us such tremendous love and support," he said.

"People have come to drives for no other reason than to say, 'I've had a match, and this is what I'm going through.'"

> ***'We're absolutely thrilled,' he said, adding that nothing is official yet. 'We didn't expect to hear anything maybe for years. To have found something so quickly is really heartening'***

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Israel and U.S. on same Iran page: Kerry

By' BARAK RAVID
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JERUSALEM — The United States doesn't believe Israel will act on its own against Iran's nuclear program, Democratic U.S. Senator John Kerry told reporters in Jerusalem on Monday, adding that Washington and Israel are in agreement on how to deal with the issue.

Alluding to the possibility that Israel would act militarily against Tehran, Kerry, speaking at a press conference follow-

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met last week with U.S Senator John Kerry in Jerusalem.
[Amos Ben Gershom/GPO photo]

ing separate meetings with Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said he believed Netanyahu understood what the United States is trying to achieve with diplomacy.

"I think that the prime minister is fully aware through his conversations with the administration, as well as through his own comments, to not be rash or not jump the gun and to give the other opportunities a chance," Kerry said.

The U.S. senator, who is chair of the Senate committee on foreign relations, also said that increased discussion between the two allies, expected to continues with a planned visit by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden, was meant to ensure Israel and the United States are "all on the same page on what options might be on the table."

"I think we are on the same page," Kerry said, adding that he "found the prime minister very supportive of the initiative we are taking right now and hopeful that they can have an impact."

Kerry's comments came just as the new chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Yukiya Amano, said earlier on Monday that he could not confirm that all of Iran's nuclear activities are peaceful, adding that Iran has not given the IAEA the level of co-operation necessary to make a determination on that issue.

Amano spoke Monday at the start of a 35-nation IAEA board meeting focusing on Iran's nuclear defiance.

Iran has refused to heed UN Security Council demands that it stop uranium enrichment. It also is stonewalling an IAEA probe of its alleged attempts to build a nuclear weapons program.

Iran insists its activities are peaceful. Many nations fear it wants to build nuclear weapons.

Also on Monday, Tehran's envoy to the IAEA said Iran has moved a stock of enriched uranium back underground after drawing what it needed to refine the material up to 20 per cent purity.

Iran has said its move to feed low-enriched uranium (LEU) into centrifuges for higher-scale refinement is for peaceful purposes so that it can make fuel for nuclear medicine.

Western officials and UN inspectors doubt Iran's explanation, since it lacks the technical capacity to convert higher-enriched uranium into fuel rods for its medical isotope reactor, whose Argentine-provided fuel stock is running out.

They fear Iran wants to advance along the road to producing high-enriched – 90 percent purity – uranium suitable for the fissile core of an atomic bomb, if it chose later to do so.

In related developments, an Israeli delegation that travelled to Beijing last week presented detailed intelligence on Iran's nuclear program in an attempt to persuade China that Tehran seeks atomic weapons, a senior diplomatic source told *Ha'aretz*.

The group, led by Strategic Affairs Minister Moshe Ya'alon and central bank chief Stanley Fischer, tried to persuade China to support sanctions on Iran by offering "the full intelligence picture available to Israel," the diplomat said.

The Israeli officials also told the Chinese that a nuclear Iran would push up oil prices. China depends on Iran for a large proportion of its imported oil.

Israel is trying to recruit China's support for a fourth round of sanctions against Iran, and the UN Security Council is due to vote on the issue in the coming months. At the very least, Israel wants to ensure China doesn't oppose the sanctions when they come to a vote.

Israel also wants to make sure China supports the report on Iran published by the IAEA's Amano. Unlike his predecessor, Mohamed ElBaradei, Amano discussed in his report the possibility that Iran might secretively be developing nuclear weapons.

China's official position is that Iran has a right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful, civilian purposes, and that there is no proof Iran has a military nuclear program.

"The Chinese were given the full intelligence picture Israel has about the Iranian nuclear program, which clearly shows Iran is developing nuclear weapons," the diplomatic source said.

"The delegation also stressed how concerned Israel was, and that all options must remain on the table," the source added.

The delegation that set out for Beijing in co-ordination with the U.S. administration also included senior officials in the Foreign Ministry, the National Security Council and the defense establishment. They met with a number of Chinese officials, the most senior being State Councillor Dai Bingguo.

According to the source, the Israelis spent two hours giving the Chinese an overview of intelligence information Israel has on Iran's nuclear program. This was the most detailed overview given by Israel to China in more than three years, since then-prime minister Ehud Olmert's visit in January 2007.

The Israeli delegation left with a positive feeling, the source said, with the Chinese saying they would seriously consider the information they received. Talks were conducted in a friendly atmosphere, with Beijing stressing the importance of Chinese-Israeli relations and its desire to develop ties further, the source said.

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Orthodox rabbi condemned for ordaining woman

JTA

NEW YORK — The Agudath Israel Council of Torah Sages has issued a statement suggesting that a New York rabbi should no longer be considered Orthodox because of his decision to ordain a woman.

Last month, Rabbi Avi Weiss announced that one of his female students would now be known as rabba – a feminized version of rabbi – replacing her previous title of "maharat." He declared in a statement that the name change "makes it clear that Sara Hurwitz is a full member of our rabbinic staff" at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, a modern Orthodox synagogue in the Bronx where he is the spiritual leader.

The Agudath Israel council, comprised of leading haredi rabbis, declared in its Feb. 25 statement that "these developments represent a radical and dangerous departure from Jewish tradition and the *mesoras haTorah*, and must be condemned in the strongest terms." The statement, which was signed by 10 members of the council, added: "Any congregation with a woman in a rabbinical position of any sort cannot be considered Orthodox."

Rabbi Avi Weiss

Rabba Hurwitz, who has served at the Hebrew Institute for nearly seven years, performs some rabbinic duties, but cannot perform others because of her gender, including acting as a witness, leading religious services and being counted in a minyan.

In recent years, a handful of prominent mainstream modern Orthodox synagogues have hired women for roles like Rabba Hurwitz's, in which they carry out certain functions that historically were the sole domain of male rabbis, from offering guidance in spiritual or Jewish legal matters to teaching classes and delivering lectures.

Agudath Israel spokesman Rabbi Avi Shafran said that the council's objection to Rabba Hurwitz's situation is that she is considered a "full member" of the rabbinic staff, in violation of the Orthodox value of "tzniut," or modesty, for women.

"Some of the roles intended for the 'rabba' are in fact roles that women even in the haredi community have played for centuries, such as counselling and offering wise advice," he said. " Others, though, are not, especially those that thrust a woman into a public venue."

The council also objects, Rabbi Shafran added, because any change in Orthodox norms must be backed by a "world-class Torah decisor," and no such authority has lent his name to Rabbi Weiss' actions.

Meanwhile, the New York *Jewish Week* cited an unnamed source close to Rabbi Weiss as saying that the Rabbinical Council of America, the modern Orthodox rabbinical group, is considering kicking Rabbi Weiss out of its organization. Like many members of the RCA, Rabbi Weiss received his ordination from the Yeshiva University-affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

The RCA has refused to grant membership to graduates of the liberal Orthodox seminary, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, founded by Rabbi Weiss.

Israelis no longer allowed in Dubai: police chief

By BARAK RAVID

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Travellers suspected of being Israeli will not be allowed into the United Arab Emirates, even if they arrive with alternative passports, Dubai's police chief said on Monday. Lt.-Gen. Dahi Khalfan Tamim said the move comes after the killing in Dubai of a Hamas operative, for which Emirates authorities blame Israel's Mossad spy agency.

Tamim said a 26-member team used European and Australian passports to enter Dubai, a member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in January and kill Mahmoud al-Mabhouh.

The Emirates will now deny entry to anyone suspected of having Israeli citizenship, Tamim said at a security conference in Abu Dhabi Monday.

It was unclear if the measure would apply to Israeli athletes competing in international sports events being held there, such as tennis player Shahar Peer, a recent semifinalist in the local Women's Tennis Association tournament.

Earlier, Tamim had charged Mossad with insulting Dubai as well as the countries whose forged passports were used in the assassination of the Hamas military commander last month.

The Dubai police chief also said a 27th member of the team that killed Mabhouh in his hotel room had been identified, saying only that it was a woman.

"Mossad shouldn't come to us. We haven't done anything to Israel. This is an insult to us, to Britain, to Australia, to Germany and to New Zealand, and it's shameful," Tamim told reporters in Dubai.

Israel has not confirmed or denied it played any role, but Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said there was nothing to link it to the killing. Hamas said Mabhouh played a role in smuggling weapons from Iran into the Gaza Strip, which Hamas runs.

The UAE, an Arab state that backs Palestinians seeking an independent state, has no diplomatic relations with Israel. But it has established low-level political and trade links in recent years, with some Israeli officials attending events in the Arab Gulf state. Tamim said dual passport holders with Israeli nationality would face extra security procedures in the future, and predicted the alleged hit team would have problems travelling outside Israel.

People with the same names as many of the suspects live in Israel and say their identities were stolen. The passport abuse has drawn criticism from the European Union, and some of the governments involved have summoned the Israeli ambassadors to their countries to protest.

Dubai police said Sunday that the killers drugged Mabhouh with a muscle relaxant before suffocating him.

Meanwhile, Australian investigators are expected in Israel in the coming days to question several dual nationals whose names have been connected to Mabhouh's assassination.

Israel agreed to allow two or three Australian police officers to question the dual citizens, after Australia's Foreign Ministry on Sunday requested approval from the Israeli envoy in Canberra to dispatch the investigators. Australia said last week that it was not satisfied with the Israeli envoy's explanation of the use of fraudulent Australian passports in the killing, after three people holding Australian passports were listed among 15 new suspects.

At least two of the 26 suspected members of the team that tracked and killed Mabhouh in Dubai last month travelled to the United States shortly after his death, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Monday. Records show one of the suspects entered the United States on Jan. 21 using an Irish passport, and another arrived on Feb. 14 using a British passport, the *Wall Street Journal* reported, quoting "a person familiar with the situation."

Spokepeople for both the U.S. State Department and Interpol declined to comment on the *Wall Street Journal* report.

Hamas founder's son worked for Shin Bet

By AVI ISSACHAROFF

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The son of a leading Hamas figure, who famously converted to Christianity, served for more than a decade as the Shin Bet security service's most valuable source in the militant organization's leadership.

Mosab Hassan Yousef is the son of Sheikh Hassan Yousef, a Hamas founder and one of its leaders in the West Bank. The intelligence he supplied Israel led to the exposure of a number of terrorist cells, and to the prevention of dozens of suicide bombings and assassination attempts on Israeli figures. Yousef's memoir, *Son of Hamas*, written with Ron Brackin, will be released this week in the United States. Yousef, 32, became a devout Christian 10 years ago and now lives in California, after fleeing the West Bank in 2007 and going public with his conversion.

Yousef was considered the Shin Bet's most reliable source in the Hamas leadership. During the second intifadah, intelligence Yousef supplied led to the arrests of a number of high-ranking Palestinian figures responsible for planning deadly suicide bombings. These included Ibrahim Hamid, a Hamas military commander in the West Bank; Marwan Barghouti, the founder of the Fatah-linked Tanzim militia, and Abdullah Barghouti, a Hamas bomb-maker with no close relation to the Fatah figure. Yousef was also responsible for thwarting Israel's plan to assassinate his father.

"I wish I were in Gaza now," Yousef said by phone from California, "I would put on an army uniform and join Israel's special forces in order to liberate Gilad Schalit. If I were there, I could help."

Yousef is now exposing the secret he kept since 1996, when he was first held by Shin Bet agents seeking to enlist him in infiltrating the upper echelon of Hamas. Their efforts proved successful, and Yousef was released from prison in 1997. His former handler, who no longer serves with the security service, says Yousef collaborated with Israel because he wanted to save lives.

"So many people owe him their life and don't even know it," said the handler, named in Yousef's book as Captain Loai. "People who did a lot less were awarded the Israel Security Prize. He certainly deserves it."

Loai makes no secret of his admiration for his former source. "The amazing thing is that none of his actions were done for money," he says. "He did things he believed in. He wanted to save lives. His grasp of intelligence matters was just as good as ours – the ideas, the insights. One insight of his was worth 1,000 hours of thought by top experts."

Loai recalled one time when the Shin Bet received information that a suicide bomber was going to be picked up at Manara Square in Ramallah and be given an explosives belt.

"We didn't know his name or what he looked like – only that he was in his 20s and would be wearing a red shirt," he said. "We sent the Green Prince to the square and with his acute sense, he located the target within minutes. So another attack was thwarted, though no one knows about it.

With his memoir, Yousef hopes to send a message of peace to Israelis. Still, he admits he is pessimistic over the prospect of Israel signing a peace agreement with the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority, let alone Hamas. "Hamas cannot make peace with the Israelis. That is against what their God tells them. It is impossible to make peace with infidels, only a ceasefire, and no one knows that better than I. The Hamas leadership is responsible for the killing of Palestinians, not Israelis," he said. "Palestinians! They do not hesitate to massacre people in a mosque or to throw people from the 15th or 17th floor of a building, as they did during the coup in Gaza. The Israelis would never do such things. I tell you with certainty that the Israelis care about the Palestinians far more than the Hamas or Fatah leadership does."

Olmert trial begins

Former prime minister Ehud Olmert asserted his innocence at the start of his trial on corruption charges in Jerusalem District Court last week. "Several months ago, when I came here for the first time, I said that I came as an innocent man and that I would leave as an innocent man," Olmert said. Olmert is charged with fraud, breach of trust, falsifying corporate records and tax evasion in relation to three incidents: allegedly paying for family vacations by double billing Jewish organizations through the Rishon Tours travel agency; allegedly accepting envelopes of cash from U.S. businessman Morris Talansky, and allegedly granting personal favours to attorney Uri Messer when he served as trade minister in the Investment Center case. Olmert is the first former Israeli prime minister to stand trial. He resigned in September 2008 after police recommended that he be indicted.

Hebron riots continue

Palestinian riots continued in Hebron five days after the city's Cave of the Patriarchs was designated an Israeli national heritage site. As Palestinian schoolchildren demonstrated Feb. 25 near the site, other Palestinian protesters set tires on fire and threw stones at Israeli soldiers and police. More than 300 Palestinians in Hebron clashed with Israelis soldiers while marking the anniversary of the murder of 29 Muslims by Jewish radical Baruch Goldstein at the cave's Ibrahimi Mosque in 1994. Goldstein was beaten to death at the scene of the attack, which also injured about 150 people.

More Iranian threats

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Arab nations will usher in a new Middle East "without Zionists and without colonialists." He made the statement during a two-day visit to Syria to meet with President Bashar Assad. "If the Zionist regime wants to repeat its past mistakes, this will constitute its demise and annihilation," Ahmadinejad added during a news conference with Assad. Ahmadinejad met in Damascus with Assad and with Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah.

– With files from JTA

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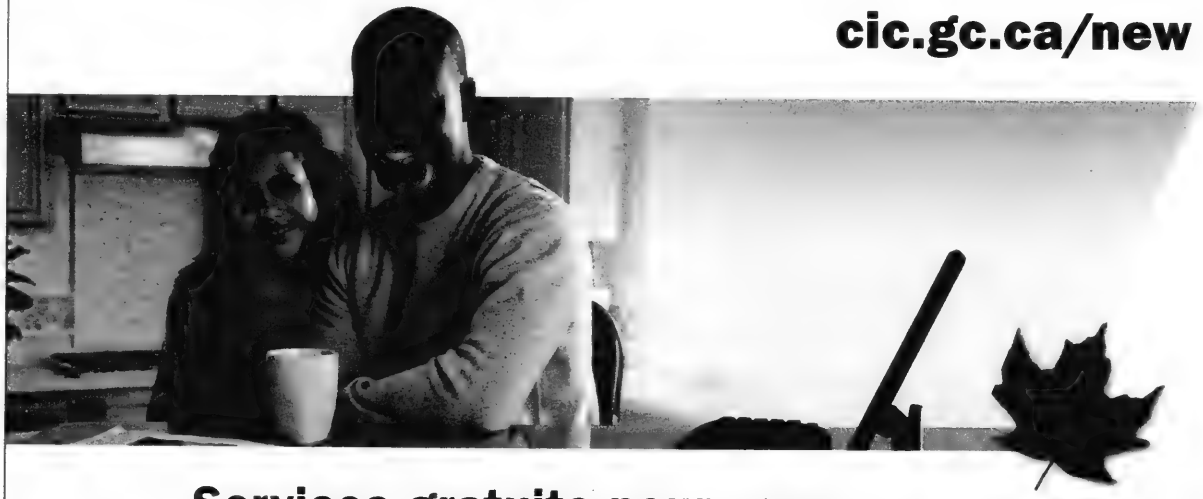

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MIRVISH TO BRING JAKE EHRENREICH'S *A JEW GROWS IN BROOKLYN* TO TORONTO

Mirvish Productions announced last week that it is bringing the hit musical *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn* to Toronto, the company announced last week. The play's creator, **Jake Ehrenreich**, has been touring across the United States since the production became a "smash hit" during its debut run of more than a year in New York.

Jake Ehrenreich

The play – which the *New York Times* compared to Billy Crystal's *700 Sundays* – has been described as a "rock 'n' roll true story, Holocaust family, Borscht-belt comedy musical." It presents Ehrenreich's true story growing up in Brooklyn and his search for identity. Being a child of Holocaust survivors made him determined to conform to his vision of what it meant to be a "real" American. But he always felt uncomfortable with his identity and with his family's haunting past.

The play's title seems to allude to the popular 1943 novel *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, by **Betty Smith**. Ehrenreich has also signed a book contract with Heath Communications, the company that produced the Chicken Soup for the Soul series of books. *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn* is at Toronto's Panasonic Theatre, April 28 to May 16. $60 to $25. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

* * *

Yiddish Music & More: Psoy Korolenko, a renowned performer of Yiddish music from Moscow, presents Virtual Nostalgia, Second Degree, a concert of Soviet popular hits and post-shtetl songs in Russian, Yiddish and Moldavian to mark the conclusion of a unique daylong symposium on Yiddish culture this week at the University of Toronto. The concert is at the Robert Gill Theatre, 214 College St., third floor (enter from St. George Street) Sunday, March 7, 8 p.m.

The symposium – "Ethnography, Culture and Oral History of Yiddish Speakers in Contemporary Eastern Europe" – features a variety of speakers, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 7. Sponsors are the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto, Al and Malka Green Yiddish Studies Program, Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, and Helen Zukerman Family Foundation. 416-978-1624, www.cjs.utoronto.ca

Psoy Korolenko

* * *

***Bloody Cartoons* at the ROM:** Twelve editorial cartoons published in a Danish national newspaper set the Muslim world on edge and provoked violence and death threats in 2005. *Bloody Cartoons*, a forceful documentary by **Karsten Kjaer**, investigates the shocking reaction by many Muslims to the cartoons. After the screening, a panel of guest experts discuss the role of the press in dealing with controversial issues, censorship and freedom of expression. Royal Ontario Museum, Signy and Cléophée Eaton Theatre, ROM Level 1B (enter at south end of the museum). Tuesday, March 9, 7 p.m. $10, $8, $6, at the door.

Colin Firth

* * *

Names in the News: Academy Award-nominated actor **Colin Firth**, perhaps best known as Mr. Darcy in a classic BBC production of *Pride and Prejudice*, has been cast as Jewish underground leader **Avraham Stern** in *The Promised Land*, a new movie set to start filming this summer.

The story is a political crime thriller set in British Mandate Palestine that takes place in the years before the formation of the state of Israel. The Stern Gang, also known as Lehi, fought against the British Mandate in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s. **Matthew Macfadyen** and **Jim Sturgess** will play British police officers trying to quash the Stern Gang.

* * *

Theatre Events

• Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre's production of *Bluish*, the **Janece Shaffer** comedy, runs March 3 to 14 at the Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. www.teatrontheatre.com, 416-781-5527

• *Odysseus Chaoticus*, Israel's fantastic clown cabaret featuring the award-winning Ish Theatre, offers a healthy dose of laughter in performances presented by Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation. Al Green Theatre, March 4 and 6, 8 p.m. $18, $12. 416-924-6211. www.algreentheatre.ca

• *My Mother's Lesbian Jewish Wiccan Wedding*, by **David Hein** and **Irene Carl Sankoff**, has returned from its winter break and has resumed performances at the Panasonic Theatre, now through March 21. $60 to $25. 461-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Shlomo Schwartzberg** discusses "How Hollywood looks at Hollywood: from *Sunset Boulevard* to *Being John Malkovich*" in his latest Hollywood and Society lecture. $12. Media Mondays, Miles Nadal JCC, Monday, March 8, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606

• Syrinx Sunday Salons presents baritone **Peter McGillivray**, with **Christopher Mokrzewski** on piano, performing two compositions by the late composer **Srul Irving Glick**, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* and *Two Landscapes*, and items by other composers. Reception following to meet the artist. $20, $15. Heliconian Hall, 35 Hazelton Ave. Sunday, March 7, 3 p.m. 416-654-0877, www.syrinxconcerts.org

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival has opened a "blazingly creative" cutting-edge website to announce its 18th annual festival, which runs April 17 to 25. The website offers details of TJFF's yearlong programming events, a highlights calendar, trailers and a blog that includes interviews with filmmakers and a photo gallery. Check it out at www.tjff.com. It's now also possible to follow TJFF on Facebook and Twitter as well.

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School hosts Night at the Oscars

Compiled by CJN Staff

Hollywood makes its debut in Toronto on March 7 as the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, hosts an evening full of glitz and glamour.

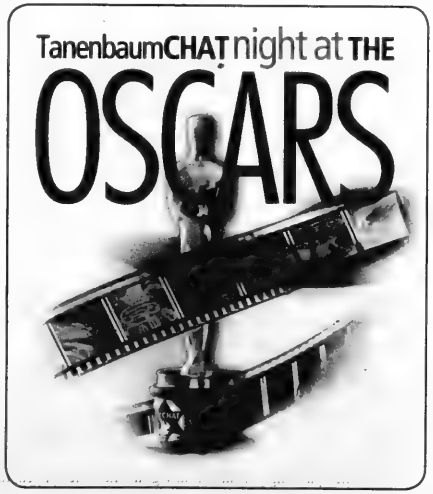
At TanenbaumCHAT's Night at the Oscars, partygoers will have the opportunity to show off their black-tie finest on the red carpet while raising funds for the Wallenberg campus' interdisciplinary studies and communication technology, which provides the latest technology, software and hardware, to students.

Night at the Oscars will be held in the Centennial Ballroom at On the Park in Toronto. The event will be hosted by Debbie Van Kiekebelt-Ross and will feature a special performance by Adrian Marchuk of *Jersey Boys*.

Cocktails begin at 6 p.m., followed by a gourmet dinner and decadent desserts. The Academy Awards will be presented on oversized video screens, with state-of-the-art sound.

The evening includes silent and live auctions of celebrity memorabilia, day trips, jewelry and more. Each guest will leave with a swag bag overflowing with gifts fit for a Hollywood A-lister.

Event tickets are $180 per person, $5,000 for sponsorship reserved tables, and can be purchased by calling 416-636-5984, ext. 359, or by e-mailing skipper@tanenbaumchat.org. For more information, visit www.tanenbaumchat.org



Artist paints portraits of Olympic athletes

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Margaret Florence Ludwig doesn't care about getting cold, wet or dirty. All she cares about is painting.

Ludwig, 81, has been painting and drawing almost as long as she remembers. Her first drawings were of Mickey Mouse or Pluto, and they were so good her mother lectured her about tracing from a book.

Born in Peterborough, Ont., she loves the outdoors almost as much as she loves painting its scenery.

When creating landscapes, she works fast, making use of every beam of sunlight, every glimmer of ice.

When inspired, she can paint for hours, eating only what she stuffed into her pockets in the morning and finishing up to five paintings a day.

"I wear the same clothes all the time. I get paint on myself, and I don't care because that's what I like to do," she said.

Ludwig, a member of the Portrait Society of Canada and the Drawing Society of Canada, has sold her paintings in Canada, the United States and England.

The artist enjoys painting winter landscapes, and has painted in the Antarctic and Greenland. On these trips, some of her colleagues take photos of the landscape, go into their cottages, turn up the heat and paint. Ludwig likes the cold.

"You just get a different spirit in your work than if you're just clicking away and going back to draw from your digital [photos]… A lot of people say it's warm [in their cottages], the radio's on, I don't want that," she said.

"I want to think… I've got this whole world to myself… You're actually there, you feel the wind, you feel the sun, you try to get that in your work."

As a painter, Ludwig enjoys getting away from the city. Apart from Greenland and the Antarctic, she's also been to Baffin Island, Nunavut.

"Everything is just so fresh and so primitive. You get overwhelmed by it. It's almost untouched," she said of these landscapes. "It's a whole different experience away from the city, away from the smoke."

Margaret Florence Ludwig's portraits of Olympic athletes are on display this month in a group exhibit at Toronto's John B. Aird Gallery.

Ludwig also enjoys painting portraits. Three of them will be on display in an upcoming exhibit of portraits of Canadian athletes. One is of Petra Burka, a former world champion figure skater, and the other two are of Jennifer Robinson, a figure skater who competed in the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City. Since Ludwig prefers working with people rather than painting from a photo, both skaters came to pose at her studio.

"I always prefer when they're alive and in front of you. You have a different relationship with the person. I think it comes out in your work," she said. "A slight smile, a slight change of light can change their whole personality. It's such a challenge. It's so much more interesting [than painting from a photo]."

When painting portraits, Ludwig said her role is to capture the person's personality, something she can't do without interacting with her subjects.

"When you're doing a portrait, you have to try to catch that personality of the individual. When you're doing a landscape, you're putting your own personality into it," she said. "I guess when you're talking to them beforehand and during their breaks, you get to know them a little better."

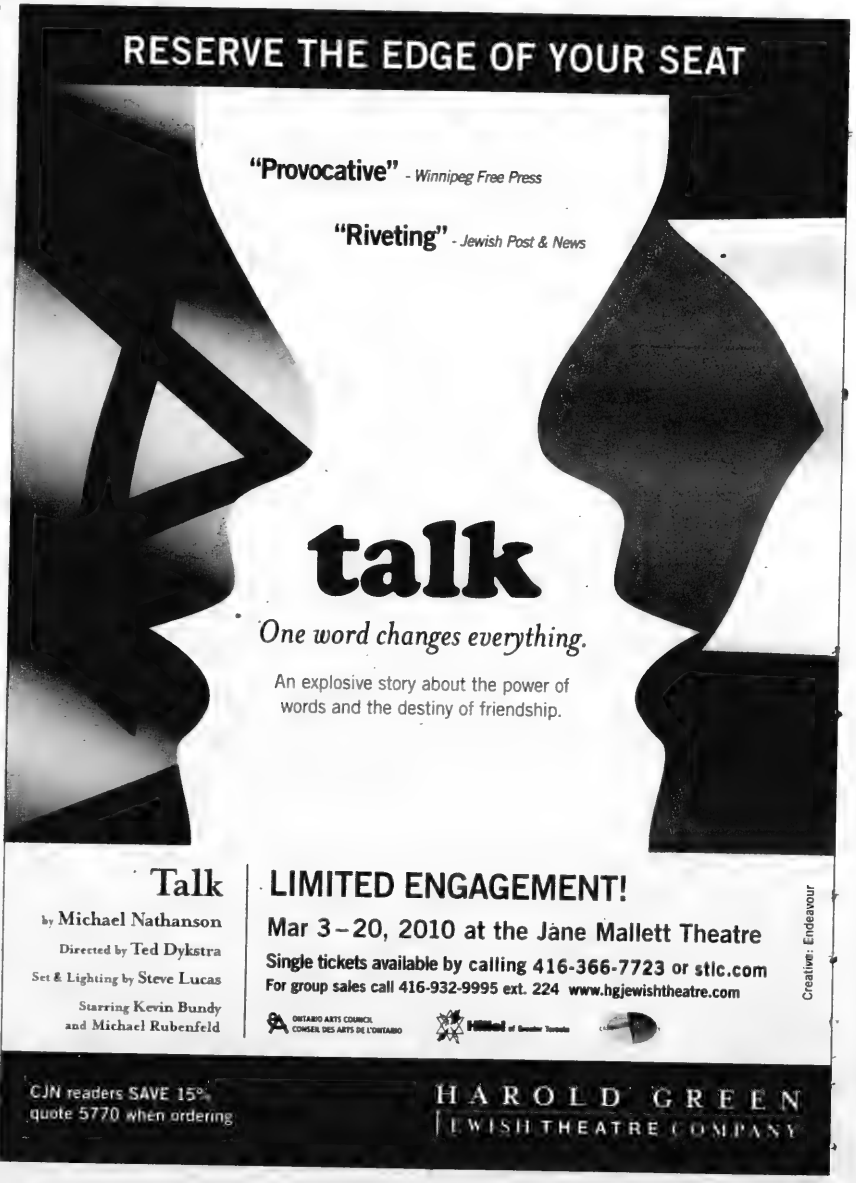
When painting, Ludwig uses oil paints rather than acrylics. She doesn't usually plan out her paintings with pencil drawings, mainly because she already knows how she wants the finished product to look.

"You can plan, but I just know what I'm going to do," she said. "I'm sort of a hit or miss person. Not everything you do turns out well."

As a painter, Ludwig doesn't have regular business hours. She'll paint several times a week and has been known to ask her guests or grandchildren, of which she has 13, to pose for her on a whim.

"I don't know why I'm like this… I've done it all my life. I guess it's just me," she said.

"Canadian Olympic Athletes: A Dialogue in Art," presented by the Portrait Society, will be on exhibit at Toronto's John B. Aird Gallery to March 26, with an opening reception on March 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, call Linda Litwack at 416-782-7837 or e-mail lalitwack@rogers.com.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Toronto writer to compete in U.S. poetry slam

By DAVID SILVERBERG
Special to The CJN

Four years ago, Ariel Platt had never heard of spoken word competitions or poetry slams, where poems are judged by the audience.

But on March 10, Toronto writer Platt will compete at an all-female spoken word competition in Columbus, Ohio, along with 65 other poets.

This isn't the first time she'll be on an international stage performing poems to hundreds. Platt, 31, was a member of the 2009 Toronto Poetry Slam Team, a group of poets who competed at the U.S. National Poetry Slam in West Palm Beach, Fla., and then at Victoria's Canadian Festival of Spoken Word.

Her poetry has also hit the local stage – her one-woman Fringe Festival show, *Down to the Underwire*, was described by the *Toronto Star* as universally appealing, "dealing with themes such as happiness and honesty as she lets us into her personal life."

"I write how I speak," says Platt in an interview. "Maybe I go extreme, but it's not far off from what I'd actually say."

Her poems touch on myriad topics, most of them spiced with her sharp humour. She's offered audiences poems on self-esteem, body image, narrow-minded boyfriends, best friends and, like any good Jewish daughter, odes to her parents.

Sometimes, she veers from her rapid-fire punch lines and rhyming jokes. "One poem that I have, which is about physical violence, was literally written because I wanted to prove to myself and to another poet that I could write about a serious topic, effectively."

A graduate of Forest Hill Collegiate Institute and York University, Platt says she has found a supportive community in Toronto's spoken word scene. "I know it sounds counter-intuitive, but yes, people in Toronto are so friendly," she says, tongue-in-cheek.

She also credits her family for believing in this grassroots art form. When Platt was first featured at the venerable Art Bar Poetry Series in downtown Toronto, "my mom had never heard of slam poetry and likely thought she was up for a night of cryptic poetry, and that my work wouldn't be accessible," recounts Platt. "Needless to say she loved the show. She and my dad are not only my biggest fans, they also come to many of my performances and often bring their friends."

Ariel Platt

At the Women of the World event, Platt is excited to showcase her work to a new audience in Ohio, but she's also trying to get rid of the butterflies in her stomach. "At the poetry slams and festivals last year, I competed with a team, but now no one has my back, really," she says. "It's just me, which is intimidating, but the event seems interesting and diverse."

What about the Jewish content in her poems? After all, she's enmeshed in Jewish culture in her career, as an on-site event novelty popular at bar mitzvahs. It would be too glib to call her poems Jewish, per se, but she does pepper her work with a few lines fellow Jews might appreciate. For instance, "People ask where my family is from. I reply, 'All four of my grandparents were born here in Canada.'

"They follow up with, 'Are you Jewish?' Mazel tov on your Jewdar, I'm not sure why you asked. I didn't ask if you were a gentile. Did you want to talk bar mitzvahs, JDate or *Yentl*? I don't often go to synagogue, but I don't judge those who do. I guess I'm what they'll call a traditional bacon-eating Jew."

Beyond trying to get her work into schools – both Jewish and public – Platt has been encouraged by the recent addition of spoken word into the Winter Olympics' opening ceremony in Vancouver. "The sky's the limit," she says. "I'm always keeping my eyes and ears open."

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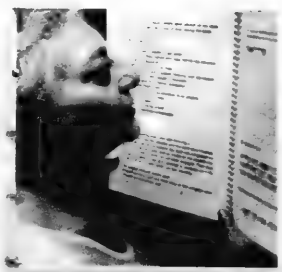

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Arts & Travel

An Israeli industrial design exhibit, opening this week at the Design Exchange, features an eclectic collection of works.

Design Exchange features Israeli exhibit

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

An exhibit of contemporary Israeli industrial design opens this week at the Design Exchange in Toronto.

"From Mediterranean Traditional to Israeli Contemporary Design" runs March 6 to June 20, in the Toronto-Dominion Centre at 234 Bay St.

Curated by Tel Aviv-based designer Alon Razgour, the exhibit features 60 works, among them lighting, furniture, pieces of industrial design, and objets d'art including a cushy, colourful "Feel seat" by Sarit Attias and Amit Axelrod of Animi Causa, and at least one item of Judaica – a modern take on a vessel used for ritual handwashing from Zivia Sustainable Design and Consultancy Studio.

Participating designers include Ezri Tarazi, Animi Causa, Umamy, Doron Oryan, Eran Apelbaum, Sarit Atztiz, Yael Yarzin, VONS, Michal Greenberg Abrahami, Ami Drach and Dov Ganchrow, Yaacov Kaufman, Studio Groovy, Reddish, Leor & Lederman, Yuval Tal, and Eilon Armon.

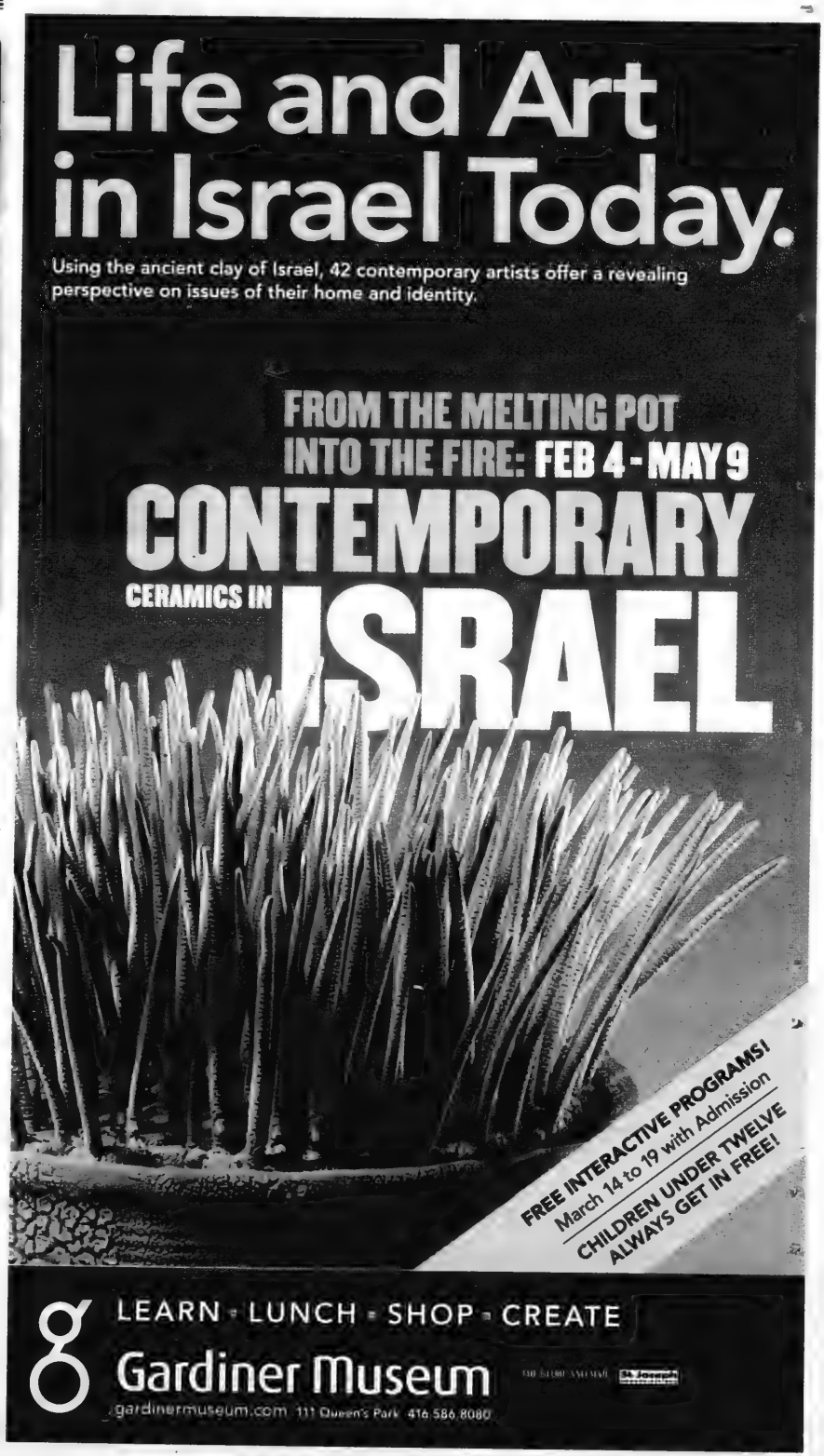
Visitors to the exhibit are eligible to win a one-week trip for two to Israel. The trip is sponsored in partnership with the Israel Government Tourist Office, Air Canada, Peerless Travel & Cruises, the Carlton Tel Aviv and Inbal Jerusalem Hotel.

Israeli culture combines many diverse influences, according to the Design Exchange's website.

"The Israeli culture and history stimulate innovation in design while preserving traditions that embody the society. These traditions include a vivid sense of humour, a rejection of bourgeois ideas of beauty, and a cunning use of new and used materials," the site says.

The Design Exchange opened 15 years ago, in the autumn of 1994. Its aims include promoting the value of Canadian design and establishing Canada as a design leader worldwide.

Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for students and seniors, and free for members. For further information, go to dx.org, the website of the Design Exchange.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And now for something completely different: **HEEBONICS**

Kids learn confidence through judo, trainer says

By MICHELLE BITRAN
Special to The CJN

Erez Cohen didn't exactly plan to move to Canada. But since he arrived here about two years ago, the 29-year-old personal trainer and former Mr. Israel has certainly been making his mark in Toronto.

Erez Cohen, centre, teaches judo to kids with behavioural problems. From left are Maurice Fidd 7, Angel Araujo, 7, Jasiah Morgridge, 8.

"I came to visit a friend of mine and one thing led to another, I started to train one person, and a month after, I'm living here," he said, laughing.

Cohen was born in a rough neighbourhood in B'nei Brak, Israel, and, after extensive study in martial arts, went on to serve in the elite anti-terror unit in the Israel Defence Forces for four years.

Certified in judo since the age of 16, Cohen was a five-time national judo champion in Israel and also earned a spot on the Israeli national Olympic team.

In Canada, he joined the judo team competing in the 2009 Maccabiah Games. Though Cohen is accomplished in both sambo, a Russian martial art, and krav maga, an Israeli hand-to-hand combat system, he maintains that judo is the most powerful martial art form.

"It gives the physical and spiritual side as well," he said, adding that judo allows smaller fighters to beat their larger opponents through the use of simple laws of physics.

Since coming to Toronto, Cohen worked with the children of some of his training clients, teaching them judo in order to build their confidence. According to Cohen, judo has been a form of therapy for some of these kids, giving them the self-esteem to overcome problems with bullying at school.

It was these positive results that led Cohen to offer his training skills to children with behavioural issues at Yorkwoods Public School, in the Jane Street and Finch Avenue area.

He spends an hour and a half each week with the behavioural intensive support program class of four kids aged six to eight, engaging them in physical activity and teaching them teamwork and co-operative skills through sport.

"They so look forward to it," said Barb Nyman, who teaches the behavioural class with the help of child and youth worker Melissa Hardy. Nyman added that the physical activity and the emphasis Cohen puts on teamwork helps the kids work through problems with aggression.

"I remember when I was a kid, no one really did anything like this for us," said Cohen, who recalls growing up in an underprivileged community. According to Hardy, Cohen not only provides the kids with a new set of skills, but also gives them a strong and caring male role model, something that many of them are missing.

Erez Cohen, 29, a personal trainer in Toronto, was a five-time national judo champion in Israel.

Erez Cohen leads a judo lesson at Yorkwoods Public School.

"I love those kids, they're very sweet," said Cohen, going on to describe the pictures they made him for his birthday.

"It was the best present," he said, adding that, because the children see their judo lessons as a game, it's easier for them to work together and to cheer each other on.

"The idea is to get them slowly integrated into a larger classroom atmosphere," said Nyman, explaining that the control the children learn in Cohen's lessons helps them work towards this goal. Also, the opportunity to interact with a new teacher-figure enriches the students' learning experience.

It is for this reason that Cohen makes an effort to bring other people with him to the classroom, including his brother and friends with martial arts experience.

"It's a good thing for [the people that come to help], you feel satisfied after," said Cohen.

When Cohen is not at Yorkwoods Public School, he is busy training his clients. As his client list expanded to its current 200 members, Cohen decided to open a gym to better serve the growing demand. About two months ago, he started Powerclub with his brother, Oren, who moved to Toronto from Israel only a few months ago.

The boutique gym, designed with Cohen's help, is modern and sleek, featuring an army-themed martial arts room and change-room countertops imported from Israel.

Cohen's penchant for interior design extends from his love of art and painting, a talent of his that clients are quick to pick up on and support. He has already sold a few paintings, and has others on display around the city.

Cohen's oldest client is 85, and has no trouble keeping up. Cohen attributes his success with clients to the extensive four-year course that certified him as a personal trainer in Israel, where he learned kinesiology and physiology.

"Not anyone that can make you sweat is a good trainer," he said.

Cohen hopes to expand his gym and to bring martial arts competitors from Israel and train them to compete in Canada. This coming summer, he plans to take some of his Canadian clients to Israel for an intensive fitness training camp. Cohen, whose family still lives in Israel, goes home to visit several times each year.

But he doesn't feel like much of a stranger in Toronto.

"The Jewish community here is something that you never see anywhere," he said. "The way that they're working together and helping each other, supporting each other – it's very rare."

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

CJN Profile

'It feels good to be Jewish,' says convert Benjamin Errett

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Call it, if you must, a story of goy meets girl. Nine years after meeting the love of his life and soulmate, Benjamin Errett, a 31-year-old Toronto journalist, has written a humorous, perceptive and heart-warming account of his romance with and marriage to Sarah Lazarovic, a filmmaker, animator and illustrator.

If a movie is ever made about their fateful encounter, it might be titled *When Benjamin Met Sarah*.

In the meantime, you can read all about it in Errett's book, *Jew and Improved: How Choosing To Be Chosen Made Me Into a Better Man*, published by HarperCollins last month.

Errett's lucid account of his intellectual and emotional journey from Christianity to Judaism, climaxed by conversion, circumcision, immersion in a mikvah and a joyous wedding, is the stuff of a novel or a film.

The features editor of the *National Post*, he decided to document his odyssey in book form after answering an avalanche of questions from friends and acquaintances about his motives and starting a blog about his adventures in Judaism.

Benjamin Errett

"There was a story to be told," said Errett, a slim, lanky fellow with intensely blue eyes and an open manner, in an interview. "But it never occurred to me to turn it into a book, though every journalist dreams of writing one."

Born in Kingston, Ont., and raised in Connecticut, he met his better half when he was editor-in-chief of the *McGill Daily* at McGill University in Montreal.

Lazarovic, raised in Florida but with relatives in Montreal, was a volunteer for an animal rights organization when she walked into the offices of the campus newspaper.

Unlike Errett, who had distanced himself from Christianity, she was thoroughly Jewish, so much so that at one point she even toyed with the notion of becoming a cantor.

"The first time I met Sarah, I thought she was crazy," he writes. "She had come into [our] offices with a story we just had to cover." Although her idea left him rather cold, Errett – a biology major who had aspirations of studying medicine – was intrigued by Lazarovic, a nice Jewish girl who had given up all hope of meeting a nice Jewish boy.

Pursuing her after she joined the staff of the *McGill Daily* as culture editor, he asked her out on a series of "kinda-sorta dates."

Initially, he was not sure whether this was friendship or love. "In retrospect," he writes self-deprecatingly, "I was oblivious." But after their eighth date, he was hooked, positively smitten.

Shortly afterward, Errett – an agnostic whose father had converted from Protestanism to Catholicism to please his Catholic wife – informed his beloved that he would convert to Judaism for the sake of their future children, and asked for her hand in marriage.

Errett was also drawn to Judaism because it felt "very right and natural" to him after he had been exposed to it, thanks to Lazarovic's parents.

Acting on his convictions, he decided to take a year of classes in Judaism. His sponsoring rabbi was Ed Elkin of the Narayever Congregation in midtown Toronto.

To help ease his way into the tribe, Errett's mother offered to convert to Judaism. His father, though supportive of his decision to become a Jew, was nevertheless somewhat confused.

As part of the process, he and Lazarovic visited Israel, where he learned that life is lived at full volume.

Through her paternal grandmother, a Holocaust survivor in Montreal, Errett deepened his knowledge of this castastrophic event and, more importantly, strengthened his bond with his fiancée.

Having discovered that observant Jews subscribe to 613 commandments, he decided to follow only those that made sense to him and ignore or downplay the rest.

After passing his formal exam in Judaism with flying colours, he submitted to a brit milah, which he'd dreaded but which turned out to be a quick, superficial and relatively painless procedure administered by a physician.

Rinsed and naked after immersing himself in a mikvah, Errett repeated after the rabbi, "Of my own free will I choose to become a Jew."

Treating himself to his first meal as a Jew after the ceremony at the mikvah, he devoured a smoked meat sandwich, fries, cole slaw and a kosher dill pickle, washed down with a glass of ginger ale, at Yitz's Delicatessen in Toronto.

He and his bride were married at Temple Emanu-El, a Reform synagogue in Montreal, on June 14, 2008. The officiating rabbi was Leigh Lerner.

"The rings were exchanged, I kissed the bride and crushed the glass," he writes.

More than a year after he and Lazarovic exchanged vows, Errett definitely feels like a different and better person.

"I feel I'm more whole. I've assimilated Judaism into who I am. Judaism is a religion that makes sense to me on a basic level. I can walk into a temple now without feeling like an imposter. There is no glass ceiling. Converts are treated just like born Jews."

No longer an agnostic, he is now a believer and has a much more nuanced understanding of religion.

"Judaism offers comfort, culture, community, tradition and belonging," he observed.

As a Jew, Errett looks at the world through new eyes.

"I read a newspaper differently. I read stories on Israel more closely. I have a personal stake in Israel. Shabbat means something. It divides my work week. I like the concept of Jewish time, of organizing my life around a set of High Holidays. Judaism is compatible with my life."

He and his wife observe major Jewish holidays, attend services at the Narayever Congregation twice a month and keep Jewish-themed books and magazines in their home in the Annex.

When he embarked on his spiritual quest, Errett knew very little about Jewish history, but today he has a "rough understanding" of it, as he modestly remarked.

He follows current events in the Jewish state with interest, describing Israel as one of the most complicated countries he has ever visited. "But I wouldn't say I feel at home in Israel."

For much of his adulthood, as he muses in *Jew and Improved*, Errett was "unemployed, spiritually speaking," a "Christmas and Easter Catholic" who was really averse to religion.

But having made an extraordinary spiritual and religious choice, he feels immeasurably enriched and fulfilled. As he said, "It feels good to be Jewish."

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Books & Authors

Journalist I.F. Stone scoured government documents for truth

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

D. D. Guttenplan's nuanced biography of iconoclastic American reporter Isidor Feinstein Stone, commonly known as I.F. Stone, leaves few, if any, stones unturned. A journalist himself, the author takes a reader on a journey of discovery from Stone's birth in Philadelphia in 1907 to his death in Boston in 1989.

Guttenplan, in *American Radical: The Life and Times of I.F. Stone* (HarperCollins), admiringly calls his cantankerous and outspoken subject an independent thinker, a skeptic and a troublemaker who fought for his causes and was always ready to defend them fearlessly.

In a long, sometimes rocky career, Stone dedicated himself to equality for African-Americans, government assistance for the poor, economic justice for farm labourers and factory workers, universal health care, a negotiated end to the Cold War, the abolition of nuclear weapons, a two-state solution to resolve Israel's struggle with the Palestinians and, of course, the right to dissent.

A leftist who supported Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, railed against McCarthyism and criticized the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War, he focused on what Guttenplan describes as "inconvenient truths."

Although he wrote for a variety of daily newspapers and magazines, from the *New York Post* to the *Nation*, Stone is probably best known for founding the independent newsletter, *I.F. Stone's Weekly*. Blacklisted and unable to find gainful employment due to his views, Stone established the spunky newsletter in the winter of 1953, when McCarthyism was at its height.

At its peak in the 1960s, *I.F. Stone's Weekly* had a circulation of about 70,000, and was read by Americans who wanted the real scoop on a current developments.

Stone, a prodigious researcher who scoured government documents in the search for truth, was the only reporter to challenge Washington's official account of the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident, which provided the president, Lyndon B. Johnson, with the pretext to escalate the war in Vietnam.

Beyond journalism, Stone was a prolific writer of books, with 14 to his credit. His first book, *The Court Disposes*, published in 1937, was a critical analysis of the U.S. Supreme Court. His last, *Best of I.F. Stone*, an anthology, was published posthumously in 2006.

By Guttenplan's estimate, Stone's reputation reached an all-time high in 1971, when his final collection of essays, *Polemics and Prophecies*, attracted unanimously admiring reviews and he received the George Polk Award, a glittering prize in mainstream journalism.

In his acceptance speech, Stone said he was "happy" to be the recipient of "my first establishment award." Yet he remained true to his beliefs, later telling an interviewer that the American Dream "is becoming a nightmare of rotting cities, growing race revolt and a decline of the once almighty dollar as we continue to squander on our overgrown military establishment abroad the billions we need for reconstruction at home."

One can only imagine how much ink he might have spilled had he lived to witness the outbreak of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just as 1971 was a golden year for Stone, so it was also a year of decline for him. Due to an illness that incapacitated him, he was forced to sell his subscription list to the *New York Review of Books*, which promptly and unceremoniously closed *I.F. Stone's Weekly*.

"After… more than 3.5 million words, the longest essay in single-handed journalism in American history was over," Guttenplan observes. "I.F. Stone's pilgrimage from outcast to institution was complete."

The son of Russian Jewish immigrants, Stone gravitated to journalism in high school. After dropping out of the University of Pennsylvania, he joined the staff of a staunch Republican daily, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. He soon switched sides, joining its morning rival, the liberal *Philadephia Record*.

When the *Record*'s owner, David Stern, bought the *New York Post*, Stone became one of his earliest recruits, prized for his skill as a penetrating analyst.

But after refusing to write a pandering editorial for his boss, he left the *Post* and morphed into a columnist for the *Nation* and *PM*, an upstart Manhattan-based daily.

By then, he had anglicized his name. As Guttenplan puts it, "This was the era, after all, that saw Julius Garfinkel become John Garfield [the Hollywood actor] and Billy Chonofsky give way to the urbane William Shawn [the editor of *The New Yorker*]."

Despite his penchant for adopting generally unpopular causes, Stone was strangely quiet about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. As Guttenplan archly notes, Stone did not write a single word in protest about it. And though Stone abhorred racism, he sent his children to segregated schools in Washington, D.C., he adds.

A thoroughly secular Jew, Stone was outraged by Roosevelt's inaction during the Holocaust. "The Jews of Europe could do with a litttle less pity and a little more help," he wrote in 1944.

Stone was introduced to the Zionist cause by, among others, Teddy Kollek, the Haganah's representative in New York City and the future mayor of Jerusalem, and Eliahu Elath, a Jewish Agency emissary and a future president of the Hebrew University.

Dispatched to Palestine by *PM* in 1945, Stone filed vivid dispatches of his impressions of the Yishuv. "It is the only place in the world where Jews seem completely unafraid," he wrote. "In Palestine, a Jew can be a Jew."

Nonetheless, Stone was not initially an advocate of Jewish statehood. He preferred a binational state within a broader Arab federation, claiming it was "the only just solution."

Upon his return to the United States, Stone wrote *Underground to Palestine*, which described the Haganah's role in bringing displaced European Jewish refugees to the Jewish homeland. The book gave him a national audience for the first time.

On his second trip to Palestine, in 1948, Stone witnessed David Ben-Gurion, the incoming prime minister, proclaim the creation of Israel. Some days later, while covering the fighting in the Negev, he lay helplessly in a ditch as Egyptian planes bombed the area.

"Covering Israel's War of Independence brought I.F. Stone closer to Zionism than to any of his life's other causes," writes Guttenplan.

In collaboration with photographer Robert Capa, Stone produced *This Is Israel*, "an affectionate, intimate portrait" of the new state.

Till the end of his days, Stone was pro-Israel, but he reserved the right to chart his own course. He praised Israel's victory in the Six Day War as "brilliant," but called for a Palestinian state and warned that "reconciliation with the Arabs" was more urgent than ever.

"For me," he concluded, "the Arab-Jewish struggle is a tragedy… a struggle of right against right."

Summing him up, Guttenplan says Stone was a great reporter, a literate, curious and conscientious man who was totally dedicated to his craft.

As Guttenplan writes, "His consciousness of history, and the sense of himself and his subjects as participants in a complex and long-unfolding drama, gave his best work a pace and solidity that will outlast any headline."

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Young Canadian immigrant fast-tracks to the Knesset

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

TEL AVIV — Noah Slepkov is living the ultimate dream of Diaspora Jews who want to make a difference in Israel.

At age 28, the St. Catharines, Ont.-born political protégé is working as an adviser to fresh-faced Labor party member of Knesset, Einat Wilf, 39.

Slepkov landed the job just four months after making aliyah.

"I'm in a situation where I'm doing exactly what I want to be doing. I am doing things that I hoped to be doing five years down the line," said Slepkov, a self-confessed *West Wing* addict, from his office in the Knesset. "It's like a dream come true."

Of course, he didn't get there overnight. It took dedication and hard work – and quite a measure of good luck.

Slepkov first met Wilf when he hosted her at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) as a stop on her Israel Campus Coalition speaking tour in November 2006. After serving as program director for Hillel Vancouver and afterward as director of Jewish Student Life at the University of Toronto, Slepkov had returned to his alma mater to take a position as director of Israel and Jewish affairs at London Jewish Campus Services.

Part of his job as leader of Israel and Jewish advocacy on campus involved bringing speakers. "Einat was the most articulate Israeli speaker I had heard throughout my eight years on university campuses," Slepkov said. "She was totally inspiring, and I knew then that she was destined for greatness in Israeli politics and the Jewish world."

The pair's second meeting took place in Israel, in February 2008, when Slepkov invited Wilf to speak to a visiting group he had organized, along with the Canada-Israel Committee (CIC), of 30 students from the UWO Richard Ivey School of Business. "The feedback from trip participants was tremendous," Slepkov said.

Wilf said that speaking on campuses, as well as to Jewish communities and organizations, is extremely important to her. "I believe that Israel is the target in many places of very malicious campaigns and you cannot leave the arena undefended," she added.

The pair's third meeting took place after Slepkov made aliyah in July 2008. As soon as he heard that Wilf intended to run in the Labor primaries, he sent her an e-mail with the subject line, "Put me to work."

"I told her I would love to be involved in the campaign, and I would do whatever she needed," Slepkov said.

"I really like politics. I came to Israel with the hope of getting involved in politics. For me, it would be so much more meaningful and more fun than going into politics in Canada."

Wilf, a former strategic consultant with McKinsey & Company in New York and a general partner with Koor Corporate Venture Capital in Israel, said it was Slepkov's do-anything attitude that won her over.

"The spirit of his e-mail was just great. A lot of people who are interested in politics and say they want to help don't want to make phone calls or lick envelopes. Everyone wants to be a strategic consultant. I loved the spirit with which he approached me."

At the time, Wilf was desperate for help with a monstrous Excel document, containing the contact details for the Labor party's voting members. Slepkov, an Excel guru, came to the rescue. Before he knew it, he was handling Internet marketing and communications for her campaign.

"When I saw that he was true to his word and he had ideas, I said okay. I actually need his skills," Wilf said.

"Being part of this campaign was very exciting," Slepkov said. He was particularly interested in Wilf, because if she were to win, she would have to rise above all of the so-called compulsories of Israeli political success – being an incumbent, having the support of the party chairman or another power broker and being a national celebrity. "If she was going to win, it would be purely through strategy, hard work, and dedication," Slepkov said.

Noah Slepkov and Einat Wilf

Wilf drafted Slepkov to participate in the national election campaign that followed in February 2009, for which he handled online marketing to constituents of the Labor party. He also got a taste of campaigning, travelling with Wilf across the country.

"These road trips were amazing for me, because we would have these long, serious, intense conversations," said Slepkov about his talks with Wilf, who has a PhD in political science from the University of Cambridge. "I was getting the equivalent of a PhD in Israeli politics. I learned so much from that experience."

But when the national election results came back, the Labor party didn't do as well as it had hoped, winning just 13 seats. Wilf was number 14 on the list. Slepkov watched as the election results were projected onto the Azrieli towers in Tel Aviv: first Likud, then Kadima, then Yisrael Beiteinu and finally Labor. "It was one of those screaming 'noooooo' moments," Slepko said. "It was a tremendous sense of disappointment."

Wilf then threw herself into teacher and principal meetings for her recently published book, *Back to Basics: How to Save Israeli Education* (at no additional cost). "Once the campaign was over, I decided to dedicate a lot of my time to meeting with teachers about the book, to try to initiate change," said Wilf, who brought Slepkov along to assist her.

She also returned to her post as a Senior Fellow at the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. Slepkov followed her again and worked as an intern, contributing to the research and writing of the institute's "Annual Assessment" publication, an overview of the preceding year in terms of geo-political, economic, social and political developments internationally and in the Diaspora and Israel.

Meantime, Wilf was offered a teaching position at Sapir College in Sderot, which she accepted, and she asked Slepkov to be a research assistant for her course on social entrepreneurship.

"It's important to mention that he did such good work at every turn that I became very dependent on his good work, so I kept taking him with me," Wilf said.

While he worked with Wilf, Slepkov continued to pursue his master's degree in government at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. It was there, while he was working as a teacher's assistant at a master's recitation class in research methods, that he got a mysterious SMS message from Wilf.

"I got this really bizarre text message from her saying, 'Are you following? Be ready to join me,'" recalled Slepkov. After checking the news, it all became clear. Rebel Labor MK Ophir Paz-Pines had resigned, bumping Wilf onto the Labor party list.

That evening she held a strategy session at her apartment in north Tel Aviv. "I asked her, 'What's my role in all this?'" Slepkov said, "and she said, 'You're going to do what you've always done.'"

Wilf said she got dozens of resumés in the first weeks of becoming an MK and "my answer to all the resumés was that I have had people who have been with me for the last two years, and they are the ones who will continue being with me."

Slepkov and Wilf have been working elbow to elbow in the Knesset ever since.

"Noah is a superb strategic thinker, and he's been great in terms of being a thought counterpart and a strategic-thinking counterpart, analyzing and making decisions," Wilf said.

"The other thing, of course, is the amazing work that he does on the Internet. For a politician to be able to directly talk and present themselves to their constituency, unmediated, is so important. It is making politics more approachable, more personable. It's not just a technical tool – it's a way of political thinking – and Noah has allowed me to be on the cutting edge of that."

"It's nice to work for someone who believes in you," Slepkov said.

Of course, he still faces lots of challenges as a new immigrant. Number 1 on the list? Hebrew. Slepkov gives himself five years to achieve fluency. "We're putting Noah on a Knesset ulpan," said Wilf, smiling. "He's not allowed to speak English in the Knesset."

The challenges and the hard work aside, Slepkov said it's been an extremely fulfilling ride. "I made aliyah for several reasons, the first of which is because I believe that the Jewish people should be in the Land of Israel. The fact that my family ended up in Canada is by mere chance."

On one of his first days in the Knesset, he was sitting in the cafeteria and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu walked by.

"All of a sudden, it struck me and I felt this strong connection to Jewish history," Slepkov said. "For me to be able to work in the Knesset, I feel part of this historical narrative."

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Gold medal reverie at Yitzhak Rabin event

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It's Heatley over to Thornton, deke, shot – oohh, great save!

The tempo picks up. The lines change. Out comes Crosby, who powers through the neutral zone, over the blue line, drop pass, shot – it's blocked.

The action is end to end. The fans are totally into it. They're cheering, encouraging their favourites to even greater heights of excellence.

Someone blows an air horn. Check that - it's a shofar.

Wait a minute. A shofar?

What, this isn't Canada-U.S.A.?

The hockey is good, but this isn't Canada Hockey Place in Vancouver. It's Rink 1 at Chesswood Arena and those colours – black versus black on one rink, white versus white on another – aren't national colours.

And that kid's got Hebrew lettering on his back. What gives?

It's time to wake up from a midday reverie, although for the kids on the ice imagining they're Crosby, Thornton, Doughty or Heatley, the one-day winner-take-all tournament is like their Olympic gold-medal game.

The fans seem to enjoy it, too. Alright, most are moms and dads, bubbes and zaydes, but the mood at the rink is festive and the players are full of emotion. The spirit is pervasive as Jewish day schools vie for top honours at the annual Yitzhak Rabin Hockey Tournament.

Thirteen teams from most of Toronto's Jewish day schools are represented at the event, named in honour of the slain Israeli prime minister.

For many kids, the tournament is a sporting highlight of the year, the culmination of a seven-week season that pitted school against school in the Jewish Day School Hockey League.

Hockey, of course, is the great Canadian cultural glue, and for kids at Jewish day schools, it's not much different.

Russell Pritchard and Errol Singer, hockey dads who've been organizing the tournament for the past five years (this is their last year), say the tournament is "a fun, social day – with kosher pizza no less."

Pritchard ventures the guess that "it's probably the largest Jewish hockey league in the world."

With 221 youngsters taking part, he may be right.

United Synagogue Day School's (USDS) Bayview and Bathurst campuses each ice teams in the junior (grades 3, 4 and 5) and senior (grades 6, 7 and 8) divisions, while Leo Baeck Day School had two teams, Associated Hebrew Schools four, Bialik Hebrew Day School two and the Toronto Heschel School one.

Buses line up to deposit players, and with school chums and family members present, some 1,000 people made their way to the rink on game day to take in the spectacle, Pritchard said.

Bialik youngsters are clearly number one after winning the junior division at day school tournament.

Though the games are competitive, organizers recognize skill levels may not be equal among all teams.

To prevent one-sided games, teams are seeded, and "over the years, we try to teach our kids to respect the other kids and not blow out the other team," Pritchard said. "We teach them *derech eretz* [respect]."

Mitchell Sinclair, coach of the Associated Hurricanes, a senior team, said his son enjoys the league even more than games in the GTHL. The tournament, he said, "creates great school spirit."

As for the final results, in the two-game junior division final, Bialik swept both games versus USDS Bayview 5-3 and 5-4, while Leo Baeck north claimed top honours in the senior division with a one-game 7-2 win over USDS Bayview.

Israeli peewees win Division B in Quebec tourney

Continued from page 1

Hawey, who has been involved with hockey in Quebec all of his life and has helped develop the Israeli Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), placed the Bat Yam team in a lower-ranked division because he thought they might not be ready to play with the better teams. In fact, he feared they might not even win one game in Division B.

They weren't eligible to compete for the tournament's top trophy, the Coupe du Monde de l'Amitié, but Hawey is already thinking that may change next year. He hopes Israel will become a regular entrant in the tournament, alongside such powerhouses as Canada, the United States and Finland.

Bat Yam's captain, Mark Revniaga, scored the second-highest number of points in Division B with his 11 goals and five assists, while brothers Dan and Michael Boudnikov weren't far behind in, respectively, the fourth and fifth spots.

Hawey thinks the team greatly benefited from their coach Dima Gromkov spending two months last summer in Quebec upgrading his skills, specifically with Lévis' Midget AAA team, Les Commandeurs, something Hawey arranged.

For example, Hawey said the team showed impressive skill in killing off a penalty with just one minute and 48 seconds left in the third period of the 3-2 squeaker over Beauport.

Bat Yam has grown into an international-calibre team (it previously played in Latvia and France), despite having no arena in their town, a suburb of Tel Aviv. The players have to travel two hours to Metullah on the northern border, site of Israel's sole regulation-size ice rink.

Before returning home to Israel from Montreal, the team was given a private tour of the Bell Centre, home of the Montreal Canadiens. They were greeted by former Habs head coach Jean Perron who coached Israel's senior national team to an IIHF Division II championship in 2005 and continues to be an adviser to the IIHF.

Some of the players attended his hockey camp in Israel last summer.

Perron took the kids through the Canadiens' hallowed dressing room and took off his 1986 Stanley Cup ring to let them have a close look.

"I'm very, very proud of you," Perron said to the players. "Say hello to all of my hockey players in Israel."

"This is a big shot in the arm for hockey in Israel," said Montreal businessman Alan Maislin, past chair of the IIHF, who thinks the presence of the 21 Israeli youngsters, including two girls, in Quebec had the added bonus of showing people a different side of the Jewish state.

Outside the tournament, Bat Yam was also invited to play several exhibition games in the Quebec City area.

Team manager Victor Gokhberg, whose son Maxim is the goaltender, admitted he never dreamed the team would do as well as it did.

He said between 200 and 300 Israeli children are now playing ice hockey at the peewee level. Because of the lack of ice rinks, hockey on inline skates is far more popular, with perhaps a couple of thousand kids playing in total.

A second ice hockey arena is set to open in the southern resort of Eilat in the near future, Gokhberg said, but that's even further away from Bat Yam than Metullah.

Bat Yam's gold medal in Quebec should help generate more interest in the game among Israeli children. "Soccer and basketball are the favourite sports. Hockey is still low on the list," said Gokhberg, a native of Latvia.

The kids seemed awestruck walking through the Bell Centre, with its photos of hockey legends and displays of game memorabilia. They looked down onto the 22,000-seat arena from the dizzying heights of the press gallery and the VIP box.

Uri Benhar, 11, a left-winger who had three goals in the tournament, said he became interested in hockey while living for seven years in Raleigh, N.C., and his favourite team remains the Carolina Hurricanes.

Asked what it meant to him to be in a hockey shrine like the Bell Centre, the shy Benhar said, "It's exciting… It feels good." He added that his ambition is to play in the NHL.

In the midst of all the celebration, Hawey noted that his fundraising to cover Bat Yam's costs here was not very successful. He raised about $6,000 and needs at least another $5,000 to pay the bills. Funds are being collected through Quebec City's only synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel Ohev Shalom.

Reducing the risk of Alzheimer's

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Speakers at a recent program about women and Alzheimer's disease assured the more than 400 women – and a handful of men – in attendance that memory lapses are not the same as memory loss.

"If you can't find your keys, that is normal," said Dr. Marla Shapiro, MC of "Beat Brain Sag," sponsored by Women of Baycrest.

Also on the panel, held at the Guvernment nightclub, was the host, journalist Libby Znaimer; Dr. Tiffany Chow, a clinician-scientist at Baycrest's Rotman Research Institute, and Dr. Jean Marmoreo, a family physician who specializes in treating mid-life women.

Shapiro said that her husband worried one morning when he found her car keys in the fridge. "I put them on top of my lunch in the fridge, because I didn't want to forget my lunch. I knew I couldn't leave the house without my keys."

Memory lapses are a hormonal thing, Znaimer said, and the information does comes back. "After menopause, though, you'll find you don't care," she said with a laugh.

She told the crowd that although one in eight people will develop Alzheimer's, the statistic for women is one in six.

"Every five minutes, someone in Canada is diagnosed, and in 30 years it will be one every two minutes," Znaimer said. "In the 'zoomer' generation, there are 2.7 million people caring for someone with some sort of dementia."

Marmoreo, known as Dr. Jean, said the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer's is age. "The fastest growing segment of the population is over 80. If you have family history, you have a three-fold increased risk, and every five years, your risk doubles. By the time you're in your 80s, the risk is 33 per cent."

She stressed however, that regular, moderate activity reduces the risk. "There is nothing your body loves more than being strong. It honours you when you [strengthen] it. Anything that keeps you fit and powerful will help your brain," said Marmoreo, founder of JeansMarines, a running group that aims to get women off the couch and to the starting line of the Marines Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C., within nine months.

Znaimer added that women who do weight training twice a week scored higher in cognitive tests.

Chow said that exercise also provides a social and a self-esteem boost. "There is a correlation between low self-esteem and Alzheimer's, and there is also a risk for people who are lonely. Social interaction is very important.

"Spend time being mindful and taking take of yourself. If you take care of your vascular risk factors, you slow down the Alzheimer's risk."

She added that research has shown that decreasing one's caloric intake by 33 per cent also slows down the risk of Alzheimer's.

"[Changes from the disease] start to occur in the 40s. Good habits need to start yesterday."

Marmoreo said that there's "much more knee-jerk alarm around cancer than around Alzheimer's. The apprehension of Alzheimer's is much more subtle. We tend to keep it under cover."

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3/4 c mild chili powder
2 tbsp. cocoa powder
1 1/2 tsp. salt
2 1/2 tbsp. sugar
2 tsp. chili pepper flakes

Cook ground meat; strain any fat. Saute onion, green pepper, mushrooms and garlic just until onion is tender. In a huge pot add all ingredients except beans. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat; simmer covered 1 hr stirring occasionally. Adjust seasonings to your taste. Stir in washed beans. Cook until chili has thickened. Enjoy! Freezes well.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE RADOMER FRIENDLY SOCIETY

The Radomer (Rodamer) Mutual Benefit Society, seen here celebrating its third anniversary banquet, was founded in Toronto in 1925 by a group of immigrant families from Radom, Poland. Formerly headquartered on Beverley Street, the society merged in 1950 with B'nai Radom, an alternate group founded by Holocaust survivors. Today it is known as Congregation Beth Radom and operates a conservative egalitarian synagogue on Reiner Road in the Sheppard-Bathurst area of North York.

Finding a good hairstylist

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I am back in therapy. After all I am Jewish, and we are a complex people. Therapy makes sense.

A year ago, I decided it was the right time for me to return to the couch. I was in a better place and prepared to be emotionally introspective. Much of this had to do with the fact I am a father, a state-of-being that demands better mental health. Often, we ourselves are not enough of a reason.

Further, I am turning 50, becoming a junior senior, and thirsty for meaning, hungry for purpose and in pursuit of a clearer value system. I'm far more aware of what I know and don't know, and my internal chaos is workable.

Mind you, being a mess was always a good reason.

I knew it would be as difficult to find the right analyst as it is to stumble upon the correct hairstylist. Once you've found them, you rarely want to leave.

You will likely find your therapist by word-of-mouth. Listen when people discuss their therapy, ask questions, and jot down names. Personally, I wasn't concerned if he/she was a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or had another designation – as long as they were superlative at the healing sport.

I met my current therapist at a baby naming. She seemed wise, aware, curious, talkative when required and quiet when needed, so I took her number and it is working out well.

A good therapist is a blessing. I am overjoyed by the bond that exists between us, as I have experienced the opposite many times. When I was younger and more unaware of my feelings, I would go through long bouts of therapy not connecting with my therapist. I figured it was me, unable to jive well emotionally. Now, however, I know that there were two people in that room, and intuitively recognize that my therapist and I were not compatible. I understand now that the professional should have sensed that and recommended we call it quits.

If you are considering going into therapy – an excellent idea – know there is a lot of mediocrity in the field. Search, search and search again.

Be aware of life coaches as anyone can become one regardless of their values and experience in life. A life coach is described as someone who is a personal expert to help you appreciate your complete potential! Coaching is very young, and full of wannabe therapists charging lots of money. And they work with you on the phone.

While there are good coaches – I had one for five years – you'll need to search hard to find them.

If you have a therapist, or are meeting one, trust your intuition and ask some basic questions. Do you have a sense you can trust him/her? Can you open up to them, lay out all the crap? Is he/she asking very significant questions? Do they seem to get you? Are they authentic? Do you sense they are working hard in that room, as they expect from you? Ask them how they think it's going.

If your guts tell you nothing is happening in that room, bring it up, give it some time – not too long – and then move on. Don't think you've failed if the first or third therapist isn't helping you and be grateful if your therapist tells you it isn't clicking.

Introspection is a mainstay of being Jewish. We are not simple folk. Take the leap. Therapy was made for us. But be vigilant and careful because a good hairstylist is hard to find.

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Passover celebrates food, fashion and freedom.

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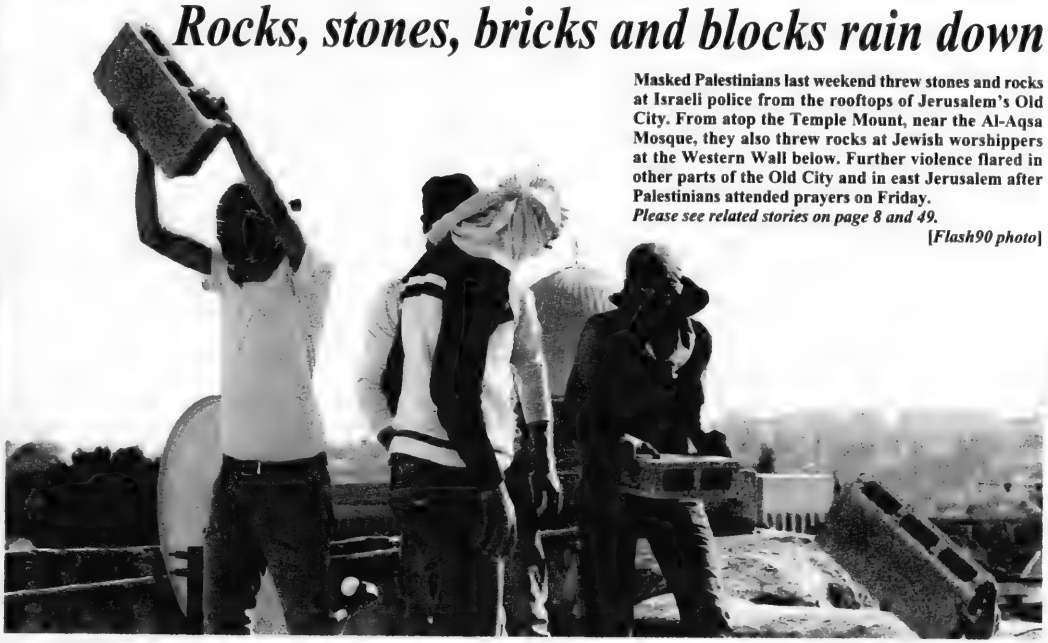
Rocks, stones, bricks and blocks rain down



Masked Palestinians last weekend threw stones and rocks at Israeli police from the rooftops of Jerusalem's Old City. From atop the Temple Mount, near the Al-Aqsa Mosque, they also threw rocks at Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall below. Further violence flared in other parts of the Old City and in east Jerusalem after Palestinians attended prayers on Friday.
Please see related stories on page 8 and 49.
[Flash90 photo]

Israeli firm develops airline security system

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

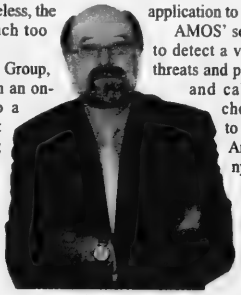
Al Qaeda operative Richard Reid was attempting to light the fuse on his shoe bomb when other passengers and crew on board American Airlines Flight 63, noticing a strange odour, tackled him and ended his attempt at terrorism.

Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, the Nigerian Islamist known as the underwear bomber, managed to set his pants on fire before passengers jumped to their own defence and subdued him.

Travellers on both flights relied on their own resources and luck rather than on any sophisticated detection or security system to save their lives. Nevertheless, the attempts came much too close for comfort.

Enter the AMOS Group, an Israeli firm with an on-board solution to a problem that does not appear to be going away any time soon.

AMOS, which stands for Air Marshal Operational System, is developing an airline security system that would provide flight crews with an early warning about terrorist threats. It also has an application to address air rage.



Arie Raif

AMOS' solution is designed to detect a variety of terrorist threats and provide the captain and cabin crew with a checklist of options to address them, said Arie Raif, the company's vice-president.

Working in conjunction with a major player in the airline industry – confidentiality prevents Raif identifying the partner – AMOS has put together a system of sniffers, censors and video surveillance that provides pilots with real-time information about possible threats in the cabin.

The sensor system can identify suspected terrorists through minute chemical, biological or explosive residue and locate them by row number. A software system developed by AMOS then provides the captain with a list of responses that he can implement and communicate by smartphone (such as a BlackBerry or cellphone) to cabin crew, air marshals or other security personnel on board, Raif said.

Continued on page 27

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Government supports national Holocaust memorial – see page 26

The News in Brief

Canada

Asper Steps Down

WINNIPEG — Leonard Asper resigned last week as president and CEO of Canwest Global Communications, the firm founded by his late father. Israel Asper died in 2003, and the company has been forced to restructure under a crushing debt load. Leonard Asper's siblings, Gail and David Asper, resigned from Canwest's board last month. The family still owns most of its controlling shares.

New Canadian Rabbis

NEW YORK — Eight Canadians were honoured March 7 at Yeshiva University for receiving their rabbinic ordination. Natanel Javasky, Avraham Grunberger, Michael Rootman and Jeff Turtel of Toronto, along with Elie Farkas, Yitzhak Szyf and Brahm Weinberg of Montreal and Michael Goldstein of Ottawa, received smichah from Yeshiva U's Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS). They were part of a record class of 190 men.

Former Mayor Dies

BRANTFORD, Ont. — Max Sherman, the only Jewish mayor of Brantford, Ont., died Feb. 28 in the city at age 96. Sherman served on city council from 1955 to 1957, when he was elected mayor. After his two-year term, the Toronto-born Sherman returned to private life. He served on council again two more times, from 1961-1964 and 1976-1997. Brantford City Hall's foyer is named in his honour, as is a local street.

Facility Being Built

TORONTO — Amid reports of a dramatic jump in diagnoses of Alzheimer's disease in coming years, B'nai Brith Canada said it's now building a care facility at 1 Kenton Dr. in Toronto. The land was donated by the late David Sud and his wife, Martha.

World

Farrakhan Slurs Jews

CHICAGO — Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan blamed Jews for U.S. President Barack Obama's difficulties. In a Feb. 28 speech at Chicago's United Centre on Saviour's Day, a Nation of Islam holiday, he told 20,000 followers that Obama's political problems came after he stood up to the Jewish lobby at a White House meeting last summer. He also said Jews control the U.S. Congress.

Letters Slur Jews

MADRID — Israel's embassy in Madrid received dozens of postcards from Spanish schoolchildren containing anti-Semitic messages. On Feb. 28, Israel lodged a complaint with the Spanish government charging Spanish schools are promoting anti-Semitic and anti-Israel ideas. Some of the postcards read, "Jews kill for money," "Leave the country to the Palestinians" and "Go somewhere where they will accept you." Another, addressed to Ambassador Rafi Shotz, read: "How many Palestinians have you murdered today?" Spain's ambassador to Israel said the letters aren't part of the national curriculum and appear to be a private initiative.

Zundel Released, Banned From Canada

OTTAWA — Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel was released from a German prison after serving a five-year sentence and was promptly banned from Canada.

Ernst Zundel

Zundel, 69, who was released March 1 from a prison in Mannheim, was found guilty in 2007 of inciting hatred against Jews and denying the Nazi genocide against the Jews – in 14 specific instances – on his website and in a newsletter. His five-year term included two years in jail after his deportation from Canada in 2005. His trial began in November 2006. He received the maximum sentence.

In a statement, federal Justice Minister Vic Toews said that in 2005, a Federal Court judge "confirmed that Zundel is inadmissible on security grounds for being a danger to Canada." He added that the ruling "reinforced the government's position that this country will not be a safe haven for individuals who pose a risk to national security."

Born in Germany, Zundel left there in 1958. Considered among the most active Holocaust deniers in the world, he was arrested in Canada in 2003. He was among the first right-wing extremists to use the Internet to spread hate material. Canada expelled him in 2005 after courts found his website to be unconstitutional. He was one of several Holocaust deniers deported to Germany at that time.

During his trial in Mannheim, his attorney, Sylvia Stolz, also denied the Holocaust and was herself jailed.

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Toronto Paralympian heading to Vancouver

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to The CJN

vancouver 2010
PARALYMPIC GAMES
JEUX PARALYMPIQUES

For some athletes, Vancouver 2010 is just getting started. This week, Canada hosts its historic first-ever Paralympic games, with more than 1,300 athletes from 44 countries.

Among the 60 members of Team Canada is newcomer Melanie Schwartz, a 24-year-old para-alpine skier.

Reaching the Olympic level has been almost as much of a surprise to the Torontonian Schwartz as it has to the people around her. Born missing half of her right leg, she tried many sports as a child, but says with a sense of wonderment that she was never particularly athletic until she was almost finished university. "Skiing wasn't anything special."

Part of the problem was that she was trying to ski like everybody else around her – on two legs.

"Originally when I started skiing, I skied on two skis and two poles and used my prosthetic leg."

She wears the prosthetic leg for most activities, and while she's very skilled, the prosthetic was far from a natural on the slopes. "I didn't have enough control of the second ski."

After she had been trying for about five years – driven by her love of the sport's speed – an instructor with Ontario Track 3 Ski Association, which teaches children and youth with disabilities, convinced her to try skiing on one leg. It took awhile to gain the skill she needed, but Schwartz quickly realized that this was her best shot at getting beyond the beginner level.

Special poles equipped with outriggers – essentially, short skis – help para-alpine skiers like Schwartz maintain essential balance without sacrificing speed and adeptness on the hills.

Though she enjoyed the sport enough to join the ski team as a student at Forest Hill Collegiate Institute, Schwartz wasn't serious about competing until her first disabled race three years ago in January 2007, when she was a computer science student at the University of Waterloo.

Continued on page 23

Para-alpine skier Melanie Schwartz to compete in Vancouver Paralympic games.

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'Lifting up our eyes'

From the editor's desk...

As readers of this column over the past four weeks know, it has been dedicated to commemorating the 85th anniversary of the opening of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in April 1925.

The official opening ceremonies were held on the eastern slope of Mount Scopus at a makeshift amphitheatre where thousands of dignitaries, guests, visitors and onlookers gathered to mark the historic occasion.

Today, a permanent amphitheatre carved of Jerusalem stone exists on that very spot, part of the unique character of the university, a touchstone site of enduring national significance.

Rare are the ceremonies at the amphitheatre that compare to the first one there 85 years ago. One exception, of course, might be the very moving address by the then-chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces, Yitzhak Rabin, who accepted an honorary doctorate on behalf of the men and women of the IDF after the Six Day War in June 1967. That, too, was a very poignant moment.

But on April 1, 1925, the atmosphere on Mount Scopus was heavy with anticipation. Thousands travelled to Jerusalem and squeezed onto the narrow promontory overlooking the Old City to the west and the Dead Sea to the east to participate in the ceremony as well to witness it. They knew it was to be a pivotal moment in the history of the Jewish People forged, like steel, through fire, on the anvil of two millennia of dispersion, perennial displacement and wounded wandering.

The decision to found a university had actually been taken some years earlier. Indeed the cornerstone of the university was laid in 1918.

One week before Pesach, however, on the seventh day of Nisan in 1925, the brilliant, heroic scientist and future first president of the state, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, presided over the epochal service that announced to the world, and especially to the young men and women of the Jewish homeland and beyond, that an academy of higher learning in the sciences and the humanities was now open without quota and without discrimination.

Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi of the Yishuv Rav Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook was asked to deliver the invocation. He was vilified in certain fundamentalist circles merely for attending the ceremony, let alone for imparting remarks as well.

As was noted in an essay published by the Orthodox Union, Rav Kook viewed the occasion as the fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah who proclaimed (60: 4-5): "Lift up your eyes and look around, they are all gathered together and come to you. Your sons come from afar and your daughters are on your side." Rav Kook's restatement of Isaiah's exhortation "Lift up your eyes" was doubly meaningful – not only in the sense intended by Isaiah, but also as an image of broad application, Rav Kook conveyed the essence of the university as a place "lifting up the eyes" of mankind, a place from which scholarship, learning and scientific advancement has emanated ever since its founding.

To be sure, Isaiah's words and Rav Kook's invocation can be applied to every university in Israel today. Indeed, the mission of the Hebrew University as articulated to *The CJN* by its president Menahem Ben-Sasson is undoubtedly, in part at least, the mission of each of Israel's universities: "service to the Jewish People and service to the world."

The soaring level of higher learning in the Jewish state is widely known and acknowledged throughout the world, despite the often malevolent mischaracterizations about Israel cast in unfriendly circles. Each Israeli university specializes in its own particular fields of research and scholarship and helps push the boundaries of human betterment to higher, deeper and further levels.

Depicting some of the unique aspects of the Hebrew University these past few weeks has been a way to emphasize this increasingly appreciated fact and, additionally, to tie the advancements in all fields of human endeavour that emanate from Israeli universities to the place of Jewish historical pre-eminence: Jerusalem.

The Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, at whose invitation *The CJN* visited the university last month, has helped establish for Canadians numerous pathways of intersection with the good works and research being undertaken at the university. Programs such as the Halbert Centre for Canadian Studies, the Asper Centre for Entrepreneurship, the Louis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies, the Wilbush Patient-Centered Medical Forum, the Peter Brojde Center for Innovative Engineering And Computer Sciences and, most recently, the Institute for Medical Research Israel Canada are some of the bridges that people from Canada and Israel travel upon together for the betterment of the world.

Mount Scopus is where the Roman general Titus and his army encamped as they pitilessly burned, sacked and plundered the Jewish capital and the Temple more than 2,000 years ago. It is thus an ironic, but perhaps predetermined accent of history, that with the bold, dramatic opening of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem 85 years ago on Mount Scopus, that very spot became one of the most moving and most important symbols of the Jewish return to sovereign life. "Our sons and our daughters" have indeed come and will continue to come from afar to Mount Scopus. Isaiah would be happy and proud.

–MBD

See JN

STUDENTS CHALLENGE RACISM

Students from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan were among the winners of the seventh annual Morley Wolfe Youth Book Competition, "Challenging Racism and Celebrating Differences," a project of Toronto Residents in Partnership (TRIP), a not-for-profit group. The contest is open to high school students who create children's books on the contest's theme. Pictured at the March 3 awards ceremony, standing from left, are the school's general studies assistant principal, Ray Buchowski; overall winner Ari Feinberg, Carli Chait, TRIP founder Morley Wolfe, English teacher Lisa Citron, and students Toreigh Sheffer and Samantha Perelgut. Pictured in front are Shane Rodak, left, and Adam Rivietz. Daniel Navy was also one of the winners.

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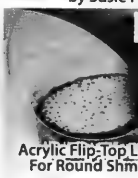

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Jewish groups help after Chilean earthquake

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), in partnership with Masorti Olami, is among the Jewish organizations raising funds to help victims of the 8.8 magnitude earthquake that struck Chile on Feb. 27, as it did following the January earthquake in Haiti.

Although the Masorti synagogue in Concepcion, close to the earthquake's epicentre, was destroyed, the infrastructure of Chile's Jewish community overall suffered little damage. There are an estimated 16,000 Jews in Chile, mostly in Santiago, the capital.

The head of the international Masorti organization, Rabbi Tzvi Graetz, circulated an e-mail last week saying that the walls of the synagogue were cracked and the roof caved in.

The country-wide death toll from the earthquake was reported to be more than 700 as of March 1. But overall, there was less structural damage and significantly fewer deaths than in Haiti and its capital, Port-au-Prince, in January, even though the quake in Chile was much more powerful.

Chabad-Lubavitch, which has an outpost in Santiago, saw some structural damage to its building. World ORT, which runs two vocational schools in Chile, reported that damage to the Jewish community appeared to be minimal.

Unlike Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries, Chile is wealthier and much better developed.

However, noted Howard English, spokesperson for UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, which has set up a Chile relief fund, "there are still relief and rescue operations required, and medical treatment is needed."

Israel is in contact with its ambassador in Chile, according to Ynet, and the government sent its condolences in a statement. Israel was among the first countries to help in Haiti.

Linda Kislowicz, CEO of UIA Federations Canada – through which funds raised by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto are being funnelled – told *The CJN* last Thursday that she had been in touch with the shaliach in Santiago for UIAFC's affiliate, Keren Hayesod, following the earthquake.

"The community is obviously traumatized," Kislowicz told *The CJN*. "It doesn't appear that there's any loss of life in the Jewish community. People are living in a variety of makeshift situations. Some are in their homes, but without electricity."

She was expecting to be briefed in more detail this week. "It might be that we would play some role in helping restore the Jewish infrastructure that has been damaged. We're still gathering information… The first line [of help] would be humanitarian… for all," Kislowicz said.

"While the devastation may not be at the level of what was experienced in Haiti, the impact and trauma is nonetheless significant and demanding of our support."

As of last Friday afternoon, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto had collected $11,000 for the Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid (IsrAID), which sent a search-and-rescue team from Israel to Haiti following the January earthquake there, and was preparing to send a team to Chile as well.

The federation has collected about $1.1 million for relief in Haiti, English said last week.

In Montreal, Federation CJA has created a link on its website for online contributions to a Chilean relief fund. Proceeds will be sent to the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, said federation spokesperson Howard Kosnick.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg has also established a relief fund, with money raised being sent to the Joint Distribution Committee of the Jewish Federations of North America.

Likewise, Ve'ahavta – the Canadian Jewish Humanitarian and Relief Committee has set up a fund to assist the people of Chile. Donations will be distributed through the Jewish Coalition for Disaster Relief to partner agencies that are providing crisis relief in Chile.

As well, Ve'ahavta president Avrum Rosensweig told *The CJN* that his organization would be prepared to respond further, as it has in other situations over the past 13 years. "We have the ability to send pharmaceuticals, and human resources [like] a doctor or a medical team, and whatever else is needed. At this point in time, the requests are not of that nature."

With files from JTA, and Janice Arnold.

To donate to relief efforts in Chile through Jewish federations, see below or contact your local federation.

In Toronto, go to ujadonations.com/chile, or call 416-631-5705.

In Montreal, go to federationcja.org/en/chile, or call 514-345-2600.

In Winnipeg, call 477-7428, or go to jewishwinnipeg.org.

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To donate through Ve'ahavta, call 416-964-7698.

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To donate through USCJ and receive a Canadian tax receipt, send a cheque to the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Chile Earthquake Relief Fund, Attention: Rhonda Schild, 1000 Finch Ave. W., Suite 508, Toronto, Ont. M3J 2V5.

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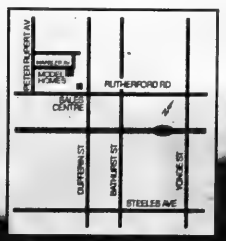

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Editorials & Letters

Mahmoud Abbas' double game

Early last week, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called upon the international community to stop Israel from placing the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem on its list of national heritage sites. He warned, further, that the decision by Israel could lead to a religious war. With such fulminations aired so carefully and bombastically in public, the rioting ensued immediately.

In Hebron and Jerusalem, Palestinian stone throwers were let loose and havoc ensued. As of this writing, dozens have been hurt on both sides. As recently as this past weekend Palestinians threw rocks from the Temple Mount onto Jewish worshippers at the Western Wall below. They were inspired to do so by the Friday sermon railing against the Jewish state wanting to include equally important Jewish holy shrines onto a list of Jewish heritage sites. Not surprisingly, the clashes spread from the Temple Mount to the Old City and east Jerusalem.

There is no doubt the violence by the Palestinians has been orchestrated by politicians and eagerly joined by religious authorities.

Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Shimon Peres emphasized that the designation of the two sites as Jewish heritage sites entailed no new administrative arrangements or altering of the administrative status quo. The Israeli leaders emphasized the designation was educational rather than administrative in nature.

But this was irrelevant to Abbas' dangerous demagogic manipulation of his people. His purpose had been achieved: to incite his proverbial "man on the street" to violence, provoke an Israeli response and point to the troubling Israeli behaviour as further proof of the impossible-to-deal-with Israeli hard line.

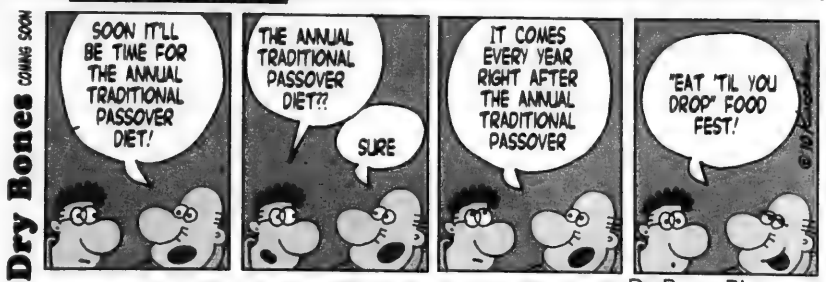
That U.S. Senator John Kerry, chairman of the U.S. Senate's foreign relations committee was visiting the region at the time of the clashes between Palestinian rock throwers and Israeli police was a bonus for the duplicitous PA leader. He could whine up close and directly into the ear of the visiting American dignitary.

Kerry's departure from the area was quickly followed this past weekend by the arrival of U.S. special Middle East envoy, George Mitchell for talks with Netanyahu and Abbas. Abbas agreed last week to indirect talks with Israel for a period of four months that would be mediated by Mitchell. His remonstrations against the Israeli heritage sites announcement was his craven political cover with that ever-present Palestinian "man on the street" for agreeing to the indirect talks with Israel. To complete the triadic presence of American power brokers seeking to influence events in the area, U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden arrived in Israel on Monday, also to talk about the peace process.

Abbas incites violence against Israel even as he acts as the hurt and injured victim pleading with important American intercederers trying to get the peace process that he has self-servingly stalled back on track. It is a dangerous double game that serves only to prove to most Israelis that he is not a trustworthy partner for peace.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israeli vice-premier and foreign minister Yitzhak Shamir visited Canada for talks with external affairs Minister Joe Clark. While in Canada, Shamir addressed public rallies in Toronto and Montreal, as well as the parliamentary dinner of the Canada-Israel Committee's annual policy conference.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Build allies in struggle against anti-Semitism

It is good to be reminded so forcefully that rhetoric serving no purpose other than to demonize Israel and divide Canadians will never find support in any major political party ("Ontario legislature condemns Apartheid Week," Toronto, March 4). Deliberately misleading and inflammatory language hinders meaningful debate and dialogue, standing in the way of efforts to build understanding and encourage peace.

In 1993, when I spearheaded the production of an innovative manual for Canadian students titled *Antisemitism on Campus – A Handbook for Student Action*, as national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, it was as a wake-up call to students and faculty across the country. Since then, many of us have continued to work hard to help make our colleges and universities more inclusive, equitable, comfortable and safe. But the rhetoric and tensions have continued to escalate, particularly during the deliberately misnamed Israeli Apartheid Week. That is why it is so important that all political parties speak out against hatred and violence against all vulnerable and oppressed groups, and, more importantly show by example how to promote and achieve human rights for all, without vilifying or demonizing the other. Let us all continue to work together to build allies in the struggle against anti-Semitism, and all other forms of racial and religious discrimination.

Karen Mock
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Pro-Israel campaign diverts from real issue

I say kudos to our students – but not because of the over-sexualized campaign known as Size Doesn't Matter, which was devised to divert attention from the real issues rather than confront them ("Pro-Israel campaign says size isn't everything," March 4).

Students deserve a lot of credit for facing the problem of anti-Semitism on campus. I applaud the great work of the students from Hasbara at York, who have dealt with this matter with courage and strength.

The measurement of success of a campaign against Israeli Apartheid Week is not how many hits sexy pictures get on a website. Community organizations have been telling us for years not to do anything that will inflame the other side or anger the uninterested Canadian people, as if we must hide our heads in shame for being Jewish supporters of Israel. The truth of the matter is that the Islamists are winning the public relations campaign. Six years of IAWs have passed and the students have been getting nothing more than training on how to sing the praises of Israel, while avoiding the issues.

Gary Gerofsky
Dundas, Ont.

* * *

IAW would wither away if...

Regarding the clever slogan to counter Israeli Apartheid Week. Size Doesn't Matter, as soon as IAW is over, the campaign should go to Israel. Israel could negotiate to return the Golan; reroute the security fence, so it doesn't include Palestinian land; really stop building settlements and begin negotiations to create a Palestinian state. Then surely Israeli Apartheid Week would wither away.

Avrum Jacobson
Toronto

* * *

Daily minyans in Winnipeg (1)

The story "Orthodox shuls can't sustain daily minyans" (Feb. 18) leaves the impression that there are no regular Orthodox daily minyans in Winnipeg. That is not quite accurate. For almost eight years, the Chavurat Tefila Synagogue has been having twice daily minyans, seven days a week (except for Saturday evenings in the winter months). Although the synagogue had to cut back morning minyans to three or four times a week and Shabbat in January and February due to some losses and the fact some people were away on holiday, we were able to continue evening minyans (Minchah and Ma'ariv at sunset). The shul will resuming daily morning minyans by mid-March.

David and Miriam Diamond
Winnipeg

* * *

Daily minyans in Winnipeg (2)

Regarding the story "Orthodox shuls can't sustain daily minyans," (Feb. 18), the Talmud Torah Beth Jacob Synagogue, Ashkenazi Congregation and Chabad North join together during the week for Minchah/Ma'ariv (evening) services; Sunday, Monday and Thursday at Chabad, and Tuesday and Wednesday at Talmud Torah Beth Jacob.

Percy Golubchuk, President,
Talmud Torah Beth Jacob Synagogue
Winnipeg

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Perspectives

Oh, to be a political analyst, liberated from the bonds of truth

BY JUDEA PEARL

For the life of me, I wish I could be a professional analyst – someone who makes a living telling people what world leaders think, why they think the way they do, why what they think is not what they say and how we ought to act knowing what they truly have in mind.

The nice thing about being an analyst is that no one cares if you are right or wrong; it is the sound of your conclusions that count, not the veracity of your premises.

Take Roger Cohen, for example, and his recent *New York Times* column Hard Mideast Truths (Feb. 11), which a friend sent me with a grim comment: "Only [President Shimon] Peres is left of the founding leaders of Israel… Israel needs peace to survive in the long run."

Judea Pearl

Cohen is the *Times* columnist who spent months, perhaps years, on a tireless campaign to convince the West that the Iranian regime does not deserve our suspicion, that it can be reasoned with like any other regime and that it does not suffer from an irrational form of fanaticism. Cohen's campaign was shattered last June by the reality of the Iranian election, its brutal aftermath and the deceptive progress of Iran's nuclear capability.

One would think that an analyst who fails so miserably in reading the minds of the ayatollah would acquire some measure of humility or introspection before reclaiming an authoritative posture as a mind reader. A prudent analyst would take a year or two to examine one's premises, scrutinize one's inference-making processes or reboot one's ideology and logical machinery.

Not Cohen.

The ink is still wet on his "I erred in underestimating the brutality and cynicism of a regime that understands the uses of ruthlessness" (*New York Times*, June 14, 2009) and he is back with the same style of logic, same underestimating premises, same conclusion-driven inferences, to offer a brilliant solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

His solution is predictable: "It does not make sense for America to bankroll Israeli policies that undermine U.S. strategic objectives," therefore, the United States should punish Israel into action on all fronts; settlements, negotiation with Hamas, security compromises and more. But Cohen's motive has a new twist: it is all for Israel's own good, otherwise, "What then will become of the Zionist dream?"

Israelis are too dumb, so the message reads, to understand that they need peace to survive in the long run, and only New York analysts understand the urgency of this need, and only they can come up with original and innovative solutions to Israel's future. Israelis, with all their experts, historians, statesmen, peace activists, visionaries, philosophers and, yes, analysts are incapable of thinking out of the box; Cohen can, as he did on Iran.

I lament the day I chose to become a scientist. If any of my theories ever turn out to be wrong, God forbid, no journal would dare print my articles again, and all my theories would forever be suspect of dubious intentions. Not Cohen. He can twist reality at will, and readers continue to swallow his logic, axiom after axiom, lemma after lemma, as long as the conclusion harmonizes with what they wish to hear: we can fix everything – just push whatever moves.

Take Cohen's reasons for negotiating with Hamas. "The Hamas charter is vile," Cohen admits, "but the breakthrough Oslo accords were negotiated in 1993, three years before the Palestine Liberation Organization revoked the annihilationist clauses in its charter. When [former Palestinian Authority president Yasser] Arafat and [former Israeli prime minister Yitzhak] Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn, that destroy-Israel charter was intact. Things change through negotiation, not otherwise. If there are Taliban elements worth engaging, are there really no such elements in the broad movements that are Hamas and Hezbollah?"

If only I were an analyst, I would be exonerated from checking the facts, and I would be spared the embarrassment of finding that the Oslo accords were negotiated only after Arafat proclaimed, three years earlier, before the UN General Assembly in Geneva (Dec. 13, 1988) that the Palestinian National Council renounced "all types of terrorism" and had accepted Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for negotiations (in truth, it did not, but the world heard what it yearned to hear).

Competing theories are cherished by scientists and abhorred by analysts

As an analyst, I would not need to find out that things did not exactly change through those negotiations in the 1990s – the PLO, to this very day, has not amended the annihilationist clauses in its charter, as openly admitted by Farouk Kaddoumi, a senior PLO leader, in an interview with a Jordanian newspaper (*Al-Arab*, April 22, 2004; also see Benny Morris' book *One State, Two States* for a detailed chronology).

On the contrary, an intractable Gordian knot has been created: every Westerner now believes the charter is amended; every Palestinian says it is amended but believes it is not, and every Israeli knows what Palestinians believe. Not a healthy mindset for peace negotiations.

Most importantly, as a scientist, I would be obliged to acknowledge competing theories. For example, that the blood-soaked second intifadah erupted precisely because former U.S. president Bill Clinton and Rabin did not insist on seeing an Arabic text of an amended PLO charter on the White House lawn. Their naiveté, so the theory goes, gave Arafat the illusion that as long as the West buys into his double-talk, Palestinians are exempt from doing any homework toward peace. It subsequently made Israelis doubly suspicious of Palestinian proclamations and reinforced Palestinians' delusion that they can achieve sovereignty without internalizing Israel's permanency. Cohen now hands them another reinforcement and, once again, all in the name of peace.

Competing theories are cherished by scientists and abhorred by analysts. For a scientist, such theories pinpoint experiments one must conduct and questions one needs to ask; for an analyst, they just spoil the music of the wished-for punch line.

Cohen, for example, simply "knows" that "the 'existential threat' to Israel is overplayed" – competing theories, elaborating on Israel's precarious position do not deserve his attention. The dreadful sight of 40,000 unstoppable Hezbollah rockets aimed at civilian population centres in Israel does not deserve the attention of omniscient analysts. And I purposely do not mention the Iranian nuclear threat, Cohen's specialty, or whether Israeli society can survive the dead, wounded, maimed and orphaned victims of any massive modern-day assault, because the consequences of competing David-Goliath theories are not on the moral screen of astute analysts like Cohen.

Or take Cohen's manifesto of morality: "Past persecution of the Jews cannot be a licence to subjugate another people, the Palestinians."

The competing theory, according to which Israel relentlessly seeks ways to extricate itself from an unwanted occupation, while Palestinians reject the very notion of end-of-conflict, will forever remain the province of scientists; analysts have a licence to ignore the hard evidence that pours out of Palestinian media, schools and public discourse, which spoils the music of a wished-for theory.

Oh, that I might become an analyst someday – mesmerized by wished conclusions, falling for my own conjectures and liberated from the bonds of truth.

Judea Pearl is a professor at UCLA and president of the Daniel Pearl Foundation (danielpearl.org), named after his son.

U.S. President encourages Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to shake the hand of PLO leader Yasser Arafat on the lawn of the White House on September 13, 1993 at the signing ceremony of the Oslo Accords. As the author points out, Clinton and Rabin did not insist on seeing an Arabic text of the PLO charter that Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority claimed had been amended. ***[RNS photo]***

The value of everything

James Stockdale, a U.S. PoW in Vietnam who resisted eight years of torment, explained the source of his courage: "I never doubted not only that I would get out, but also that I would prevail in the end and turn the experience into the defining event of my life."

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

Stockdale's optimism inspires. However, he doesn't see himself as an optimist. He said that the PoWs least likely to survive were the optimists, because "they were the ones who said, 'We're going to be out by Christmas.' And Christmas would come, and Christmas would go… And they died of a broken heart."

Ironically, Stockdale was optimistic about the long-term future, yet pessimistic about the short term. Business consultant Jim Collins labelled Stockdale's views the Stockdale Paradox.

This paradox resembles Maimonides' views on the Messiah. To Maimonides, the Messiah is a fundamental belief, yet, at the same time, Maimonides, wary of the destruction brought by false Messiahs, forbids speculation about when the Messiah will arrive. Much like the Stockdale Paradox, Maimonides demands that we dream of the Messiah, yet he discounts any possibility of the Messiah's imminent arrival.

At the heart of these paradoxes is a riddle about optimism. Optimism has two definitions: being content ("The glass is half full"), and hoping for a better future ("It'll all turn out for the best"). These two definitions are dramatically different. One reflects acceptance of one's circumstances. The other reflects a desire for change. "Optimism" is itself a paradox, because it demands us to dream of a better future while being happy with our present situation!

However, accepting both definitions of optimism is not illogical. An optimist sees the value in everything. Of course the optimist dreams of a better life. But the optimist also knows how precious life always is, and that even the torments of a PoW camp can become the defining moments of one's life.

It's not easy to embrace the value of everything. Rabbi Israel Spira was a Holocaust survivor who taught and inspired thousands until his death in 1989. In March 1945, he learned that he had lost his entire family. Overwhelmed by despair, he walked up to the electrified fence at Bergen Belsen in order to end it all. A woman, witnessing this, called to the rabbi: "How can you stand here now and think of ending your life? God will bless you once more… And besides, the world needs you!"

Rabbi Spira stepped away from the fence. Even in pain, even when dreams seem impossible, the optimist knows that his first duty is to live each day and see the value in everything.

Students, legislators stand up for Israel

With many people justifiably worried about the constant attempts to delegitimize Israel on college campuses, especially in Canada, we should highlight some successes.

Recently, we have seen that being creative, passionate and edgy can help reframe the conversation about Israel. The key is to be clever, not defensive, and to master your own particular strategic terrain.

Gil Troy in Montreal

In early February, McGill University students mobilized against an unfair and misleading resolution being proposed by their student society. There has long been an unspoken ceasefire on the McGill campus, with both pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli forces holding their fire, being more committed to the tradition of civility on campus – and, frankly, to the more academic atmosphere overall. A year ago, pro-Palestinian forces broke this deal, by proposing a resolution condemning Israel's Gaza operation. Pro-Israel students mobilized and voted it down at the student society's General Assembly.

Last Passover, pro-Palestinian forces became even more aggressive, planting 1,415 Palestinian flags and 13 Israeli flags in the central green space on campus, supposedly representing the disproportionate death toll during Israel's Gaza operation. This dramatic display sought to politicize the entire campus environment.

The administration should never have allowed this break with tradition, which threatens to have every other group try similar antics. I have no desire to come to work and be bombarded by one undergraduate attempt after another seeking to dramatize whatever issue is trendy one season or the next.

Undeterred, the pro-Palestinian forces this year cooked up a seemingly harmless resolution demanding McGill invest ethically, which actually was a one-sided resolution targeting Israel. Although the General Assembly votes only on the "be it resolved" clauses, two "whereas" clauses singled out Israel for special opprobrium. This was an attempt to get the many people who support ethical investing to condemn Israel implicitly. Pro-Israel – and pro-civility – forces rejected these unfair terms. At the General Assembly, they voted down the two offensive (and historically inaccurate) "whereas" clauses, then passed the resolution.

Similar out-of-the-box thinking shaped a controversial web-based ad campaign, launched by the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students. Critics have called the "size doesn't matter" video crude, vulgar and sexist. It is certainly crude and vulgar; I'm not sure if it's sexist. But it's also funny, attention-grabbing and speaks to college students in their language, with their sensibility. We want to speak to the "more than 80 per cent of students on a given campus who haven't made up their minds about Israel and the Middle East," one of the project's creators, Noah Kochman explained. The video, which received more than 18,000 hits in its first few days, is a lure to get students learning facts about Israel.

As a professor, I wish my students got references to Aeschylus and Agamemnon. But if I want to be understood, I have to speak about Michael Jackson and Tiger Woods. Similarly, it would be great to live in a G-rated world, but our students live in an R-rated one. Kochman and his team shrewdly recognized that and spoke that language.

In a far more respectable vein, Peter Shurman, a Progressive Conservative legislator in the Ontario provincial legislature, refused to be passive in the wake of the anti-Israel week targeting campuses. Explaining that resolutions in the legislative assembly "do one thing only: they send a message, moral suasion pertinent to any given subject," he proposed a resolution regarding something "I am passionate about" in late February. Shurman rose in chambers on Feb. 24, proclaiming: "I move that in the opinion of this House, the term Israeli 'Apartheid Week' is condemned as it serves to incite hatred against Israel, a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights, and the use of the word 'apartheid' in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime in South Africa." The resolution passed unanimously – and was applauded worldwide.

Edmund Burke famously noted, "All that is necessary for evil to succeed is that good men do nothing." These examples show that when good people do something, evil can be defeated, or at least, rebuffed.

Women of the Wall, Part II

One year ago, I wrote about my experience with Women of the Wall on Rosh Chodesh Adar in Jerusalem: the rage I experienced coming from the men's side, the fear from the women's side, and my own disheartenment while praying with this group of sincere women at Judaism's holiest site.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Jerusalem

One year later, again on Rosh Chodesh Adar, I went to the Wall to pray with them. This time, there were close to 200 women gathered there, as since the November arrest of Nofrat Frenkel for the "crime" of wearing a tallit, the monthly prayer sessions have grown larger and larger in support of the idea that any Jew should be able to pray at the Kotel as they wish. This time, there was a large contingent of Masorti kids from the Israeli Conservative youth movement flanking us on either side.

This time, many male supporters came and stood on the men's side nearest the mechitzah, forming a sort of protective barrier between us and the men climbing on chairs to scream and curse at us. (For Adar, the screamers brought a bullhorn so we could hear them call us "Amalekites" more clearly.)

This time, we were protected not only by male police, but also by male army officers called in to help when haredi women tried to aggressively break us up by entering the tightly knit group and physically pushing us out of the plaza. How odd it was to be praying behind a row of bare-headed male soldiers in the women's section. When the haredi women became vocally abusive, shrieking at us (apparently we are Christian lesbian Reform blasphemers), we kept on singing *Hallel*. It was Purim shpiel meets Mahatma Gandhi.

No matter how much detractors claim the Women of the Wall come only to provoke, let's be honest: the very presence of a large group of interdenominational women being spiritual in a way that differs from the haredi "protectors" of the Wall is provocative.

And this time, I felt as if my community and my colleagues were there with me. I was able to speak for a few moments publicly to the 200 women gathered (and to Frenkel, who was leading the service) and let them know about the full-page ad signed by 29 rabbis that appeared in this paper, and the event that took place in Toronto on Rosh Chodesh Adar in support of religious freedom. All those gathered deeply appreciated Toronto taking a lead, and I suggested to the rabbinical students gathered and to the guests from abroad that they take this idea from Toronto and spread it.

Thank you, Toronto, for understanding the depth of this issue. This is not about whether you or I "want" to wear a tallit at the Wall. It's not a personal matter of Frenkel or Anat Hoffman, director of the Israel Religious Action Center, who was arrested in January for wearing a tallit at the Wall. It's about the soul of Israel, about Israel being a light unto the nations, about Israel being a democratic country of all her citizens, and about Israel being a Jewish homeland for all Jews to practise their Judaism freely.

It struck me that when we read from the Megillah this past Purim about the threat of women not obeying their husbands, and the sarcastic decree that went forth from Achashverosh commanding each man to be king in his castle after Vashti refused to be degraded, we really read about the way society perceives the power of women as a national and cosmic threat. Instead of seeing the Women of the Wall as a sincere group of *ohavei haShem*, some of our brothers and sisters see us only as a threat to the system.

Would that they could hear the Megillah as a mocking critique of this kind of drunken, irrational fear of women gathering and expressing their humanity, not as a justification for it.

You can read Rabbi Goldstein's blog from Israel at www.jerusalemofgoldstein.blogspot.com. You can learn more about Women of the Wall at http://womenofthewall.org.il.

The Kirshner File

Lieberman cuts a swath across foreign policy

Pugnacious, combative and outspokenly nationalistic, Avigdor Lieberman marks his first anniversary as Israel's foreign minister this month, determined as ever to create a muscular Israeli foreign policy. A rough-and-tumble Soviet-born and bred politician whose constituents are mainly Russian Jewish immigrants, he defiantly marches to his own drummer. "I've always been controversial because I offer new ideas," said Lieberman, who recently became the first Israeli foreign minister in 20 years to visit Africa after a groundbreaking trip to Latin America, which has not been high on Israel's diplomatic agenda.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Lieberman acquired his plum job despite an ongoing police investigation against him over suspicions of bribery, money laundering, fraud and breach of trust. The prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, tapped him for the post after his right-wing Israel Beiteinu party won 15 Knesset seats and thus held the balance of power in the Knesset following last February's general election.

Dispensing with the niceties of diplomacy, Lieberman broke the mould in his inaugural public speech as foreign minister.

Only a day after U.S. President Barack Obama said that peace in the Middle East can be achieved if Israel and the Palestinians are open to compromise, he sent shock waves across the region by declaring that his government was not bound by the Annapolis peace process, which was conceived by the United States and envisaged a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although the November 2007 Annapolis conference proved to be nothing more than an elaborate photo op, the actual Annapolis process was a high-minded exercise, setting out realistic parameters for final status talks on core issues based on the 2003 "road map" peace plan.

But with the formation of Netanyahu's right-of-centre government, and with Lieberman claiming that talks with the Palestinians had reached "a dead end," Annapolis, for all intents and purposes, was rendered irrelevant.

Although Lieberman professed to be committed to the "road map," which he originally opposed, he has ventured away from it.

In a repudiation of the 1990s Oslo spirit, he has lambasted "the "peace industry" as a waste of money and asserted that "slogans" such as the two-state solution and the land-for-peace formula have deteriorated into cliches tailored for headlines.

According to Lieberman, the way forward is to ensure security for Israel and to improve the economy of the Palestinians, thereby achieving stability for both.

Lieberman, a resident of the West Bank settlement of Nokdim, believes that the dispute with the Palestinians is not about Israel's occupation and its network of settlements, but about the Palestinians' refusal to recognize Israel's existence and legitimacy.

And lately, he has described the conflict as a religious one.

Speaking glowingly of the "Cypriot model" as a possible template for resolving the conflict, he calls for an exchange of territory and population. Under his proposal, Israel would annex settlement blocs in the West Bank, while Arab towns adjacent to the border would be incorporated into a Palestinian state. The remaining Arab citizens of Israel would sign a loyalty oath or lose their right to vote.

Lieberman's plan is not meant to be implemented any time soon. A dyed-in-the-wool pessimist who thinks that only a long-term intermediate agreement is attainable and that returning to the pre-1967 borders is a non-starter, he discounts the possibility that a comprehensive accord can be reached in less than 20 years.

As he put it recently, "Even if we return the last grain of sand, and divide Jerusalem, and agree to all the [Palestinian] demands, nothing will change and we will be in the same situation."

He doubts whether diplomatic progress can be made unless the Palestinian Authority confronts terrorism and assumes control of the Gaza Strip, which was seized by Hamas, an Islamic organization dedicated to Israel's destruction. "Without these, it will be difficult to move forward," he has observed.

Lieberman is of the view that Israel, having displayed goodwill by accepting the principle of a two-state solution, reducing the number of roadblocks in the Palestinian areas and declaring a 10-month partial building moratorium in the West Bank, has emptied its "arsenal" of gestures to the Palestinian Authority. The onus is now on the Palestinians to make reciprocal gestures, he says, having warned the Palestinian Authority that the moratorium will be followed by a renewal of "full force" building.

At the end of the day, Lieberman simply does not trust the Palestinian leadership, claiming that it supports and sponsors much of the global campaign to smear and delegitimize Israel. In addition, he claims that the Palestinian Authority is playing an "ugly" and "double game" with Israel: "During Operation Cast Lead [in Gaza in 2008 and 2009], the Palestinian Authority pressured us to crush Hamas. Then, a month later, they submitted a complaint against us to the International Criminal Court in The Hague."

His position on Syria is also unwavering.

Last month, after Syrian President Bashar Assad claimed that Israel was leading "the region into war," he warned Assad that Syria would be defeated in a future war and that "your family will no longer be in power."

Israeli Foreign Minister Avidgor Lieberman meets U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Aghast by Lieberman's bellicose comments, Defence Minister Ehud Barak urged Syria to resume talks with Israel instead of trading harsh words.

Lieberman opposes a resumption of negotiations with Syria, which were formally broken off by Damascus after Israel invaded Gaza.

Unlike his most recent predecessors, Lieberman does not believe that an Israeli pullout from the Golan Heights – which Israel captured in the Six Day – will yield peace with Syria. "We will not agree to withdraw from the Golan," he said last spring. More recently, he declared, "Syria must understand that it has to let go of the demand for the Golan."

He scoffs at the notion that Turkey – Israel's oldest Muslim ally – should resume its role as a mediator in Israel's talks with Syria. He argues that Turkish "slurs" directed at Israel by its prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have effectively disqualified Turkey. "We approach Turkey with respect and appreciation," Lieberman has said of Israel's pivotal relationship with Ankara. But two months ago in Jerusalem, Turkey's ambassador to Israel was publicly humiliated by Lieberman's rash deputy, Danny Ayalon, in a bizarre and asinine incident.

Lieberman's ties with Egypt are equally testy, due to belligerent remarks he made before his tenure as foreign minister. In 1998, he called for the bombing of the Aswan Dam in retaliation for Egypt's support of Yasser Arafat, the then-president of the Palestinian Authority. Two years ago, piqued over Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's refusal to visit Israel, Lieberman said, "He can go to hell." As a result, the Egyptian foreign minister has boycotted him.

Lieberman, having compared Iran to Nazi Germany, has recommended that efforts to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions should be subject to a tight deadline. During a introductory meeting with Canada's foreign minister last June, he called for tougher sanctions against Iran. Last week, he called for unilateral U.S. sanctions on the Islamic republic.

Though he regards the United States as Israel's best friend, he wants to move away from "a lone dependence" on Washington and cultivate closer relations with Russia, which he considers "a strategic partner." Lieberman's bilateral dealings with the United States have been tense. In his sole trip to Washington, he and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton clashed over Israel's settlements in the West Bank.

To some Israelis, Lieberman is like a breath of fresh air, calling a spade a spade. To most Israelis and non-Israelis, however, he is a polarizing figure who belittles the peace process and territorial compromise, needlessly provokes neighbours and further isolates Israel.

Romspen Investment Corporation Announcement

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School libraries cautioned about book

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

York Region's school board is advising its administrators and teacher-librarians that a book about Palestinians and Israelis available to junior high students should be supported by "facilitated discussions" to avoid discrimination and the expression of bias.

The advisory suggests that students borrowing *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* as part of the Red Maple reading program should be given "a historical context and balanced perspective of both sides of the conflict that will help students understand and appreciate the sensitive aspects of the novel."

The book, distributed to school libraries across Ontario, is recommended for children in grades seven and eight by the Ontario Library Association (OLA). The Red Maple program is a voluntary after-school activity in which students can choose five of 10 recommended books and later rate them.

The Shepherd's Granddaughter, by Canadian author Anne Laurel Carter, prompted a mailing from Canadian Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center cautioning libraries that the book offers "a one-sided view of the Middle East conflict that cannot be simplified in the manner that it is presented. We are extremely concerned this over-simplification of a complicated matter has clear potential to incite hatred and violence against Jewish and Israeli students."

References to Israelis in the book generally portray them as malevolent. The Wiesenthal Center cited two examples. In one, a Palestinian character said of Israelis: "Innocent? No Israeli is innocent. Why should we let them live in peace? They don't deserve it."

A second reference has an Israeli soldier saying: "No Palestinian boys in city. We shoot Palestinian boys."

Board recommends facilitating discussions

Wiesenthal Center president Avi Benlolo said he would prefer if the book was made unavailable to students. "The Simon Wiesenthal Center does not promote censorship, but the issue is that this book is so skewed and so overtly against the State of Israel. It's fictional, yet it circulates without any kind of background. We find despicable and horrendous that it is allowed in this way. Any school child who reads the book will grow to hate the State of Israel and possibly the Jewish people."

The organization issued a memorandum cautioning educators about the book. It stated "the Ontario Library Association's choice to include the Palestinian viewpoint without Israeli representation is irresponsible and in direct violation of its mandate to promote the 'health and growth of a free society.' In addition, the one-sided fictionalized presentation of such an emotionally charged issued does not 'maintain the right of intellectual freedom,' but will inevitably provoke an emotional response, which is clearly not in keeping with the association's mandate to promote intellectual freedom."

Shelagh Paterson, executive director of the OLA, said the book allows students to "explore difficult subject matter, whether you agree or disagree.

"Many schools and parents participate in kids reading experience. It gives them the opportunity for open discussion in a safe environment" and to "stretch thinking."

Paterson acknowledged that *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* is more controversial than other offerings this year, but said it served to "challenge the reader to explore ideas that are controversial."

She said the committee that selected the 10 Red Maple books "looked at the literary quality, structure, richness of language, clarity, themes and content." In addition, the selections had to have been published in the last year.

Responding to suggestions that two books offered by the OLA in the last four years both portrayed Israelis is a negative light – in 2006, the York Region School Board removed *Three Wishes* from its libraries while the Toronto District School Board restricted access to children who had parental permission to borrow it – Paterson said "we're not trying to deliberately inflame or offend. That's not the intent."

Sarah Burakowski, a special education resource teacher in York Region who alerted the Wiesenthal Center to the book, said *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* is too one-sided to be showcased in the Red Maple program.

"I found that it presented a very negative image of Israel and provided little context for young readers about a conflict that is beyond their understanding. I found the book to be slanted and biased, and found it created a negative attitude about Israel and its people," she said.

Burakowski believes there are many other good books by Canadian authors on controversial subjects that could have been promoted for the Red Maple program, including one about the genocide in Uganda. That book "is not biased because it gives both viewpoints… There are other areas of history that don't focus on Israel and the Palestinians," she added.

Ross Virgo, spokesperson for the York School Board, said the board issued its memorandum because "we are deeply committed to providing an equitable learning environment free from bias and discrimination."

That criterion must be taken into account when selecting learning resources, he added.

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April 20
Paul Godfrey, politician, Blue Jays owner, president and CEO of The National Post, member of the Order of Canada. Mr. Godfrey will speak about his career in the world of politics, business, sports, and newspapers.
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April 27
Rabbi Avraham Feder, Rabbi Emeritus of Beth Tikvah Synagogue, will review the novel Friendly Fire (2007) by A. B. Yehoshua. Yehoshua (1936 -) has won many prestigious awards including the Israel Prize for Hebrew Literature. Copies of the book are available at the synagogue office @ $16.
Sponsored by Forest Hill Place, Pine Ville, Terrace Gardens

May 4
Matthew Teitelbaum, CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario and one of the most successful directors in its 109-year-old history.
'Building the new AGO: Challenges and Pleasures'
Sponsored by Thorne Mill

May 11
Rose Reisman, author of 16 cookbooks, nutritionist, caterer, restaurateur, TV and radio personality.
'The Art of Living Well'
Sponsored by Terra Cotta Gardens

May 25
Dr. Michael A. Cohen, a practicing Chiropractic Acupuncturist. His first hand experiences with different healing traditions around the world have helped create the unique insights behind his healing philosophies and practices.
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June 1
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Greater Toronto Area

Families celebrate Pesach in 1800s style

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Toronto artist Vivian Reiss and her family are going to recreate a Canadian Jewish Passover seder, circa 1822, at the Campbell House Museum.

The March 29 event is the second private seder the Reiss-Gartens will be hosting for relatives and close friends in the historic building. Originally located in the town of York, the house was moved to downtown Toronto in 1972.

Reiss has showcased her paintings in over 50 shows in Canada and worldwide. Her art

Vivian Reiss creates a 1800s-style Passover meal.

can be found in private and corporate collections in more than 15 countries, including the Canadian embassies in Washington, D.C., and Paris. Her talents go beyond the canvas, as she has designed architectural projects, costumes, clothing and furniture.

This Passover, Reiss, whose creativity also extends to cooking (she is currently writing a cookbook), will prepare a candlelight supper, featuring a traditional seder menu meant to emulate the experience of the first Jewish settlers in York. The meal will be cooked in the museum's wood oven and open fire, using time-honoured tools such as a cast iron cauldron and frying pan.

Reiss says the museum's rustic kitchen will let her share her fascination with the history of Passover in old Toronto with the 15 guests who will attend the seder. After having a birthday party a few years ago at Mackenzie House, a historic building and museum in Toronto, where she learned to cook on a hearth, Reiss joined the Culinary Historians of Ontario and became interested in ancient Jewish cooking rituals.

"This all coincided with the summer before when I visited a small town in Italy, where a community of Jews once lived," says Reiss. "I came across this ancient matzah oven and wanted to recapture what a seder would have been like back then."

Reiss says the seder will also be an opportunity for her to express her passion for the arts through the colourful dishes she will serve. The menu includes a bright canary pudding infused with lemon; rosemary lamb shanks in a vibrant wine sauce; purple and orange yams alongside red and yellow beets, and toasted homemade marshmallows.

Due to popular demand, Reiss will be making her famous chicken soup with matzah balls – her claim to fame as a Jewish mother, she says. "The soup will boil away in a beautiful brass cauldron, complementing the colours of the carrots, parsnip and chicken itself. Everything becomes golden."

Culinary-wise, cooking at Campbell House will be quite complicated, says Reiss, who finds satisfaction in the challenge. "There's no electricity in the kitchen. We have to bring in big washtubs of water to cook with. It's hard to control the heat in the brick oven, and it takes two hours to reach the desired temperature. It gets to about 540 degrees, so the dynamic energy of the fire and the smoky taste it brings to the food make the experience fantastic. It's seder cooking by candlelight."

To make the meal even more authentic, Reiss plans to set the table with cutlery from the 1800s that she's collected over the years from antique markets. To give the seder a personal touch, she will use horseradish from her garden for the bitter herbs course and fennel seeds she has grown for her sweet matzah recipe.

Reiss says Passover has always been her favourite holiday, as it revolves around family getting together and sharing special customs. While she has previously enjoyed cooking for her loved ones in her own home, she says the Campbell House seder further allows her to reflect on her roots.

Her parents were Hungarian immigrants, and she was raised in New York. She says at the seder her family will be reminded of their own exodus through experiencing what life might have been like for the first Jews who made their journey to Toronto.

"Passover is about exodus. It's about the immigrant experience," says Reiss. "Passover is the most meaningful holiday to my family, as every year our table is filled with Holocaust survivors, their children and grandchildren. The Passover meal, especially matzah, is symbolic of the Jewish immigrant experience."

Much like the Jews who only had time to prepare matzah after fleeing Egypt, those who immigrated to Montreal, Quebec City, New York and the town of York faced a similar predicament on Passover, Reiss says. They arrived to a strange land and had to fend for themselves, without ready-made provisions such as the manufactured goods sold in stores today.

Reiss will be taking her journey back in time with her husband, Irving Garten, her daughter, Ariel, and her son, Joel, and other guests.

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Greater Toronto Area

From left, Israeli consul general Amir Gissin; Fran Sonshine, national chair of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem; Marek Zakrzewski, accepting the award on behalf of his father, Zbigniew; Yacov Fliegmann; and Gabriella Starker-Saxe, accepting the award on behalf of her grandmother, Irma Uranyi Paine. ***[Ron Csillag photo]***

Righteous Gentiles get posthumous honours

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

Gabriella Starker-Saxe and Marek Zakrzewski had never met before last week, but their stories are remarkably similar. Both are Canadian descendants of Holocaust-era heroes, and both remember hearing their forebears say that their exploits were nothing special.

"She never talked about it," said Starker-Saxe of her grandmother, Irma Uranyi, as she wiped away a tear. "My mother did, though, and the attitude was, 'You did the things you had to do. You did what was normal.'"

Zakrzewski nodded in agreement. His father, Zbigniew, "did what was tradition – normal and natural. He said it was human responsibility. He did not say he was a hero."

Yad Vashem, Israel's official Holocaust memorial and museum, respectfully disagreed, and last week, conferred posthumous Righteous Among the Nations status on Zbigniew Zakrzewski and Irma Uranyi for having risked their lives to rescue Jews during World War II.

They now enter the rarefied company of nearly 23,000 other non-Jews from 44 countries who have been so honoured by Yad Vashem and the Israeli government.

Starker-Saxe, from King City, Ont., and Marek Zakrzewski, who lives in Vancouver, were presented with certificates and specially struck medals by Israel's consul general in Toronto, Amir Gissin, and the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

Also on hand for the moving ceremony in Toronto was Yacov Fliegmann, flown in from Israel by El Al airlines, who was rescued in wartime Budapest by Irma Uranyi.

In the fall of 1944, following the murder of his father, Fliegmann, then 13, arrived in Budapest from Transylvania with his mother and seven-year-old sister, Yehudit. One day, his mother went out to search for food without wearing the yellow Star of David. She never returned.

Yacov placed his sister in an orphanage, where he soon joined her. But he fled when an order came for all Jewish boys aged 12 and over to be rounded up for forced labour in Germany. After a few days dodging authorities on the bombed-out streets, Yacov found refuge in a building managed by Irma Uranyi, where she lived with her mother and daughter. Irma's husband, a convert to Judaism, had been sent to a forced labour camp.

Irma fed and sheltered Yacov until Budapest's liberation in January 1945 by Soviet troops. She died in 1993, humble and taciturn to the end, said her granddaughter.

Meanwhile, Zbigniew Zakrzewski was honoured as Righteous for having saved the life of Brunia Rubinovitch, who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto at the age of 10 after her parents were murdered there. She made her way to the home of her parents' non-Jewish friends, the Wolskis, who were worried for her safety because the neighbours knew Brunia was Jewish.

Brunia was shuttled to a relative of the Wolskis, who in turn sent the girl to another relative, Zbigniew Zakrzewski, an upper-class Pole whose uncle had been Poland's prime minister after World War I, and his son, Marek. Zbigniew prepared Aryan papers for Brunia, gave her a Christian name and registered her at a Catholic school.

Zbigniew looked after Brunia as though she was his own daughter, and she regarded him as a devoted father.

But at war's end, Zbigniew was arrested by the Soviet secret police for his membership in an underground resistance movement against both the Nazis and Communists. He was sentenced to death.

Brunia, by now 14, wrote an impassioned letter to the president of Poland, begging for mercy for her saviour (the letter was read aloud by a student at Milton District High School. About 20 students who study the Holocaust attended the ceremony).

The president was unmoved, and in March, 1947, Zbigniew Zakrzewski was executed in a jail in Lodz. His burial site is still unknown.

Brunia made her way to Israel, but was unable to travel to Toronto to witness the honouring of her rescuer.

Creating employment opportunities for Israel's haredim

Joseph and Wolf Lebovic team up with JDC to benefit ultra-Orthodox

By Daniel Horowitz

Wolf and Joseph Lebovic

Men raised in the haredi educational system do so from their childhood with a full-time focus on learning the Talmud and halacha, Jewish law. From an early age, school hours are lengthened to enable this intense focus to become the norm. With this dedication of learning comes a strict adherence to haredi cultural norms that are not always the norms of mainstream Israel – essentially no mixing of men and women except within the family; standards of dress that reinforce modesty and make the individual identifiably haredi, and a willingness to dedicate oneself to spiritual pursuits at the expense of one's material well-being.

While the haredi educational system prepares them for a life of Torah scholarship and promotes analytical thinking, it does not necessarily provide the training needed for gainful employment in mainstream Israeli society.

And, while haredim value large families as an expression of a mitzvah from the Torah, as families grow, expenses grow. Despite a modest monthly stipend, the burdens on the wife grow as she tries to meet material needs, and financial troubles often begin, trapping many haredim in poverty.

That's where the new Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Shachar Employment Program comes in.

A project of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), with which UJA Federation of Greater Toronto has a strong relationship, the employment program that bears the Lebovic name will enable 2,000 haredi men to lead their families out of poverty to success through employment. It will also make their transition to the working world "safer" in terms of Haredi cultural codes.

"As a member of the American Joint Distribution Committee, I was told about a number of projects that they were seeking funding for, and I was moved, in particular, by the plight of haredi men," explained Joseph Lebovic. "These are men who are committed to spending their lives studying Torah; and it's not just so that they can learn, but it's so that they can keep connected and in touch with the life they have chosen. Unfortunately, their studying of the Torah doesn't lead to employment. While they receive a stipend from the government, it's not enough to support a family."

While the program was started as a pilot, it proved its worth almost immediately, taking off quickly due to the needs of employers and the needs of haredim.

"The haredi community is not monolithic," explained Solly Kaplinsky, executive director, Overseas Joint Ventures, JDC. "While some sectors really insist upon full-time learning 'forever', others accept that it is a proper way to begin married life, but that eventually one will have to transform into work. As graduates of the haredi educational system, men have often gained excellent analytical skills, but lack basic credentials for employment such as English, mathematics and computer skills."

Thus, when finding a job is absolutely vital to meet their burgeoning financial responsibilities, it is not easy for haredi men to transition quickly while, at the same time, giving up the income of the Kollel stipend. It is often a very difficult choice to make.

The Lebovic gift of U.S. $500,000 will enable 2,000 haredi men to gain the training and education needed to find more lucrative jobs. The American Joint Distribution Committee will secure matching dollars for the program, which will go to prepatory education and skills courses, on the job training, food, monthly salaries, and much more.

The gift from the Lebovics will also benefit the haredim in the following ways:

- It will provide program participants with immediate monthly salaries well above their stipends, reducing the financial pressure on their families.
- It brings together haredi men with Israelis from other sectors of society at work allowing them to interact with each other.
- It will encourage non-haredim to appreciate the haredim as individuals making a positive contribution to Israel.

"It's very important that these men have the chance to learn job skills in a place that is run by other haredi men; a place where they have the proper food required, a place where they are comfortable, as haredi men," said Joseph Lebovic. "This is absolutely vital to their well-being, and I'm glad that we are able to provide this atmosphere where they can transition more easily."

"The vision and compassion displayed by Joseph and Wolf Lebovic never ceases to amaze me," said Ted Sokolsky, CEO and president, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. "While their generosity has helped reshape the Jewish community across the Greater Toronto Area with their gifts to Mount Sinai and the Tomorrow Campaign among many, many others, their commitment to tzedakah and tikkun olam knows no boundaries. Through their gift to the JDC, these men and their families will benefit greatly not only financially, but in terms of their peace of mind."

Some of the haredi men in Israel benefiting from the Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Shachar Employment Program.

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Greater Toronto Area

Peel officer killed in car crash

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A Peel Region police officer who died in a car crash while on duty started life in Moldova and immigrated to Israel as a young man.

Artem (James) Otchakovski never lost his love of nature and the outdoors, which he brought with him from Moldova, said Crissy Samuel, a longtime friend.

Otchakovski, 36, was killed March 2 when his cruiser struck a light standard in Brampton while en route to assist another officer. His car collided with another vehicle before hitting the lamp post. He was the first Peel police officer in 25 years to be killed while on duty.

Otchakovski, who lived in Barrie, was born in Kishinev, but made aliyah in his teens. He lived in Eilat, where he trained as a chef and worked in the hospitality industry. But Otchakovski never felt comfortable in Eilat's desert climate after growing up in a temperate area with mountains and forests, Samuel said.

Artem Otchakovski at a happy moment

At age 20, he left Israel for Canada, "his dream destination." Samuel and her ex-boyfriend had met Otchakovski in Israel, and her onetime boyfriend asked her to "help James out when he came to Canada," she recalled.

"He was 20 years old, but he was a very old soul, very European, very much into the outdoors, hunting and fishing," she said.

Otchakovski was a bird-watcher and back in Moldova, he kept a pet owl. He went on long hikes and despite his love of birds, in Canada he was an avid pheasant hunter. "He was a very atypical Jew," she said.

He was also very focused. "Once he got his papers and was able to work legally, he woke up and said he'll get a job today."

His first job in Canada was as a chef at the Wildfire Steakhouse on Yonge Street and later at Buonanotte, a restaurant at Davenport and Avenue roads.

The *Barrie Examiner* reported Otchakovski was known around his station for handing out recipes and teaching young officers how to cook.

"He's going to be very missed," said his colleague, Sgt. Paul Dhillon. "It's going to be a big loss. Right now, the [other] officers are having a very, very difficult time."

After leaving the restaurant business, Otchakovski took a job for an insurance company and from there moved to Brink's, where he worked for 10 years. It was at Brink's that he met his wife, Erin. They were married four years ago and have a three-year-old son, Owen.

"They're trying to cope, and we're trying to help them cope with it, but it's a life-altering experience," Peel police Chief Mike Metcalf told a news conference. "Obviously, Erin will never get over this."

Samuel, a longtime close friend, recalled "it was James' dream to become a police officer in Canada… He had a huge respect for policing. He thought it was a physical job, which he liked."

Although both his parents are Jewish, "he was not brought up in a typical Jewish home. He was raised in a very secular manner. He considered Judaism more of a nationality." Growing up, he heard stories of the Holocaust from his grandmother, who was a survivor of Nazi camps, Samuel said.

At the end of his life, everything seemed to be falling into place for him. He was happily married, had a son, he had just acquired a new bird dog and he anticipated bringing his mother to Canada from Germany within the year.

"He packed a lot into 36 years," Samuel said.

A full police funeral will be held this week.

A trust fund in support of Otchakovski's family has been established with TD Canada Trust. Donations can be made at any TD Canada Trust branch. Cheque or direct deposits should be made out to "In Trust for the Family of James Otchakovski." The account number is 0159-6529108.

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Special Guest Speaker
Joseph Schlesinger
Award winning Canadian journalist with CBC Television News. Joseph was raised in Czechoslovakia and in 1939 he and his brother were among the 669 children Winton saved. Mr. Schlesinger was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1994.

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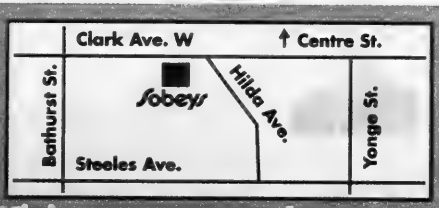

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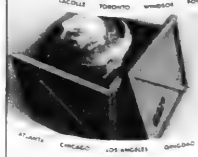
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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

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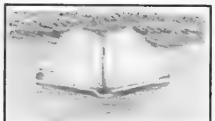
Jewish Life

Checking in, six months later

By RABBI ILYSE GLICKMAN

You may not know this, but there are many people out there who not only celebrate their birthdays, but their "half-birthdays" as well. This is the calendar date precisely six months after their actual date of birth. While I don't do this myself, I do something fairly similar around the time of year in which we presently find ourselves.


Rabbinic Reflections

Every year between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, Jews around the world contemplate their behaviour and actions, and seek reconciliation, forgiveness and peace between themselves and others and with God. The Yamim Nora'im are a time for us to sever the shackles that keep us bound, and to deeply and wholly examine who we are, who we wish to be and what we hope to accomplish in the coming year. While some call them Jewish New Year resolutions, thesepromises and oaths are made publicly and privately. This is a time for tshuvah, a turning to good things, good thoughts and good actions.

But what happens a month or two later? Come November each year, how many among us revert? We're only human, after all. What a daunting task it is for each of us to remember and to undertake what we promised to do for a full year. There's no shame in the fact that most of us require guidance, mentoring, reminders and encouragement when the stakes are so high.

That is why I engage annually in a mid-year check up. Every March (or so), I look inward to gauge how I've been doing and how I am doing. Have I kept up my end of the promises I made six months ago? Have I transformed myself for the better? If not, why not? What, or who, is keeping me from achieving the resolutions I wanted to make? Perhaps I should revisit them, evaluating which are still attainable and which I might not realistically be able to accomplish.

The Jewish New Year falls right around the start of autumn every year. The leaves are changing colour and will soon fall off the trees. Nature is beginning to slow down and hibernate for the winter. Some of us venture outside more sparingly, and many of us engage in a type of hibernation of our own. Today, the season of spring is almost upon us. Life will soon begin to peek through the soil, confirming that warmer days are to come, and before we know it, the sun's summer rays will warm our faces.

I can't think of a better time to check in with ourselves, as our mid-year alarm clock begins to sound. On Rosh Hashanah, we hear the shofar as it wakens us to change. Six months later, we can evaluate these changes with the shofar blasts still resounding in our ears.

This is not the time to press the metaphorical snooze button, but instead to be fully present and alert. Check in with your emotions, your thoughts and behaviours, and your Judaism. Don't be afraid to challenge yourself, but at the same time, don't be afraid to award yourself the gift of forgiveness and encouragement. After evaluating the past six months of your life, permit yourself to accept the mistakes and missteps you have made. That is, after all, what this exercise is for.

Then, stand up tall, take a deep, cleansing breath, and move forward.

Remind yourself that you are capable of remarkable things – because, of course, you are.

Rabbi Ilyse Glickman is spiritual leader of Am Shalom Congregation in Barrie, Ont.

The lessons of Egypt

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

Pesach is around the corner and thoughts of freedom, redemption and – yes – matzah, begin to fill our heads. Yet with all the grandeur of the events, sometimes the subtle moments get obscured. With the intention of increasing our seder discussions, here are some of the more subtle Pesach moments that appear in the midrash.

The Egyptians were slavemasters and very successful economic strategists. In the midrash, it discusses the Egyptian response to the plagues, and at certain times one can't help but be impressed with their attitude. When the plague of locusts hit, the midrash states that the Egyptians tried to find joy in their distress and instructed each other to go out with casks, gather the locusts into the casks and pickle them. This way they would have protein food stored and pickled in casks for whatever might still await them in the plagues ahead. It is for this reason, according to the midrash, that God removed the locusts so that "there remained not even one locust." When God handed them lemons, the Egyptians tried to make lemonade. They were thinking of tomorrow.

Yet Israel did not learn this trait from their Egyptian masters in all the years they spent in Egypt. Suffering blocks out views of tomorrow and thoughts of lemonade are unknown. Israel is crying out in pain and sees no opportunities lying in wait in Egypt. When God is telling Moses to instruct Israel in preparation of leaving Egypt, the text states that God says to Moses, "Speak, please, in the ears of the people and let each man ask of their neighbour and each woman of her neighbour for gold and silver articles." In English, it seems that God is addressing the word "please" to Moses, that he should please speak to Israel. The midrash understands that this would not make sense in that context, and, therefore, attaches the word "please" to Moses beseeching Israel to do this.

In other words, according to the midrash, Israel only wanted to leave. They were focused on the moment at hand and nothing more. In essence, Israel was saying *"Dayainu"* to God – just get us out! God is now telling Moses to implore Israel to ask for valuable articles before they leave. They must begin to think of tomorrow. Freedom has a practical side.

The beautifully subtle message is that what the Egyptians tried to do with the locusts is exactly what God is trying to teach Israel to do – plan for the future, come what may. The focus of the text is not on the lesson itself, but on the teacher of the lesson.

The Jewish lesson introduces what Pirkei Avot will later state so powerfully: "Make for yourself a rav," a teacher.

The world is filled with seemingly profound lessons, and we are often flooded with innovative thoughts. Yet we know that beyond the thought itself, we must always consider the source.

Israel has chosen not to learn from their cruel and inhuman masters. Israel has chosen God as the Master Teacher.

Jewish Life

Israelite inscriptions

By ALEX GROPPER

In my last column I wrote about early Israelite inscriptions and their significance, but only got as far as the 11th century BCE. Yet most of the inscriptions that we have date from the 10th century BCE onward.

Past Forward

These inscriptions are important for obvious reasons, such as illuminating the writings of the Bible. They give us a context for the biblical text and show how widespread literacy was in a particular period.

Most recently, a new translation was made of an inscription excavated in 2008 in the Elah Valley in Israel, the place where David fought Goliath. What has made this translation doubly intriguing is both its dating and content.

The date of the inscription has been tentatively put in the 10th century BCE, roughly the time of David and Solomon, making it one of the earliest alphabetic inscriptions that we have from Israel. But its content is even more fascinating.

During a conference held at the University of Haifa on Jan. 7, Prof. Gershon Galil said that the translation he made of the inscription proved that there was a Davidic kingdom at that time, as well as showing that parts of the Bible were written as early as that period in the 10th century BCE. That's a highly controversial claim.

In his translation, Galil attempts to show that there was already a highly developed ethical and moral component in ancient Hebrew life, since his translation refers to the just treatment of slaves, widows and orphans.

Prior to the Elah Ostracon, the earliest Hebrew inscription was discovered in 1908 at the site of Gezer and is also dated to the 10th century BCE. Known as the Gezer Calendar, it deals with the agricultural cycle. It is written in an early alphabetic script, which indicates that there was literacy in ancient Israel. Although the Gezer Calendar shows no features that would label it as Hebrew, the inscription is generally classified together with early Hebrew inscriptions, but belonging to the northern Israelite or Phoenician variant.

More recently, in 1993, another fascinating inscription was found at the northern Israelite site of Tel Dan, by the legendary archeologist Avraham Biran. The inscription gave even more direct proof of the existence of David. It dates to the ninth century BCE and was probably inscribed to commemorate a victory by the Aramean king, Hazael of Damascus. The inscription appears to celebrate his defeat of the northern kingdom of Israel, as well as the southern kingdom of Judah and its Davidic dynasty.

What made this inscription so important was that it contains the first non-biblical mention of the "House of David." It has proven to be a strong argument against those who doubted the existence of David, especially since it would be difficult to have a Davidic dynasty without a David.

In 1975, an exciting discovery of an eighth century BCE ostracon, or inscribed pottery vessel, was found by archeologist, Ze'ev Meshel in the northern Sinai. The discovery ignited a great deal of controversy. What made this vessel so extraordinary was that it referred to "YHWH and his Asherah," implying that the God of Israel had a consort. It was a phenomenal discovery and seems to indicate that a pure Israelite monotheism was not yet fully developed.

It was a revelation that would be brought home to me a few years later when I was involved in the City of David Excavations in Jerusalem, which were directed by my friend, the late Yigal Shiloh.

Among the vast destruction debris of the First Temple, we found idols in the homes of people living in Jerusalem. It was a vivid reminder of why the prophets foretold the destruction of the city. It also showed me that human nature hadn't changed much in the last 2,500 years.

Food allergies and Passover

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Rivka Leah Schwartz faces year-round challenges in the kitchen. Her kids are sensitive to wheat, eggs and dairy. Her parents have to keep their cholesterol down, and don't eat eggs, and her relatives aren't allowed mushrooms and dried fruit that contains sulfites. If, like Rivka Schwartz, you have family members who must stay away from holiday staples such as nuts, eggs, most matzahs or even wine, you could use some advice. Fortunately, there's plenty on the web.

The Jewish Highway

Schwartz suggests investing in a kosher-for-Pesach steamer and steaming vegetables. Be careful not to fall back on chemical laden foods in your search for convenience. Look out for sulfites in grape juice, wine, raisins and dried fruit. What about Passover breakfasts? She suggests baked apples, baked pears, meringue cookies, cakes made with nuts, matzah and jelly, baked potato or sweet potato. **[bit.ly/psch39]**

Like Schwartz, when Leslie Anivum plans the family seder, she faces more challenges than most mothers. Her son, David, suffers from anaphylactic egg, nut, peanut and fish allergies. "My seder doesn't look all that different from anyone else's," she told the *Hartford Courant*. "I've just learned to adapt the ingredients." Anivum uses apricot butter or applesauce as a substitute for eggs in desserts and cookies, leaves nuts out of the charoset, uses regular rather than egg matzah and skips fish dishes altogether. **[bit.ly/psch10]**

For many years, wheat was virtually the only flour used in commercial matzah. Standard wheat matzah and other staples can be a minefield for people allergic to wheat. However, the Torah also allows matzahs to be made from barley, rye, oats and spelt.

And as Lisa Mandl points out, Passover time can actually be a "gluten-free gold mine" for people sensitive to wheat. Foods that are "non-gebrochts" are certified to be completely free of wheat, as well as spelt, barley, oats or rye. Now is the perfect time to stock up on specially formulated cakes, desserts, pancake mixes, even gluten-free kneidel mixes that can be enjoyed year-round. **[bit.ly/psch12]**

If you'd prefer to bake from scratch, here are some recipes for flourless Passover desserts. **[bit.ly/psch13]**

And then there is the "nut" problem. Michael Kesztenbaum says that "ground nuts are used in many Pesach cakes to replace the flour and work with the matzah meal to give the pudding flavour and texture." People with nut allergies use olive oil exclusively, because they are concerned that vegetable oils include nut oils. On the other hand, many manufacturers are becoming more sensitive and are beginning to offer more nut-free Passover products. **[bit.ly/ psch40]** Here are recipes for nut-free charoset, sponge cake, matzah balls and Passover pizza. **[bit.ly/psch14]**

Joe Regenstein adds this piece of advice for people scouring food labels for forbidden ingredients: "Consumers should not assume that kosher markings ensure the absence of trace amounts of the ingredient to which they are allergic." A professor of food science, he recommends "that the very allergic consumer consider purchasing cases of product and testing each product in small amounts first before allowing unrestricted access. A new lot of the product – a different "code" – should be treated as a new product." **[bit.ly/psch15]**

Although it is not an "allergy," one of the staples of the seder, wine, is off limits for recovering alcoholics. In order to remove the temptation, Rabbi Meir Kessler of Boca Raton, Fla., hosts one of many "sober seders" held in North America. **[bit.ly/psch16]** "The seder has a whole different meaning for a recovering addict who is trying to leave his own personal Egypt," says Rabbi Kessler. **[bit.ly/psch17]**

Next week, Passover for diabetics and people watching their waistline.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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דער זינגער פון אומקום אין דער אַנוואַנער פון אירפּקום
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אַברהם סוצקעווער, פּאָרטיזאַן, פּאָעט, און עדות קענען די נאַציס בייַ דער נורנבערג משפּט, איז אָוועק פון אונדז יאַנואַר 20, 2010. סוצקעווער איז געווען אונדזער זינגער פון אומקום אין דער אַנוואַנער פון אירפּקום. אין פּעסטשטעלן אָט דעם אמת פּאָרשטייען מיר אַרץ אַז אין יידן דיכטונג איז אומקום אין אירפּקום אַ מין "נעוועטיק קאָד" וואָס מען קען נישט פונאַנדערקריגן. סיביר, ווילנע אין ארץ- ישראל זיינען די דריי עקן וואָס מען נעמט אין יידן פּאָעזיע. סיביר וואָס אָט אים איינעווייקלט זיינע קינדער יאָרן אין דעם וועלט פון קולטור און אין דער פּאָליטיק פון אַ נייעם דיכטערישן דור –וויע ווילנע–וואָס איז צעשמעטערט געוואָרן אין היטלערס גיהנום, אין ישראל וואָס האָט סימבאָליזירט פֿאַר סוצקעווערן זיין באַזיצונג–זיין המשכדיקייט.

אין ישראל איז ער אין ניכן נעקומען צום וויטיקדיקע פֿאַרשטאַנד אַז זיין שיקזאַל וויי אַ יידישער פּאָעט העגנט אויף אַ האָר...אַז זיין דיכטערישע שליחות, פֿאַרמירט אין פּייַער פון חורבן, איז צו "געדענקען די טויטע און וויי אויפֿלעבן דורך קראַפֿט פון פּאָעטישן וואָרט." ער האָט אויך פֿאַרשטאַנען אַז דאָס וועט נישט גרינג אָנקומען אין אַ לאַנד וואָס קערט זיך אָוועק פון מאַמע לשון. אין זיין גרינדונג פון דער ליטעראַרישער ציטשטרפּט "די גאַלדענע קייט" האָט ער אויפֿגענומען וואָרט שמיד מיט אַ בישוף מאַכערס קראַפֿט נעענדן אָכט אַז די וועלט וואָל נאָך אַ מאָל הערן דעם ברום פון יידיש. אָט ליינט:

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וואָל איך וויי אברהם
איס ברהרשאַפֿט צוהאָקן אָלע נעצן?
וואָל איך זיך אַ לעבעדקער לאָזן איבערוועצן?
וואָל איך איינפֿלאַנצן מיין צונג
אין תּורהן ביז פּאַרוואַנדלען
וועט זי זיך אין אָבותדיקע
ראָשטיקעס מיט מאַנדלען?
וואָס פּאַר אַ קאַטאָוועסדיקע
חיצן
דרשנט מיין פּאָעזיע-ברודער מיט די באַקנבאַרדן,
אַז מיין מאַמע-לשון גייט באַלד אונטער?
מיר וועלן נאָך אין הונדערט יאָר אַרום רַא קענטיק זיצן
אין פּירן די דיסקוסיע בייַ דעם ירדן.
וויל אַ שאָלה נאָכמאַכן אין נאָכלם:
אויב עד וויס נעמיר חז
די תּפילה פון בערדיטשעווער,
יהואָשפֿ ליד
און קולבאַקס
וואָגלט
צו דעם אונטערנאַנג–
טאָ וואָל עד מיר, אַ שטיינער,
אָנזיין וווהין די שפּראַך גייט אונטער?
אפֿשר בייַ דעם כותל מערבי?
אויב אַזוי, וועל איך דאָרט קומען,
עפּענען דאָס מויל
און וויי אַ לייב
אָנגעסאָן אין פּייערדיקן צונטער,
איינשליינען דעם לשון וואָס גייט אונטער.
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info@cjnews.com

Islamic radicalism called temporary

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Though Islamic fundamentalism is riding high today, it may be a thing of the past in the future, an American political commentator and academic said last week.

Calling radical Islam a "temporary" phenomenon and only "one version of Islam," Daniel Pipes suggested it may well be supplanted by moderate Islam further down the road.

Daniel Pipes

"What appears eternal is transient," said Pipes, the founder and director of Middle East Forum, a conservative think tank, and Campus Watch, which monitors scholarship on the Middle East.

"Things will change," he added. "The wheel will turn."

Pipes' thesis was disputed by Wafa Sultan, a Muslim born and raised in Syria who immigrated to the United States in 1989 and is now a naturalized U.S. citizen residing in Los Angeles.

A psychiatrist and author, she claimed that moderate Islam is merely a "smokescreen" designed to conceal the radical nature of Islam.

Declaring that Islam is neither moderate nor peaceful, Sultan observed, "We can't reform Islam, but we can reform Muslims."

This process has begun and will take a few generations, but only Muslims can defeat radical Islam, said Sultan, who has criticized Muslim societies for treating non-Muslim minorities badly and not recognizing the accomplishments of its Jewish citizens.

Pipes and Sultan made their respective comments at an informal debate March 3 at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation sponsored by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies.

Pipes, a scholar who holds a Harvard University PhD in Islamic history and has taught there as well, noted with alarm that some western countries are becoming "Shariah-law friendly" under the influence of radical Muslims.

He cited Britain as an example.

Positing "an alternative" to radical Islam, Pipes said there are "plenty" of moderate Muslims.

He cited Tahir ul-Qadri, a prominent Islamic scholar who recently issued a fatwa urging young Muslims to reject extremism and notions of "martyrdom."

Claiming that many Muslims oppose Shariah law, Pipes said they need the help of non-Muslims to resist Islamic encroachments.

"We have to encourage them and say, 'You are the true Muslims.'"

Radical Islam is the problem, while moderate Islam is the solution, he went on to say.

"To ignore moderates is to ignore the only real solution to the problem," said Pipes, who has contributed to the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Jerusalem Post*.

Quoting an Egyptian Muslim cleric, Pipes likened Islam to the multitude of products in a supermarket. "You can choose whichever [one] you desire."

Pipes described the present Muslim period, with its eruptions of radical Islam, as a bleak one. But he reminded his audience that the Muslim world was a haven for persecuted Jewish refugees prior to 1945. "Things may well reverse themselves. Who knows? Things change over time."

Sultan, who has called herself a Muslim who does not adhere to Islam, was not as hopeful as Pipes.

Having described Islam as a religion and political ideology, Sultan claimed that its objective, as stated in the Qur'an, is to rule the universe under Shariah law.

"That's the essence of Islam, a theologically driven ideology," said Sultan, the author of *A God Who Hates: The Courageous Woman Who Inflamed the Muslim World Speaks Out Against the Evils of Radical Islam*, published last year.

No less a person than the current prime minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is of the view that the phrase "moderate Islam" is offensive to Islam.

There is only one brand of Islam, she said, referring to Islamic radicalism.

Surveying the arc of Islamic history, Sultan noted that Muhammad, the prophet, was a "Jew hater," and that Jews and Christians could only live in Muslim lands on sufferance, provided they paid special taxes and recognized the primacy of Islam.

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U of T honours dental fraternity

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The Alpha Omega dental fraternity is a cradle to grave type of organization.

"We say Alpha Omega will be there for you. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last," said Sheryl Lipton, the president of the fraternity's Toronto chapter. "We'll be there from the beginning of [our members' dental] careers to the end."

The fraternity, which will be honoured March 27 by the University of Toronto's faculty of dentistry, is an international organization of dentists. It offers support to new dentists and students entering the field, has programs for older professionals and is involved in charity work. This year, through their global oral health initiative, Alpha Omega is participating in building a dental clinic in Nicaragua and is continuing to support its Dental Volunteers for Israel program, which helps operate a dental clinic in Jerusalem.

"People feel we should be not only helping Jewish causes, but also [engaging in] tikkun olam, to repair the world," said Lipton, who became Toronto chapter last June. "This is part of what Alpha Omega does… We have a strong charitable and philanthropic component."

This is also part of the reason that Alpha Omega will be honoured by U of T.

The fraternity's Toronto chapter will be one of three recipients of the university's Award of Distinction, which celebrates individuals or groups that have made a difference in the field of dentistry. The two other recipients are also Alpha Omega members, and so is David Mock, the dean of the faculty of dentistry at U of T.

While Mock wasn't involved in the decision to honour Alpha Omega, he has been a member since 1964.

Sheryl Lipton

"[Alpha Omega] creates an ethic of what health-care practitioners should be doing. They introduce, even though it's not limited to Jewish students, a Judaic ethic… of caring, of tikkun olam," he said. "[The group] provides mentorship with seasoned practitioners. They also provide some ongoing… mentoring."

Mock commended the organization for its charitable work in Toronto, which includes contributions to dental clinics such as the one at Mount Sinai Hospital, as well as two financial awards given to U of T students, one through the university and one through Alpha Omega.

For Lipton, providing support to dental students is a crucial part of her work at Alpha Omega. As Toronto chapter president, she helped create a new mentorship program that pairs new dentists or students with dental professionals.

"We're trying to meet the needs of our young graduates," she said.

Lipton was also involved in creating a program that supports dentists age 50 and older.

"We're trying to meet everyone's needs as best we can," she said.

Lipton has been practising dentistry for 28 years. She was offered the presidency 12 years ago, but declined because her three daughters were too young.

"Alpha Omega means so much to me. It was important to accept the role as president," she said, adding that she's been involved with the group since she graduated from U of T in 1982.

The 2010 Awards of Distinction gala will be held March 27 at the Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton Centre Hotel. Cocktails are at 6 p.m. and dinner is at 7 p.m. Tickets, which include dinner, are $250. For tickets, call 416-979-4940, ext. 1, or visit www.utoronto.ca/denstistry/gala.

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About Hazzan Shalowitz

• He began singing at the age of 10 as a child soloist in various High Holy Day choirs throughout the Chicago area as well as on recordings, radio and television.

• Wrote, narrated and produced 4 television programs for the Jewish [illegible] which have aired on St. Louis television for over 12 years: The Sound of the Shofar, The Light of the Menorah, The Cup of Elijah, The Scroll of Esther

• Won the national Telly Award in 2000 as co-host of the weekly television show "See/Hear"

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A CHARITABLE CUT: Jessica Kline, 11, saved her hair for six years and donated it to Zichron Menachem, a non-profit organization that operates in 12 hospitals throughout Israel assisting children being treated for cancer and providing such things as camps and outings free of charge. Jessica donated her hair in honour of her grandfather, Yacov Springer, who has cancer and is a Holocaust survivor.

Schwartz to compete in three Paralympic events

Continued from page 3

"I figured I'll just try it for one year," she says. "Then I showed up at the Ontario championships and won two golds. I was absolutely shocked."

The terms used for competitions can vary: disabled, adaptive, para-alpine. But what is certain is that the races are as fast and challenging as those in non-disabled skiing, though, as in the Paralympic Games, scores are sometimes equalized to create a level playing field between skiers with different disabilities.

Several key wins led Schwartz to the World Cup of para-alpine skiing in Italy this January, and there, she qualified to represent Canada at the 2010 Paralympic Games. Even before qualifying in December, she was also chosen to carry the Olympic torch at Blue Mountain resort, near Collingwood.

Between March 13 and 20, she plans to compete in three out of five Paralympic events: slalom, giant slalom and super-G – a cross between slalom and downhill that gives athletes only a single chance to complete a faster run than other slalom events, with up to 30 tricky direction changes. Paralympic skiers compete on the same courses as Olympic women's teams.

"It's thrilling to watch," says Schwartz's father, Jay, who, along with other family members and friends, will be cheering on his daughter in person in British Columbia. He'd be "thrilled to death" to see his daughter place in the top 10 this year, but, "as long as she doesn't hurt herself, I'm happy."

Realistically, Schwartz is excited just to be competing this year. Her goal isn't the podium – yet. "I'm not in the top 10… I know that there are a lot of people better than me."

But her coach believes she has a shot at a medal in the next games, and that's what Schwartz has set her sights on. "Everything I can do this year is working toward 2014."

Melanie Schwartz

When she's not skiing, Schwartz enjoys giving back to organizations that helped her get her start, like the War Amps CHAMP program for child amputees. She's also taught skiing to disabled kids: she started working as an instructor with Ontario Track 3 as soon as she turned 17. She's sorry that she hasn't been able to teach in the past few years because she's competing most of the winter.

Though competition has meant putting her computer career largely on hold to train and compete all winter, she's found some balance by continuing the basic pattern that began with a co-op program in university. It alternated four months of study with four months of work. Now, her schedule is more like "ski in the winter, work in the summer."

"I am my own biggest motivation," Schwartz says. "What drives me most now is challenging myself to become better. I can look back and see that I've improved a lot, or look forward and see how much more there is to learn… and when you do get it, the feeling is fantastic."

You can watch ongoing coverage of para-alpine and other 2010 Paralympic events, including video interviews with Schwartz and other athletes, at http://www.ctvolympics.ca/paralympics, http://www.youtube.com/paralympicsporttv or http://www.paralympicsport.tv.

Rabbis see little action at Vancouver Olympics

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — The multifaith centres inside the athletes' villages in Whistler and Vancouver were heavily underused during the Olympics, according to Rabbi Shmuel Birnham, rabbi of Congregation Har El on the North Shore of Vancouver.

Rabbi Birnham was asked to be the Jewish clergyman on the Winter Olympics' multifaith committee, which included Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist clergy.

"Apparently a number of groups brought their own ministers or priests along," he said. "That makes sense, because for those who are religious, the athletes don't want any kind of change in their routine. Looking for an inner connection with a new pastor is not the easiest thing."

Rabbi Birnham had asked eight rabbis in the Vancouver area to cover different times during the Games, and he said that although the rabbis interacted with Israeli athletes at the various public forums, there wasn't much need for their services.

"That's fine," he said. "You prepare for a disaster, and when you don't have to use the disaster packet, you're happy."

Games organizers had informed the multifaith committee that approximately one per cent of the participants in the Winter Olympics would seek assistance from the multifaith clergy, which, for the rabbis, translated to roughly 30 Jewish people in each village.

Although their services weren't needed, Rabbi Birnham said having access to the athletes' villages was a wonderful experience.

"It was great to wander around and feel the atmosphere," he says.

"In the interfaith community of Vancouver, new relationships were created and old relationships were rekindled and deepened. I know that things will be happening in the interfaith world in Vancouver as a result of this."

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The New Israel Fund of Canada has provided emergency assistance to the Aguda and the First Narayever Congregation has joined NIFC in this effort with a major gift from its tzedakah fund.

Haitian quake victim's body finally found

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — After seven agonizing weeks for the family, the remains of Alexandre Bitton, the only Jewish Canadian killed in the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, were finally recovered March 2 in the rubble of the Hotel Montana, his mother confirmed last Friday.

When found, he was the only Canadian still missing at the completely levelled Port-au-Prince hotel.

"They know it's him because they found him in his room with all his papers on him," Jocelyne Bitton told *The CJN* last Friday. "He had his passport on him, his wallet on him with all his credit cards, so from what the RCMP is telling us, they are sure it is him."

Alexandre Bitton

Still, while some closure came in knowing Bitton had been found, the family – still upset over what they said was a lack of co-operation by Foreign Affairs officials in keeping them informed about Bitton's whereabouts – remained frustrated by delays in getting a necessary dental-record match done to absolutely confirm his identity.

"The coroner's team was there on Thursday," Jocelyne Bitton said last week, "but they changed people and they won't be back at work until Sunday. The test won't take place until Monday [March 8], and we hope to have [the confirmation] by the middle of the week.

"I don't understand why the team couldn't wait one more day," she continued. "The waiting was hard for seven weeks, but this week it is unbearable, knowing he is found but cannot be put to rest."

She said the family's sense of relief in finally knowing her son's fate was tempered by the awareness that all hope is now gone.

"This is the news we were waiting for, but didn't want to hear," she said. "We were getting desperate that he wouldn't be found at all. Even in our head if we knew he was probably dead, there was a glimmer of hope. Now there's none."

She said it's not yet known whether any family member or other member of the community would travel to Haiti to facilitate the return of her son's body to Montreal.

Ironically, Jocelyne's husband, Ralph Bitton, once supervised a sports-study program at Antoine-de-St-Exupery High School in Montreal's east end that had included the participation of Olympic figure skating bronze medallist Joannie Rochette, whose mother, Therese, died suddenly in Vancouver just before her daughter was to compete. Jocelyne said her husband and Rochette stayed in touch on Facebook, but she didn't know whether Rochette was aware of what had happened to her former teacher's son.

Montreal man leaves wife, two-year-old son

"Ralph didn't want to add to her pain by informing her," Jocelyne said.

According to Shaare Zedek Congregation's Rabbi Alan Bright, a friend of the family who has been in regular contact, there is a general consensus among religious authorities that mourning can begin once a body is recovered and identified.

Bright married Bitton and his wife, Line Dufresne, at his shul in August 2009, and they have a two-year-old son, Joshua.

Bitton, 36, was an Internet technology consultant and was on his first trip to Haiti on business with a colleague, who was just outside the hotel when it collapsed. The colleague survived.

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Dr. Abramson graduated in medicine from the University of Toronto. She holds fellowships in internal medicine from the American College of Physicians, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in both internal medicine and cardiology and is a fellow of the American College of Cardiology.

Her present position is director of the cardiac prevention and rehab centre and women's cardiovascular health in the division of cardiology at St. Michael's Hospital. She is associate professor of the department of medicine at the University of Toronto. Her major research interests include prevention of coronary disease in both men and women, evaluation of women's cardiac health needs and the role of female sex hormones in the cardiovascular system.

She is a national spokesperson for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, as well as a member of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society. She spends much of her time educating the public on heart health and prevention.

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U.S. appears naive as Syria courts Iran

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

In "Fanning the winds of war" (*Winnipeg Free Press*, March 2), Samuel Segev wrote about how, following the appointment of Robert Ford as the first U.S. ambassador to Syria in five years, the Obama administration was counting on Damascus to distance itself from Tehran and to stop arms transfers to Hezbollah. However, neither is remotely likely to happen. As a result, the United States appears to be naive about the influence it can yield.

Syrian President Bashar Assad "has no incentive to weaken his ties to Tehran," Segev noted. "On the contrary, he believe[s] his continued ties to Tehran would only increase his value and would increase the American incentives." (Ford will assume his posting following U.S. Senate confirmation, which seems assured. Yet, apart from his presence lending prestige to Assad's regime, it's not clear what the United States gains.)

Assad underscored this determination to stand by Iran by hosting a summit late last month with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah – a meeting that featured prominent denunciations of both U.S. Mideast policy and, of course, Israel. Moreover, in response to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's calls on Damascus to free itself from Iran's grip, Assad increased not only the quantity of Iranian arms transfers to Hezbollah but also their quality, including advanced surface-to-surface missiles.

Segev quoted Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, who spoke in Washington on Feb. 26: "Lebanon is a member of the UN and is also now a member of the UN Security Council. But Lebanon has also a 'private' army [Hezbollah], not subordinated to the state, and this militia has an arsenal of 45,000 missiles and rockets that can hit targets anywhere in Israel. We cannot accept this."

Israeli analysts have expressed surprise that the United States has been under some sort of illusion that Syria could be pried away from its alliance with Iran. They point out that during previous negotiations with Israel, Syria never indicated its willingness to break this bond. So why not take Syria at its word?

Assad is not the only one to assert his ties with Iran. Damascus-based Hamas head Khaled Meshal has been moving closer to Iran. Following the Damascus summit, he was Ahmadinejad's guest of honour in Tehran at a conference on "Islamic and National Solidarity with the Palestinian People," during which calls for Israel's destruction figured prominently. Hamas policy has consequently become even more extreme (Meshal, for instance, has renounced previous talk of a long-term truce along the 1967 borders with Israel).

Into this toxic assembly of Assad, Meshal and Nasrallah – with Ahmadinejad and gang close at hand – Ford plans to inject his presence. And this comes at a time that the international community, including foremost the UN, has all but given up on pursuing Assad as the prime suspect in the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri, the event that prompted the United States to pull its ambassador from Damascus.

Providing an ostensibly different perspective, in "Report: Syria willing to consider gradual approach to peace" (*Ha'aretz*, March 2), Akiva Eldar related how Gabrielle Rifkind, a "conflict resolution specialist" with the Oxford Research Group, told him that according to Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem, whom she met in Damascus last December, Syria is serious about peace with Israel. This would involve stages of Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for a "form of normalization" according to Rifkind. This of course sounds very encouraging to western ears.

Yet on the crucial issue of Syria's ties with Iran and Hezbollah, Eldar wrote: "[Muallem] said that [Syria] will not negotiate any change in its relationship with Hezbollah and Hamas until after the Golan is returned. 'Key questions, such as Syria's support for Hamas, Hezbollah and its policy to Iran, would only be answered after withdrawal,' [Muallem] said."

Only after Israeli withdrawal?

In short, enough said.

* * *

Not to be missed – from the *Economist*'s Feb. 27 "Lexington" column about U.S. President Barack Obama's policy of relying on drone attacks in Pakistan:

"For some reason, his habit of blowing up alleged terrorists and bystanders from the air causes less global outrage than the smothering of a lone Hamas operative, allegedly by Israel, in a hotel room in Dubai."

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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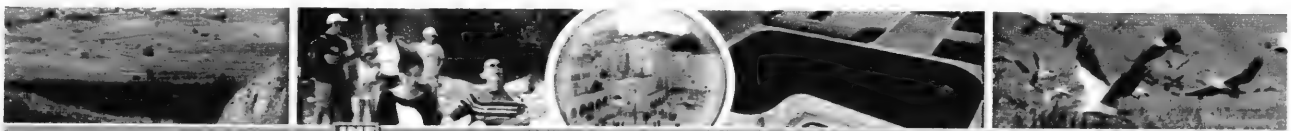

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Throne speech backs Holocaust memorial

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The federal government will support legislation to create a national Holocaust memorial in Ottawa.

In the speech from the throne last week, the government announced: "It supports the establishment of a national monument to the victims of communism and it will support legislation to establish a national Holocaust memorial."

The memorial will be created under terms of a private member's bill that has already passed first reading and is heading for committee, said Thornhill MP Peter Kent, junior minister for foreign affairs.

"We have a variety of Holocaust memorials on a smaller scale," Kent said. "A national memorial somewhere in the National Capital Region will be appropriate."

The bill, now called An Act to Establish a National Holocaust Monument, was first proposed by former Thornhill MP Susan Kadis after it was suggested by Thornhill resident Laura Grossman. It is now being sponsored by Edmonton-area MP Tim Uppal, Kent said.

"It's a wonderful gesture by the prime minister to include it in the speech from the throne," he said.

Kent expects the bill to pass quickly, as it has all-party support. Once enacted, the National Capital Commission will designate a location and call for designs. "No federal money will go to it. It would be funded privately. That's a minor challenge," he said.

In another announcement, the throne speech said the government would take steps to streamline the process under which war criminals are brought to justice.

"Our government will also introduce legislation to speed up the revocation of citizenship of those who have concealed their war crimes," the throne speech stated.

The legislation "will provide for an expedited consideration and decision process which will remove some of the legal foot-dragging and delay tactics," Kent said, including the process in cabinet, where the revocation occurs.

The speech from the throne, in a section on immigration, said that "our government will introduce legislation to establish Pier 21 in Halifax – the site where so many began their Canadian journey – as Canada's national museum of immigration."

Government to streamline process to bring war criminals to justice

Jewish organizations are currently working on a memorial that will appear at the site documenting the policy that turned away Jewish refugees on board the St. Louis, sending them back to Europe where many were killed.

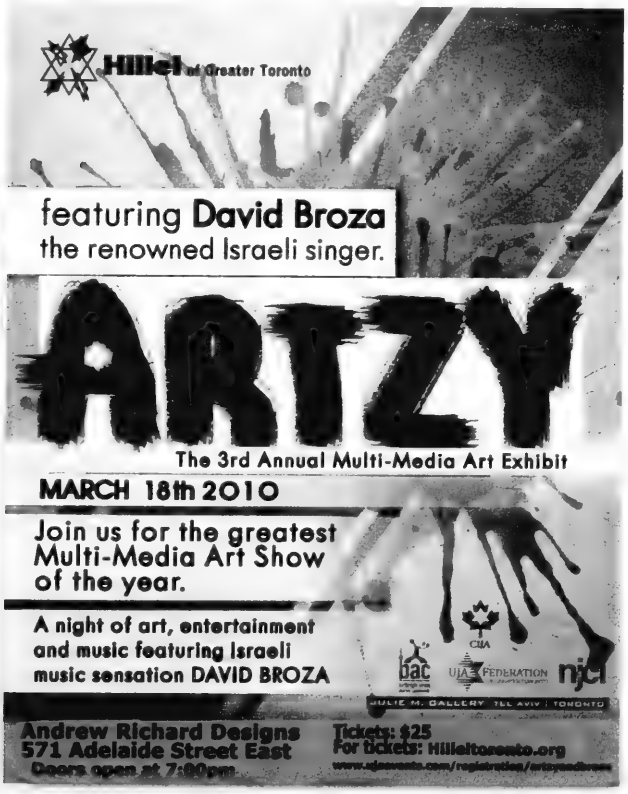
Canadian Jewish Congress lauded the throne speech's announcements on immigrants.

"Today's throne speech had a proper mixture of both justice and memory in dealing with past crimes, the need for justice to be done and the importance of remembrance," said Congress CEO Bernie Farber.

"We are heartened by the government's decision to introduce legislation that will speed up the revocation of citizenship of those who concealed their war crimes in order to gain Canadian citizenship. In particular, we hope that this legislation will finally bring to justice Nazi enabler Helmut Oberlander, a translator for a mobile killing unit during World War II that murdered tens of thousands of people, the majority of which were Jews. The Canadian Jewish community awaits the decision by cabinet in regard to Mr. Oberlander's denaturalization and deportation. It is important that the words of the throne speech now be put into action," Farber said.

Peter Kent

"We are very encouraged by the government's decision to establish a national Holocaust memorial. Congress has long advocated for such a memorial to help future generations recognize humanity's capacity for evil. With such understanding comes hope for the future," he added.



Coast to Coast

AMOS system helps 'defuse the confusion'

Continued from page 1

"Once the threat is identified, the system tells the pilot on the monitor what is the immediate action he has to take, and the scenarios are presented to him based on models of terrorists who went on board and carried with them residuals of explosives, biological or chemical agents."

Not only does the AMOS system provide information about an imminent threat, "it defuses the confusion. AMOS tells the pilot on the monitor you must do A, B and C," Raif said.

The responses, he continued, are based on Israeli experiences with counterterrorism.

Though AMOS was designed with flights in mind, it can be adapted to other "means of mass transportation, including trains, cruise ships and [subways]."

Raif, who served in the Israeli consulate in Toronto from 1976 to 1981, said the AMOS system was developed to allow airlines to comply with a 2007 directive from the U.S. Federal Aviation Authority that required air crews be discreetly informed in flight of potentially dangerous situations.

"We are the only company dealing with aircraft cabin security," he said. "We are not competing with airport security. We complement it."

The system would have detected the underwear bomber, who passed successfully through airport security but assembled his dangerous concoction of explosive chemicals on board.

Although it has been under development for a few years and a prototype is expected by the end of 2010, AMOS is still seeking new investors for a cash infusion to further develop the product, Raif said.

The company was created by a number of Israelis with experience in the country's security establishment. CEO Shmuel Sasson is the former director of the security division of El Al Israel Airlines. He also retired recently from the Israel Security Agency, also known as Shin Bet, where he held the equivalent rank of brigadier general.

Lotan Lior is former commander of the Israel Defence Forces' hostage unit and counterterrorism unit, and Gil Shavit is an engineer with expertise in advanced digital video applications.

Israeli Consul General Amir Gissin said AMOS further demonstrates "the fact that Israel is a world leader in the area of civil aviation security. That's something coming to the awareness of many countries and it adds positively to the way people look at what Israel has to offer. It's a real technical achievement."

Raif said he expects the cost of the onboard system to run between $330,000 and $500,000 (US) per aircraft, "not much for a plane worth $150 million to $200 million" and much less than the $3.5-million cost of a single entertainment system.

"No airline will refuse," he predicted.

CHAT team wins mock trial event

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Grade 12 mock trial team from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy's Kimel Centre placed first in the York Region Judge's Cup Competition.

The annual tournament is open to all high schools in York Region and held in the real courtrooms of the Newmarket Court. Judges of the Ontario and Superior Courts of Justice preside over the moots and judge the event.

This year, 22 schools took part, and TanenbaumCHAT was judged to be the best for 2010. In addition to the team victory, two students also won individual prizes. Yoni Taylor won the Ontario Justice Education Network's award for advocacy and Jordyn Benatar won the most prestigious award of the event – most valuable player.

Mock trial competitions give students the opportunity to participate in a simulated criminal trial using a case created by the Ontario Bar Association. They play the roles of lawyers and witnesses, and engage in the actual processes conducted in a criminal trial, including direct and cross examinations, and opening and closing statements.

Teams must prepare to play both Crown and defence, as the decision of what side they'll take is made as the result of a coin toss a few minutes prior to each moot.

This year's mock trial team was composed of students Jordyn Benatar (witness), Oron Eli (lawyer), Josh Fluxgold (strategist), Josh Freedman (strategist), Eric Frydrych (strategist), Jeremy Halpern (lawyer), Sarah Navy (strategist), Adam Rivietz (witness), Maury Rubin (strategist), Miera Srebrolow (lawyer), Jody Steinman (strategist) and Yoni Taylor (lawyer). Lynne Howard is the coach.

The students began preparing for the competition in October, and they're preparing for their second competition this spring.

On Campus

UWO students receive threatening messages

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Several students at the University of Western Ontario received threatening messages last week after starting a Facebook group against Israeli Apartheid Week.

The students, who started or participated in a group called UWO Students Against Israeli Apartheid Week, were sent anonymous messages from a "fake" Facebook account, which means the subscriber used a false identity and a picture of someone other than himself/herself on the page. One of the messages stated that the student should, "Watch your actions next week, young lady. You don't want to be hurt."

Dana Gold, a member of Israel on Campus at UWO, along with two other students, reported the messages to the university campus police last Sunday.

"I went to a party that night. I got home, I was about to go to sleep, at 3 a.m. I got [the message]. I didn't know who it was from, it was telling me to watch my back, I was scared," said Gold, adding that the Facebook group was set up to help Jewish students deal with IAW on campus.

The group, which has more than 400 members and is separate from Israel on Campus, had information about anti-IAW initiatives and suggestions about how to deal with any IAW concerns.

"It wasn't anything hateful. It was just showing students how to deal with [IAW]," Gold said.

"I feel intimidated walking on campus, not only because I'm a Jew but because [the person who wrote the message] knows what we look like."

Campus police don't believe that the messages were sent by a UWO student, but they are investigating the incident, said Helen Connell, the university's associate vice-president of communications and public affairs.

"I can totally appreciate how disturbing [the messages] were… Our campus police are taking this very seriously, and there is an investigation underway," she said, adding that campus police work in co-operation with the London city police and make a point of speaking to student groups before events such as IAW.

"I'm sure it's a challenging time for some people, because what we have here is a week when people are expressing viewpoints that are offensive to some people and difficult for them to hear," Connell said. "Universities are places where we promote free speech. That does not override the right of every person who studies… on this campus to feel safe."

During IAW, Israel on Campus organized a lecture by Khaled Abu Toameh, an Israeli Arab journalist, and ran information sessions. Jewish students, separate from Israel on Campus, also organized a pro-Israel rally at the university.

Students at York University started a new campaign last week to counter IAW. Hasbara at York, along with Christians United for Israel and StandWithUs, a pro-Israel campus group, launched their Israel Under Fire campaign, which aimed to raise awareness about Israel and the Israel Defence Forces through information tables and daily prayers for the safety of Israeli soldiers.

The campaign, which ran from March 1 to 4, was well received, said Naomi Samuel, Hasbara's vice-president of public relations.

"The first day of our campaign we witnessed incredible unity among Jewish and pro-Israel students on campus," she said, adding that this initiative is a different approach for Hasbara.

"Hasbara at York is doing everything it can to counter the anti-Semitism and anti-Israel propaganda that will be flooding York University throughout the week," she said. "We decided to take a different approach to promoting and defending Israel through standing in solidarity with the Israel Defence Forces… our goal is to empower the Jewish and pro-Israel community at York."

According to Keith Marnoch, York's associate director of media relations, there were no major incidents during IAW last week.

"All the events that various groups had intended to run have gone without a hitch. There hasn't really been anything out of the ordinary," he said, adding that York security was visible in Vari Hall last week, where most of the information tables were set up.

"We have had a few more security [guards] visible in the Vari Hall area, not so much to intimidate but more to manage… the people who have set up tables and so on," he said.

Winnipeg JSA/Hillel counter IAW

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Winnipeg's first Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) will take place at University of Manitoba at the same time that JSA/Hillel will be running Israel Awareness Week activities that were scheduled and planned months ago.

The Jewish Federation of Winnipeg only learned at the end of February that U of M would be taking part in IAW March 8 to 12.

"It is possible that the organizers of IAW timed their events to take place during the same week we have scheduled our events," Bob Freedman, the CEO of the Jewish federation, said in a phone interview, adding that he didn't know for sure.

"Samantha Loxton, [director of JSA/Hillel] has been in contact with the Muslim Students Association, and they have assured us that, unlike what has been the case in other cities, they are not backing this event. Their name is not listed as a sponsor on the IAW website," Freedman said.

Bob Freedman

The main sponsors for IAW in Winnipeg are the local chapters of Canada-Palestine Support Network (CanPalNet), Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) and ActLeft, a student group at the University of Manitoba.

JSA/Hillel is putting on two pro-Israel events on the U of M campus during the week in question. These include a talk by Israeli-Arab law professor Mohammed Wattad on March 8, and a day where students will be setting up a shuk, or open market, March 11, with free giveaways, falafel, information and video clips that showcase the beauty and culture of Israel and the country's business, medical and technological achievements.

When asked about security for Wattad's lecture, Freedman said, "We are relying on university campus security and have raised the issue of security with U of M."

Freedman also raised the issue of ensuring that IAW activities do not lead to harassment of pro-Israel students. In a letter dated Feb. 26, he wrote to U of M president David Barnard: "We trust that the university will ensure a safe environment for all students so that freedom of expression can occur, without repression, without intimidation or worry for both sides of the equation."

John Danakas, the director of public affairs at U of M, told *The CJN* in an e-mail that U of M will "respond promptly to behaviours that constitute discrimination, harassment or represent a violation to Canada's laws.

"We will continue to monitor [IAW] closely, and please be assured that maintaining a safe and respectful environment for our students, faculty and staff remains a priority for the University of Manitoba."

In addition to events at U of M, JSA/Hillel also planned two activities off-campus – a hooka night March 9 at an eatery where students can get a taste of Israel, and The Israeli-Palestinian Comedy Tour show that took place at the West End Cultural Centre the week before IAW.

As for responding to IAW, Freedman said JSA/Hillel will have students at every IAW event to "monitor the events, but not to disrupt.

"Our student leadership is disciplined, and they know how to conduct themselves… If a student asks us about attending an IAW event, we will tell them to go if they are interested, and if there is something they feel ought to be questioned, then they ought to do so in an appropriate fashion. We don't want any Jewish students or any people from the Jewish community who aren't students disrupting or starting any kind of outburst or riot."

The federation also plans to have staff at the university on different days, Freedman said, and he himself will be going to U of M during IAW.

"We will be there in a supportive role," he said, adding he estimates that about a dozen pro-Israel professors will make themselves visible that week.

"Their job won't be to counter IAW, but to be supportive of our students," he said.

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York taking 'disciplinary measures' against student

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

York University is investigating a student who allegedly called for the mass murder of Jews, but at the same time, the student appears to be avoiding investigators.

Following reports in the *National Post* that Salman Hossain posted material on his website, "Filthy Jewish Terrorists," calling for the genocide of Jews, York attempted to confirm Hossain's authorship.

But calls and e-mails were unanswered, leading the university to dispatch someone from its security department to one of his classes for "a face-to-face meeting," said Keith Marnoch, York's associate director of media relations.

The university is concerned that Hossain may have breached the school's Student Code of Conduct, and a tribunal hearing is pending, Marnoch said.

"The individual Salman Hossain, upon being confronted by us, did not respond to us and we've taken the appropriate disciplinary measures," he said following security's attempt to meet with Hossain.

Marnoch would not give details of the effort to confront Hossain at his class. He also declined to specify the "disciplinary measures" or whether Hossain has been barred from campus.

Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, said keeping Hossain away from the university is the least York could do.

"In our view, the safety and security of York University's student body superceded anything else. They're [York administrators] going to have to find a way to deal appropriately with Mr. Hossain," he said.

In a report published last week, the *National Post* quoted from Hossain's website and noted he did not dispute that they were his views.

"No one in this world can take our history away from us. Especially not the cancerous group of people calling themselves Jews or Judeo-Christians who are going to be genocided in the near future," he is quoted as writing.

The website also pictures a graphic stating, "Terrorism is A Jewish Passover Celebration," and in a purported rebuttal of the *National Post* article, Hossain admits to advocating the genocide of Jews.

"Just like you are co-opting western nations to attack Muslim states and slaughter the populations over there. Most Jews in North America and Europe support the war against Islam and Muslims, which they instigated. They are happy to see Muslims get slaughtered. They enjoy the deaths of millions of Muslims, and the slaughter that they are undergoing. Thus they should also be at the receiving end of what they are perpetrating against others."

Hossain's alleged writings prompted a police investigation to determine whether he breached the Criminal Code's hate promotion and advocacy of genocide provisions.

Farber said Congress had "been getting quite a number of calls from students and parents" concerned about safety on campus.

"There is an absolute necessity for the administration of York University to protect and defend the student body. We can't get any information to confirm that is happening," he said.

Farber noted that police investigated Hossain, but last year, Ontario Attorney General Chris Bentley decided not to prosecute. (The attorney general's consent is required for a case to proceed.)

Bentley said at the time that Hossain had removed his offensive postings and was undergoing rehabilitation.

Marnoch said the university is concerned about following due process, but if investigators confirm Hossain authored the Web postings, a disciplinary tribunal could be convened.

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER

Hillel members Josh Spatz, left, and David Cohen did brisk business selling $1 falafel during I-Fest, a celebration of Israel's culture, held at McGill University's Shatner student building. On the theme "Size Doesn't Matter" – the title of the new Canadian Federation of Jewish Students campaign – the information day presented Israel as a small, but modern and sexy, country that is a good place to visit, study or live.

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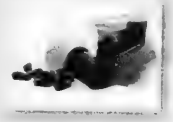

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to honour his legacy
through continued Holocaust education.

With heartfelt condolences to his family,
May you be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

Lorraine Sandler
Chair

Mira Goldfarb
Executive Director

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Afghanistan-Pakistan: Solve One, Solve Them Both?

Director of the Gulf & Energy Policy Program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; a former journalist with the BBC & Financial Times, he has reported from Pakistan, Afghanistan & Iran.

presented by
Simon Henderson

7:30 p.m.
Wednesday,
March 24, 2010

How should the U.S. and the world handle Pakistan with its nuclear arms?

Beth Tzedec Congregation
Max & Beatrice Wolfe Library
1700 Bathurst Street, Toronto

בית צדק

On Campus

IAW is anti-Israel, not pro-Palestinian: journalist

By MICHAEL ISENBERG
Special to The CJN

Students using violence or abusive speech in support of Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) are not pro-Palestinian, they're anti-Israel, says Israeli Arab journalist Khaled Abu Toameh.

"If you are pro-Palestinian, go to Palestine and teach illiterate kids how to read and write. Help abused women, impoverished people. That's pro-Palestinian. Help the Palestinians better their lives," Toameh said at a Hillel-sponsored talk at Ryerson University last week.

Toameh, the West Bank and Gaza correspondent for the *Jerusalem Post* and *U.S. News and World Report*, discussed several issues regarding Israel's relationship with the surrounding Arab countries, including problems with Iran, extremist governments and a lack of free speech that results in misleading, anti-Israel media coverage around the world.

A large part of his talk, however, focused on the promotion of boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel, most notably by young adults on university campuses, as exemplified by IAW.

"There's no concept of boycotting Israel by Palestinians. The first time I heard of Israeli boycotts was three years ago in North America," he said, referring to IAW.

Toameh's concern is not that people should be denied their freedom to disagree with Israeli politics, but that he finds these boycotts are ineffective and damaging.

"If you want to boycott, why do something negative? Go do something positive. Go help people."

He argued that many boycotters are not well informed on the issues in the Middle East and are not very supportive of Palestinians, but rather against Israel.

"The majority of people I've met in the U.S. leading Israeli Apartheid Weeks are not even Palestinian. They're Lebanese. I tell them [create a campaign for] apartheid of Lebanon, because [the Lebanese] have a ban on certain people from working in 62 professions. These students, they say, 'Shut up.' Clearly, they don't really care about the people."

He added that many people who argue against Israel's actions haven't thought out the repercussions of their proposed resolutions, such as that regarding land ownership.

"Even if [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu accepts a two-state solution, who do you give the land to? Hamas? Fatah?

"People ask me, 'When did you become pro-Israel, a Zionist Arab?'

"I say, 'As a journalist I am pro-facts, pro-truth.'"

Toameh classifies himself as pro-Palestinian because he speaks out against corrupt Arab governments through his work in the Israeli media, hoping to bring about change. He noted that most moderate Muslims' voices are silenced by their governments.

Regarding the West Bank, Toameh said he hates the label "apartheid wall," adding that the wall is unwanted by most Israelis, but its benefits are too great to ignore.

"This wall was built because of [the late Palestinian leader Yasser] Arafat. His name should go on the wall," he said.

"Thanks to the wall, I can take my kids freely around Israel… and not worry about bombings and the picking up of corpses. It's called reality. Because on the other side of the wall, it's frightening."

Toameh concluded his talk with the message that all the issues people have with Israel stem from its very existence.

"The majority of the world has not come to terms with Israel's right to exist. There is no other conflict. People have to wake up."

OUT OF THE COLD: In the middle of Israel Apartheid Week, Muslim and Jewish university students came together at the University of Western Ontario to build a more positive relationship between their communities and to make sandwiches for London's underprivileged. Seventy-five students came out to the event hosted by the Tzedaka/Sadaqah Project which resulted in over 250 sandwiches being distributed to the needy.

On Campus

Students connect to Israel through art

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

The menorah in Liat Shalom's artwork isn't just a religious symbol. It's a link to her heritage.

"That specific menorah has been in my family for four or five generations. It was given to my mom by my great-grandfather," she said, adding that he immigrated from Poland to New Brunswick, where he helped start a Jewish community.

"He built a shul with his own two hands," she said.

Shalom, a first-year new-media-arts student at Ryerson University, uses her art, which includes sketches and digitally manipulated photos, to express the connection with Judaism that her grandfather worked so hard to forge.

This is why it's appropriate that she submitted her work to Artzy, a Hillel-sponsored arts and music night that takes place on March 18 at Andrew Richard Design Studio in Toronto.

In its third year, Artzy aims to celebrate Israel and Judaism through music, photography and visual art. The event, which is supported by the Birthright alumni committee, features more than 50 works of art from students and community members in Ontario, as well as a performance by Israeli singer David Broza.

While attending last year's event, Shalom, who was born in Israel and moved to Canada three years ago, felt homesick.

"It had a lot of very strong symbolism, it evoked a lot of very strong emotions in me," Shalom said. "It's a good way to see Israel through various people's eyes."

Rotem Stark, Hillel's director of arts and culture in Toronto, agrees.

Stark has been organizing this year's event with Hillel since September.

"It's such a special night. This is really a night for everyone in the community to come together, regardless of age and background," she said, adding that Artzy is a change from most pro-Israeli events.

"We do so much in the community in Hillel. We have so many initiatives that have to do with politics. Through art, I feel people can really connect in different ways," she said. "Art can be so many things to so many people. It's such a beautiful way to bring people together."

Liat Shalom submitted this digitally manipulated photograph of herself to Artzy, a Hillel-sponsored arts and music night. Ryerson University student Tal-Or Freedman took the original photo.

So far, about 25 artists have submitted work, which includes everything from mezuzot and sculptures to animations, musical performances and paintings.

The fact that Artzy falls right after Israeli Apartheid Week isn't a coincidence, Stark said.

"It's a good time to have it because IAW is such a hit on the Jewish community and our students. We wanted to have a great event, an uplifting event just to show the beautiful side of Israel," she said.

For Maxine Seider, a fourth-year arts and science student at the University of Guelph, the event is a good way to connect with the Jewish community.

"I think it's a way that people can connect in a non-political environment," she said, adding that she's also submitted work to Artzy.

"It's a great way to get people hooked on Israel... we need that. A lot of people see Israel as this political place where there's a lot of conflict. I think it's important to show the fun side."

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazal tov Suzanne & Jack Benchimol on your 50th anniversary. Chantal & Henri, Ruth & Judah, Eric. Grandchildren Adam & Esther, Nathalie, Lior, Rivka, Rachel, Amanda.

Rebeca Lulka celebrates her 90th birthday sharing a "Flan" that she made, with four of her 11 great-grandchildren, and two of her eight grandchildren.

Mazel tov to Paula & Yitzhak Goldhar who recently celebrated their 60th anniversary with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Happy 70th birthday to our wife, mother and grandmother, Ruthie Kahane. We love and admire your unwavering support, guidance and strength. Love, your family.

Wishing Trudy a very happy second birthday. Love, Mommy, Daddy, Bob & Asher.

Sarah & Larry Yarmus Rona & William Steinman announce the engagement of Jennifer & Andrew. Proud grandparents, Berel Blum, Shirley Yarmus & Rona Rochwerg.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines: The deadline for the March 25 issue is March 15. Please note that because of the Passover holiday, the deadline for both the April 1 and the April 8 issues is March 22. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, March 11

BUILDING BRIDGES

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am continuing education committee presents "Building Bridges Over Troubled Waters," with **Avri Kadmon**, JNF head of river rehabilitation in Israel. Co-sponsored by JNF of Canada, 7:30 p.m., 416-633-5500.

Saturday, March 13

SEX IN THE (OLD) CITY

Temple Har Zion presents a Shabbaton and potluck lunch, and a program that explores attitudes to sex, especially in the Bible. Torah study, 9 a.m., Shabbat service, 10:30. Kiddush, and dairy, vegetarian and nut-free lunch follows. **Ray Havelock** will talk about "Sex in the (Old) City," 12:30 p.m. rayhavevlock@gmail.com or 905-889-2252.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah's Torah class, 10-11 a.m., Vayakhel/Pekudei, everyone welcome.

STUDY WITH THE RABBI

Rabbi Wayne Allen, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, will talk about the writings of Josephus Flavius, following Minchah, 6:30 p.m.

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (South) meets at Habonim, 5 Glen Park (Glencairn & Bathurst). Shiur at 9 a.m. Services at 9.30 a.m. Kiddush following. For information, tpmsouth@gmail.com

Sunday, March 14

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am presents **Prof. Sarianna Metso** on "The Dead Sea Scrolls and Legal Intersections in the Hebrew Bible," 9:15 a.m. $5 at the door, includes breakfast. www.bethdavid.com, 416-633-5500.

THE ELVIS SHOW

Shaar Shalom Singles and Intersynagogue Singles 45+ presents **Dave Robinson**, winner of the Collingwood Elvis impersonator competition, 7:30 p.m., $8. Call **David**, 416-224-9494.

CAVALCADE OF STARS

Shaarei Shomayim Brotherhood and the entertainment and cultural committee present the 16th annual Cavalcade of Stars, an evening of Jewish music, 6:45 p.m., starring The Shpeelers and Gypsy Flame. Proceeds go to Jews for Judaism. $18, or $29 per couple.

FENG SHUI

"Feng Shui, the Jewish Way: Your Home and Your Mazel," presented by Kehillat Shaarei Torah sisterhood. Doors open 7 p.m., lecture/workshop, 7:30. Admission $10. At the synagogue, 2640 Bayview Ave.

WINTER CLOTHING EVENT

Family Resource Centre's Clothing Cupboard, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, is having a "fill up a bag" of remaining gently used women and children's clothing, $5 a bag, 10 a.m.-noon. Call **Ellen Koblinsky**, 905-882-8509.

DREAMS

Learn about how dreams help us get inner guidance, with psychotherapist **Ursula Carsen**. Temple Emanu-El's adult education program, 10 a.m., 416-449-3880.

CHILDREN'S CONCERT

Ayin L'tzion Sisterhood and Congregation Bnai Torah present a lively musical event with musicians from the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, suitable for children 5-10 years old, 2 p.m. Reservations required. Hagit, 905-709-6285, or Miriam, 416-661-2677. martell@ican.net

Continued on page 33

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem

Kensington Place RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

Extends its sincerest gratitude to
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Righteous Among the Nations
Award Ceremony, March 3, 2010,
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About Righteous Among the Nations

An individual is considered for the title "Righteous Among the Nations" when the data, based on Survivor testimony or other documentation, clearly demonstrates that, during the Second World War, a non-Jewish person risked his or her life, freedom, and safety, in order to rescue one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation without exacting monetary compensation or other rewards.

Remembering the Past, Shaping the Future

The State of Israel has designated Yad Vashem as the sole entity that can bestow the title "Righteous Among the Nations."

About Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Remembrance and Education Centre in Jerusalem, is the universal guardian and imparter of the Shoah's (Holocaust's) legacy and the protector of human values. Visited by over 1 million people annually, Yad Vashem is internationally recognized as being at the forefront of Holocaust commemoration, education, documentation, and research.

About The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem is one of Yad Vashem's largest and most prominent of its 28 representative bodies worldwide. The Society supports Yad Vashem's initiatives and implements its important vision across Canada. Through its educational and commemorative activities, the Society carries out Yad Vashem's mission of ensuring that the Holocaust and its lessons are forever engraved in the memory of humankind.

www.yadvashem.org

Continued from page 32

Monday, March 15

DIABETES MEETING

"Treatments for Type 2 Diabetes: Old and New" with **Dr. Ronald Goldenberg**, Jewish diabetes chapter meeting, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. $1 admission, 416-363-0177, ext. 7403.

Wednesday, March 17

POMEGRANATE GUILD

"Dying to Print," an introduction to colour and pattern in printed and dyed fabrics, with **Gunnel Hag**, Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Thursday, March 18

SOCIAL CLUB

Temple Sinai's social club presents **Susan Jackson**, who will speak on "The New Jewish Toronto," 7:30 p.m. Members $8, guests $10.

BACK PAIN

Dr. Stephen Lewis will hold an educational forum on "Back Pain – Prevention and Treatment," Shaarei Tefillah Congregation, 7 p.m. Sponsored by Canadian Magen David Adom for Israel. Tickets: 1 - $10, 2-$18, cmda@interlog.com or 416-780-0034 .

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Beth Tikvah's friendship group presents an afternoon of song with **Mickey Lewin**, 2-4 p.m., $5. 416-221-3433.

COUSCOUS TO KASHA

Dr. Seymour Epstein will talk about his book *From Couscous to Kasha: Reporting from the Field of Jewish Community Work*, 7:30 p.m. Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am. Co-sponsored by Beth David's library committee. 416-633-5500.

OTHER NEWS

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave.., 2nd floor. RSVP, **Judy**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or judy@djds.ca.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m., followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m., followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

BAYCREST VOLUNTEERS

The Museum at Baycrest seeks volunteers for two projects over the summer. An online catalogue project requires volunteers who have computer and research skills, and are detail oriented. The Museum on Wheels is a bedside art program that requires volunteers with a background in art and/or anthropology, and previous experience working with an elderly clientele. 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, or alefkovitz@baycrest.org

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com for info on the following groups.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell the Kids, March 24, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 6:30-9 p.m.

Develop a Successful Business Relationship with Your Child's Other Parent, March 25, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

Effective Parenting: four-session group for parents of children 2-11 years, begins March 25, 7-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

SCHOOL REUNION

William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate's 50th anniversary reunion, April 29-May 2. All events are held at the school, 20 Tillplain Rd. www.mackenziereunion.com or 416-395-3330, ext. 7, for details.

GALA FASHION SHOW

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham presents a fashion show hosted by **Erica Ehm** and featuring guest speaker **Judy Feld-Carr**, March 21, Arcadian Court, The Bay Queen St. The store will remain open after the show. Portion of proceeds will be donated to ASTEH. Doors open 5:30 p.m., tickets $65, $36 students and seniors. chabadmarkham.org or 905-886-0420, ext. 227.

PASSOVER HAGGADAH

Rabbi Martin Berman, Shaar Shalom Synagogue, continues his three-part series, Tip Toe through the Passover Haggadah. March 16, 7:45 p.m., "Illuminating the Haggadah: Telling the Story and Selling Books through Art"; March 23, 7:45 p.m., "The Story of *Kitniyot*: No Rice, No Beans? Where Did This Come From?" www.shaarshalom.ca.

100th ANNIVERSARY

The Stashover-Slipia Congregation is 100 years old in Toronto in 2010. Call to find out how you can support, reconnect and help us celebrate, 416-789-1333 or Stashover100@bell.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or to drive older adults to medical appointments. Call **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

Circle of Care Hospice and Jewish Hospice are looking for volunteers. Comprehensive 30-hour training program begins April 12. Contact **Mindy Shiel**, hospice coordinator at 416-635-2900, ext. 467, or mshiel@circleofcare.com.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, March 18, 1:30 p.m., "Everything You Need to Know About Pensions," with **Olivia Chow** and other experts, ext. 155.

Association of Jewish Seniors, Aileen Carroll, minister of culture, and minister responsible for seniors, will address issues of concern to seniors, March 18, 9:45 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim Synagogue. Members free, guests $2. Annual Passover seder takes place at Bernard Betel Centre on March 30, 6:30 p.m. Tickets, $20, on sale at Betel Centre. By reservation only. **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

March 16, lecture, "Pesach and the Jewish Experience: The Nature of Miracles and the Miracle of Nature," with **Arnie Gotfryd**, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

KOFFLER CENTRE

KOFFLER CENTRE, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, ext. 4228.

Painting instructor and artist **Sadko Hadzihasanovic** and chef **Ellen Grossman** lead workshops to highlight the fluidity between food and art, March 17, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., $110 plus GST. Ext. 4269.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

The Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Exploring Israeli Society, March 15, 6-8 p.m. $15. Info: jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

March 14, 2 p.m., Sundays on Bloor, "On Being a Jazz Vocalist" with **Heather Bambrick.** A co-presentation with Jazz Performance and Education Centre, Toronto. $9, drop in. Info: music@mnjcc.org.

Community Passover seder, March 29, 7:30, presented by Chabad of Midtown, Miles Nadal JCC, JF&CS. Led by **Rabbi Nechemia Deitsch**. At Miles Nadal JCC. RSVP before March 19, $50 per adult. $25 per child ages 3-12. After March 19: $60 per adult, $35 per child, 416-516-2005 or www.chabadmt.com.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

L'CHAIM: Dr. Ellen Warner, second from right, an oncologist at Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Science Centre, spoke about genetic testing at a recent meeting of L'Chaim support group for Jewish women with cancer. From left are Marsha Urowitz, Elizabeth Erlich, Cheryl Awenus, Annette Cohen, Rivka Allal, Laurane Klingman, Warner and Melanie Creighton.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 28

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Joseph King Grupstein	Feb 20/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Oscar Appleton	Feb 19/10	259 Hillcroft Str
Sam Hennick	Feb 19/10	58 Chriswell Cr
Moishe Appleby	Feb 21/10	17 Robbie Ave
Murray Page	Feb 21/10	3 Rean Dr
Max Fox	Feb 22/10	2121 Bathurst St
Shirley Caplan	Feb 20/10	24 Robingrove Rd
Esther Giest	Feb 13/10	Heritage Nursing Home
Bernard Braham	Feb 21/10	51 Transwell Ave
Sam Ross	Feb 22/10	Baycrest Apotex
Marie Parker	Feb 22/10	3560 Bathurst St
Ricky Kirsh	Feb 23/10	10 Fernwood Rd
Leo Orzy	Feb 23/10	73 Cork Ave
Rebecca Hyman	Feb 23/10	31 Rosemount Ave
David Gelman	Feb 20/10	40 Robert St
Harold Debora	Feb 24/10	5901 Bathurst St
Douglas Randall	Feb 25/10	73 Ternhill Cr
Zelick Goldstein	Feb 26/10	131 Beecroft Rd

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Falikovich, Iosif	Feb. 18/10	541 Finch Ave. W
Greenholtz, Ella	Feb. 18/10	135 Antibes Dr
Borovitch, Samuel	Feb. 18/10	205 Cummer Ave
Granville, Minnie	Feb. 19/10	1166 Carlo Crt
Hagin, Hona	Feb. 20/10	4455 Bathurst St
Himelfarb, Mary Ellen	Feb. 19/10	80 Elgin Mills E
Jacob, Joseph	Feb. 20/10	16 Prince Charles Dr
Nefsky, Leonard	Feb. 21/10	177 Pannahill Rd
Leon, Benjamin	Feb. 20/10	635 Glencairn Ave
Weinryh, Lola	Feb. 21/10	344 Spring Gate Bl
Gotfried, Melvin	Feb. 20/10	3560 Bathurst St
Singer, Morris Aaron	Feb. 21/10	56 Pinnacle Rd
Asody, Mary	Feb. 22/10	7460 Bathurst St
Snitman, Rebecca Ida	Feb. 21/10	
Hislop, Sidney	Feb. 23/10	7 Townsgate Dr
Katzef, Riva	Feb. 23/10	7825 Bayview Ave
Kutner, Lily	Feb. 23/10	230 Carmichael Ave
Ender, Jack	Feb. 24/10	65 Skymark Dr

The family of the late

SELMA LEIBOVITZ ז"ל

Would like to express their heartfelt appreciation for the kindness and support during our recent bereavement.

The Leibovitz-Schwartz families

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Obituary

Baycrest was Ross' 'No. 1 organization'

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Sam Ross, a real estate developer who had a longtime commitment to Baycrest, died Feb. 22 at age 84.

A former member of Baycrest's board of directors, Ross served as chair of the building committee for the Terraces of Baycrest and the Joseph E. and Minnie Wagman Centre.

After receiving Baycrest men's service group Man of the Year Award in 1976, Ross assumed key executive volunteer positions, including chairman and vice-president of the board.

In 2003 he was appointed an honorary director of Baycrest, and in 2005, a leadership gift from Ross and his wife, Ida, enabled Baycrest to establish the Sam and Ida Ross Memory Clinic as part of its focus on brain health.

An avid long distance runner, he always participated in Baycrest's Fun Run fundraiser.

Sam Ross
[Baycrest Foundation photo]

Mark Gryfe, president of Baycrest Foundation, said that Baycrest was Ross' "number 1 organization. When he took on the project of building the Terraces, he lived it. He went into the place and supervised the construction site. He took his professional experience and brought it to Baycrest. It is his lasting legacy."

Donald Rafelman, who served as vice-chair of the Terraces advisory committee, said that Ross "couldn't have put more effort into the project if it had been his own private venture. His extreme dedication and unrelenting commitment were evident right from the start."

Gryfe said that he has heard from "countless people" who called Ross a quiet gentleman whom people respected. "He was very low key and not into anything for his ego. If all we have to leave behind is our reputation, then Sam's memory will be a good one."

In his eulogy, Ross' son, Jeffery, said that it was a common family joke how quiet his father was. After joining his father at a business meeting, however, "a debate ensued. When [my father raised his hand to speak] the room fell silent, with someone noting that 'Sam had something to say.'

"What transpired was not so much the fact that Dad could see beyond the immediate issues with a great insight, but moreover, to me, the respect and recognition that was given to Dad by his peers."

Born in Poland near the Russian border, Ross came to Canada with his family when he was four years old. "As a young man, he worked with his father as a carpenter, and during World War II, he joined the air force and served as a mechanic," his son said.

At this time, he met his wife, Ida, to whom he was married for 55 years before her death in 2006. "At a speech my father once gave, he said that of all the deals he had ever made, the best deal was marrying Ida."

Jeffery Ross said that on Yom Kippur of 2008, he heard a rabbi's sermon, which left a powerful impression. "I will always remember the last two words… 'Be good.' Sam Ross was a good man."

Sam Ross was husband of the late Ida and father of the late Murray. He leaves behind his son Bernie and daughter-in-law Ruth; son Jeffrey and daughter-in-law Diane; and daughter-in-law Rhonda. He also leaves eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Health & Lifestyles

Colon cancer screening urged for all Canadians

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

In order to encourage more Canadians to get screened for colon cancer, March has been declared colorectal cancer awareness month by the Canadian Cancer Society.

Colon cancer is second to lung cancer as the largest cause of death in Canada and Ontario, and the third-largest cause of death after breast and lung cancer amongst women.

Dr. Michael Gould, a gastroenterologist and president of Vaughan Endoscopy Clinic, said colonoscopies have been recognized as the best way to screen for colon cancer, because polyps can be removed on the spot.

The awareness month was initiated in the past decade, he said, because the Cancer Society wanted to stress the importance of screening.

"About 30 per cent of patients have polyps, and there is a six per cent chance of getting colon cancer. We stress the importance of colonoscopies, because all tumours start as polyps. If they're removed, they won't turn into cancer."

The biggest obstacle in getting the message across, Gould said, is that people are afraid of the test. "I admit, it's not easy, but the preparation has improved because new 'drinks' have been developed to help clean out the colon.

"During the 30-minute procedure, in which a video camera attached to a long tube is steered up the colon, patients are sedated and there are no tubes. They sleep for a few minutes afterward, and it's done. Most people leave fine, and are back at work the next day."

He said only about 25 per cent of the population get screened.

"Most are afraid of the procedure, but it's important, and it's not a big deal. If it comes out normal, they don't have to return for at least five years," he added.

"It is something that most people don't want to talk about. Who wants to discuss their colon, or their bowel movements?"

PASSOVER FOOD IDEAS

Pan pals share their favourite recipes

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

At this time each year, most cooks start searching through their cookbooks and recipe clippings, ask friends and family for suggestions and get busy searching the Internet for Passover recipes. Pesach desserts are always a special challenge.

I love to share the special recipes that my "pan pals" have shared with me. So here are some delightful desserts that I hope you will prepare and share with your friends and family this Passover – and in the future! Some of my favourite cookbook authors shared these with me from the cookbooks they've authored. I've also included one of my favourite recipes as well. Enjoy!

So, if you are invited to a friend or family member's home for Passover, why not bring them a copy of a cookbook authored by one of my special "pan pals"? There's no better way to say thank you!

* * *

My friend Estee Kafra of Toronto is a talented, creative cook and food photographer, and we often share recipes and ideas with each other. Here are two terrific recipes from her latest cookbook, *Cooking with Color*, which she recently published. The first recipe is fruit-based and the second is somewhat decadent, but both are quite easy to prepare.

ESTEE'S CHAROSET-INSPIRED COMPOTE

Source: Cooking with Color

This refreshing dessert is inspired by charoset, a staple of the Pesach seder. You can try adding some pears for a nice variation. The recipe can be doubled or tripled as many times as necessary, but don't use more than 2 or 3 cinnamon sticks.

2 cups water
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup red wine (dry or semi-sweet)
1 1/2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 cinnamon stick
4 Cortland apples, peeled and cut into small wedges

Candied Walnut Topping:

1/2 cup sugar
2 to 3 tbsp. water
1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 cups chopped walnuts

Bring water, sugar and red wine to a light boil in a saucepan. Add lemon juice and cinnamon stick and lower heat. Add apples, cover and let simmer for 20 minutes or until apples just begin to fall apart.

Turn off the heat and let apples cool inside the covered saucepan. Remove cinnamon stick and refrigerate apple mixture until ready to serve. Serve chilled with candied walnuts.

Continued on page 36

More food choices than you think

As spring approaches, Jews worldwide anticipate the festival of Passover, when we celebrate the ancient Hebrews' liberation from slavery more than 3,000 years ago.

We extend invitations to the seders, make lists, plan menus, and clean our houses, in anticipation of the eight-day festival.

Passover food varies, depending on where we live and where we come from, but for everyone it plays a central role in the celebration. Whether we are Sephardi or Ashkenazi, we look for dishes that adhere to our own traditions.

When we think about Passover food, we often think about what we cannot eat – all the food items that are chametz. Passover menus, however, can be chockfull of dishes that we *can* eat, such as fruits, vegetables and all our favourite meats poultry and fish.

In our upcoming food pages, we want to help you find some recipes that will prove that Passover can be a holiday that is about what you *can* eat.

Whether you've been making seders for years or planning your first one, you'll be sure to find some recipes that will enhance your holiday.

The ingredients in all our recipes are acceptable for Passover use, and can be purchased kosher for Passover in most large Jewish communities.

From all of us at *The CJN*, enjoy your Passover meals, and we wish you a chag kasher v'samayach.

– *Carolyn Blackman*

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CHOOSE 1
Homemade Mini Matzo Ball Soup
~ or ~
Butternut Squash, Nutmeg and Ginger Soup

CHOOSE 1
Farm Fresh Baby Spinach, Oyster Mushroom, Mandarin Orange & Pecan Salad
~ or ~
Morrocan Style Quinoa Salad with Dried Cranberries, Diced Sweet Potatoes & Nuts
~ or ~
Mesclun Greens, Cherry Tomatoes, Hearts Of Palm, & Cucumber

CHOOSE 1
Lean Brisket with Apricots and Grilled Apples
~ or ~
Slow Roasted Boneless Turkey Breast Stuffed with Sautéed Mushroom, Spinach and Onion Matzo Stuffing
~ or ~
Supreme of Chicken with an Apricot Glaze
~ or ~
Baked Salmon with an Olive & Sundried Tomato Tapenade Crust

CHOOSE 2
Grilled Peppers, Zucchini, Mushrooms Roma Tomatoes, and Vidalia Onions, Drizzled with Olive Oil & Aged Balsamic

Garlic Infused Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes with Caramelized Onions

Sweet Potato Mash

Asparagus with roast cherry tomatoes Kalamata olives and roasted garlic

Roasted Baby Potatoes with Kosher Salt

Broccoli & Shitake Mushrooms, tossed In Roast Garlic, Ginger, Olive Oil & Green Onions

Potato Kugel with Caramelized Onions

DESSERTS

Fresh Fruit Platter

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À La Carte

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Slow Roasted Boneless Turkey Breast Stuffed with Sautéed Mushrooms, Spinach and Onion Matzo Stuffing $9.95 pp

Supreme of Chicken with an Apricot Glaze $9.95 pp

Baked Salmon with Olive & Sundried Tomato Tapenade Crust $9.95 pp

Grilled Peppers, Zucchini, Mushrooms Roma Tomatoes, and Vidalia Onions, Drizzled with Olive Oil & Aged Balsamic $3.95 pp

Garlic Infused Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes with Caramelized Onions $2.75 pp

Sweet Potato Mash $2.95 pp

Asparagus with roast cherry tomatoes, Kalamata olives and roasted garlic $5.95 pp

Fingerling Potatoes with Kosher Salt $2.95 pp

Broccoli & Shitake Mushrooms, tossed in Roast Garlic, Ginger, Olive Oil & Green Onions $3.75 pp

Potato Kugel with Caramelized Onions $2.95 pp

DESSERTS

Fresh Fruit Platter $3.95 pp

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Recipes and Survivors' stories

Continued from page 35

For the Candied Walnut Topping, preheat oven to 350. Stir together the sugar, water and cinnamon in a bowl. Add walnuts and use a wooden spoon to mix lightly until walnuts are evenly coated.

Spread walnuts on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Toss or mix lightly to recoat the nuts, and bake for 5 to 10 minutes longer. Mix again immediately after taking out of the oven. Sprinkle over compote at serving time. Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

ESTEE'S COCONUT CUPS WITH CREAMY GANACHE FILLING

Source: Cooking with Color

Coconut and chocolate seem to be a match made in heaven. This delicacy is perfect for Pesach, but of course can be used as a special treat all year round. While these appear to be fancy and intricate, they are actually quite simple to make and freeze well. For the best flavour, try to ensure that your ground coconut is fresh.

Macaroon Cups:
2 1/4 cups desiccated or shredded coconut
1/2 cup sugar
2 egg whites
Ganache Filling:
4 oz. chocolate (bittersweet)
1/2 cup margarine
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa

Preheat oven to 280. Grease compartments of a non-stick mini-muffin pan very well.

For the Macaroon Cups, mix the ingredients together in a bowl. Press mixture against the sides and bottom of each muffin compartment. Cover each compartment evenly and fully, and try to ensure that the bottom isn't too thick. (You can wet your fingers occasionally to help you press the coconut mixture in easily.)

Bake for 30 minutes, then let cool completely before removing Macaroon Cups from the pan. You may need to run a sharp knife around the top edges of each cup to loosen.

For Ganache Filling, melt chocolate and margarine together in the top of a double boiler, and stir to mix. Remove from heat and let cool for 2 to 3 minutes.

Stir in egg yolks while whisking thoroughly to prevent them from cooking. Add cocoa and mix well. Pour mixture while it is still warm into coconut cups and leave at room temperature to set. Store in airtight container. Yield: 12 cups.

* * *

I met Joanne and Harvey Caras when they were in Toronto recently at an evening sponsored by Chabad on Bayview. Joanne shared a recipe from *The Holocaust Survivor Cookbook*, a very special fundraising project that has raised over half a million dollars to date for Jewish charities.

Joanne wrote, "If you are having the seder at your house, prepare one or two of the Passover recipes in *The Holocaust Survivor Cookbook*. Then do what my family does, have someone at the seder read aloud the story of the survivor whose recipe was used. What a wonderful and meaningful addition to your seder this will be!

ELLEN WOLF'S MATZAH LAYER CAKE

5 oz. bittersweet chocolate
1 oz. cocoa
2 egg yolks
6 oz. butter or margarine
1/2 cup sugar
5 to 7 matzahs
5 oz. liquid (wine or coffee)

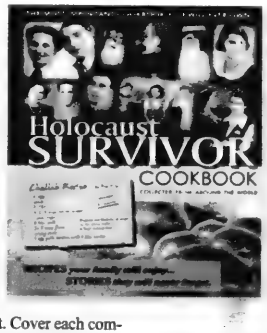
Melt chocolate and cocoa together on low heat, stirring often. Let cool. Beat egg yolks with butter and sugar. Mix chocolate and cocoa into the beaten butter mixture to form a spread.

Brush each matzah with coffee or wine. (Place matzah on a plate first for easier handling.) Then spread with a layer of chocolate spread mix. Add next matzah to the top and repeat.

Continue until all chocolate spread mix is used, ending with chocolate. Cover and refrigerate. Serves 6 to 8.

Note from Norene: I've edited this recipe slightly to clarify some details. People with compromised immune systems (e.g., the elderly, pregnant women) are hesitant to eat recipes made with raw eggs. However, the recipe survived and the contributor survived, so that says a lot!

* * *



My "pan pal" Barbara Wasser of Niskayuna, N.Y., shared this excellent dessert recipe – it's one of her favourites. Barbara is the co-author of *Divine Kosher Cuisine: Catering to Family and Friends*. This award-winning cookbook is a fundraising project for Congregation Agudat Achim in the upstate New York town of Niskayuna.

Barbara wrote, "This dessert is pareve and gluten-free too, so it can be made all year round. These rolls are not hard to make but do take a little patience. I've been serving this dessert since 1980, and we can't have a seder without it. One year I didn't make it and had very unhappy guests and family. Even those who don't usually eat much in the way of desserts wait all year for this one!"

BARBARA WASSER'S PASSOVER CHOCOLATE ROLL

Filling:
6 large egg yolks
10 tbsp. margarine
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate

Continued on page 38

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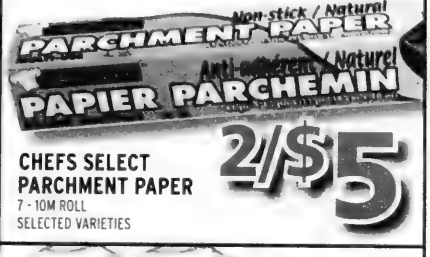

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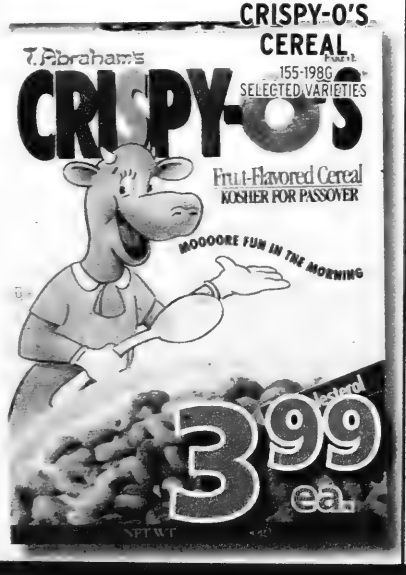

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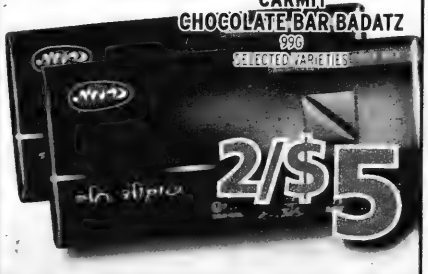

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Starter. Gefilte Fish with Horseradish Choice of: Sweet or Salt and Pepper

Soup. Chicken Soup with Mini Matzo Balls, Carrot and Leek Threads

Appetizer. Cured Charred Salmon (4oz) on a Bed of Pickled Red Cabbage
Served with White Asparagus, Fennel & Sundried Tomato Vinaigrette

Main Course. Pan Roasted Breast of Chicken with Honey Dates and Saffron
Mini Red and White Potatoes with Sundried Tomatoes
Medley of Sautéed Vegetables

Dessert. Individual Chocolate Opera

Seder Plate.

- Minimum Order: 6 Guests, No Substitutions, $45.00 Per Person -

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Chicken Soup with Mini Matzo Balls (4L)	$33.00
Carrot and Sweet Potato Soup (2L)	$17.50
Carrot and Sweet Potato Soup (4L)	$33.00
Homemade Egg Noodles (1/2 lb)	$7.50
Charoset (250 ml)	$7.50

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Pan Roasted Breast of Chicken with Honey Dates and Saffron (8oz)	$15.50
Seared Atlantic Salmon with Oven Roasted Tomatoes, Cucumbers and Preserved Lemon Vinaigrette (7oz)	$14.50
Carved Roast Turkey with Stuffing, Cranberry and Gravy (Serves 10-12)	$145.00
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ACCOMPANIMENTS

Mini Red and White Potatoes with Sundried Tomatoes (Serves 6)	$25.00
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Individual Chocolate Opera (Each) *(Layers of Almond Meringue, Espresso Buttercream and Chocolate Ganache)*	$4.50

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Passover Food Ideas

More unique desserts

Continued from page 36

Beat yolks at high speed with electric mixer 10 minutes or until thick and lemon colored. Melt margarine with chocolate. Stir until smooth and cool slightly. Add chocolate to yolks and beat until thick.

Cake:
7 large eggs, separated
14 tbsp.confectioners' sugar, divided
6 tbsp. potato starch
1/2 cup cocoa powder, sifted
1 tsp. kosher for Passover baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
cocoa, kosher for Passover confectioners' sugar and potato starch for rolling

Preheat oven to 350. Grease a 12 x 18 x 1-in. baking pan. Line with parchment paper and grease again.

Beat yolks on high speed with electric mixer 10 minutes until thick and lemon-coloured. Add 8 tablespoons sugar.

Combine potato starch, cocoa and baking powder. Fold mixture into yolks.

Whip whites with salt in separate bowl on high speed with electric mixer until foamy. Add remaining sugar and continue beating until stiff peaks form.

Fold whites gently into chocolate mixture and spread into pan. Bake 6 minutes, rotate pan 180° and bake additional 5 to 6 minutes or until cake pulls away from sides. Cool 2 minutes and run knife along sides of pan.

Spread large dampened linen towel or tablecloth on surface and sprinkle with equal amounts of cocoa, sugar and potato starch. Remove parchment and roll from 18-inch side. Cool slightly.

Unroll cake, cut away any hard edges, and spread with three-fourths filling, leaving 1/2-in. border on sides and 1 inch at top. Roll-up cake and decorate with remaining filling. Chill and slice when filling is firm. Freezes well. Yield: 14 to 16 slices.

* * *

And of course, this article wouldn't be complete without adding one of my favourite Passover recipes. It comes from my book *The Food Processor Bible* (first published as *Pleasures of Your Processor*). I usually omit the nuts when I make it because my son Steven is allergic to them. My seven-year-old grandson Max really loves marshmallows and so do I. Whenever I visit my family in Montreal, Max usually exclaims, "Bubbie Norene's coming – quick, hide the marshmallows!"

NORENE'S FARFEL MARSHMALLOW TREATS
Source: The Food Processor Bible

Guaranteed to please the kids, both big and small!

1/4 cup butter or margarine
5 cups Passover marshmallows
1 cup walnuts or almonds
5 cups matzah farfel
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 cup chocolate chips, melted

Melt butter or margarine on low heat in a large pot. Add marshmallows and stir until melted. Remove from heat.

Steel Blade: Chop nuts with quick on/off pulses, until finely chopped. Add half the nuts to marshmallow mixture. Reserve remaining nuts for garnish. Stir in matzah farfel and cinnamon. Mix well. Spread evenly in sprayed 9 x 13-inch pan. Wet your hands and pat down evenly.

Drizzle melted chocolate over farfel mixture. Sprinkle with reserved nuts. Cool until chocolate is set. Cut into squares. Yield: 4 dozen squares. Freezes well.

Birthdays take the cake!

By RANDY FINGRUT
Special to The CJN

If Passover has the chutzpah to interfere with birthday plans or a family celebration, you may be feeling a little downhearted. Since the secular calendar we follow in our day to day lives differs completely from the Jewish calendar, these differences may cause a birthday to fall on Passover every few years, and about once a decade to fall directly on a seder night.

But there's no reason that you should pass over the marvel of any personal festivity. Birthdays and other occasions can be enjoyed over Passover, regardless of the dietary requirements of the holiday. With a few great recipes, and a little preparation, you can ensure that you will have an outstanding time.

EXQUISITE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE CAKE

Lighter than air and bursting with flavour, this cake is a sure way to put anyone celebrating a birthday on Cloud 9. The cake itself is pareve, but it can be dressed with an incredibly rich chocolate cream icing. Alternatively, it can remain pareve garnished with a drizzle of melted bittersweet chocolate and topped with fresh raspberries.

8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, broken into small pieces
5 tbsp. Passover margarine, plus margarine to grease pan
5 egg yolks
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup orange juice
6 egg whites

Grease a 9-inch spring form pan with margarine, and place a greased parchment paper circle on bottom of pan. Fill a 9-inch Pyrex dish 3/4 full of water and place on lower rack of a 350-degree oven.

Continued on page 39

Chocolate, lemon, even charoset for cakes

Continued from page 38

Melt margarine in microwave in a covered bowl, on high power for about one minute. Add broken chocolate to margarine and continue on high power for one more minute. Stir mixture until smooth and set aside.

In a large bowl, beat egg yolks using an electric mixer on high. Slowly add 1/3 cup sugar and continue to beat until mixture has tripled in volume.

In a second bowl with clean beaters, beat egg whites on medium. Slowly add remainder of sugar and continue beating on high until soft peaks form.

Fold the chocolate into the yolks until blended. Gently fold egg whites into chocolate mixture, a bit at a time, until blended. Transfer mixture to prepared spring form pan. Bake on middle rack of oven, over pan of water, about 50 minutes. Cake is done when tester comes out with a few moist crumbs. Cool cake on rack. Cake will fall as it cools.

When cool, run a small offset spatula between the cake and outside of pan. Remove pan sides. Place a flat platter on top of cake and turn cake over. Remove pan bottom and parchment paper.

Chocolate truffle cake

Chocolate Cream Icing

8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, broken into small pieces
2 cups whipping cream

In a medium sized bowl, melt the chocolate in the microwave for one minute at high heat, then stir until melted. Let the chocolate cool for three to five minutes. The chocolate should be warm and still liquid but not hot. Whip the cream until soft peaks form. Stir 1/3 of the whipped cream into the chocolate. Fold the chocolate mixture into the remaining whipped cream. There will be enough icing to generously ice the top of the cake and to pipe a design around the top outside edge of the cake. Keep refrigerated.

LEMON TART IN A MACAROON SHELL

Each luscious bite of lemon is silky while simultaneously sweet and tart, and the shell is remarkably chewy.

Macaroon Shell

3 cups shredded coconut
3 egg whites
zest of one lemon
1 1/2 cups kosher for Passover icing sugar (or 1-1/2 cups sugar less 1-1/2 tbsp., plus 1-1/2 tbsp. potato starch pulsed until fine in processor or blender.)

Grease a 10-in. pie pan with margarine.

In medium bowl, combine coconut, egg whites, lemon zest and icing sugar. Pat mixture into pan and up the sides. Bake at 375 for 20 minutes, or until golden. Shell may be puffy. Carefully press it down into place and cool.

Lemon Filling

3 egg yolks
1 egg, whole
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup margarine, melted
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
zest of two lemons

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and sugar. Add melted margarine, lemon juice and zest. Pour combined mixture into baked macaroon shell.

Bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Cool on rack, then refrigerate.

CHAROSET CAKE

Delightfully moist! A satisfying end to any Passover meal.

Filling

4 firm apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 cup walnuts, chopped
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
2 tbsp. sugar or honey
3 tbsp. Concord grape wine

Cake

2 eggs
1 cup vegetable oil
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups matzah meal
1/2 cup potato starch
zest of two lemons

Grease a 9-inch angel food pan. Place a donut-shaped, greased parchment paper on bottom of pan. In a medium size bowl, mix apples with lemon juice. Add nuts, cinnamon, sugar and wine.

In a second bowl using an electric mixer, beat eggs and combine oil and sugar. Add matzah meal, potato starch and lemon zest, and mix until smooth. Layer prepared angel food pan with 1/2 cake batter, the charoset and then the remaining cake batter. Bake at 350 for 45-50 minutes, or until tester comes out clean. Cool completely on a rack. When cool, run a small offset spatula between cake and outside of pan, and between cake and centre of pan. Jiggle cake until it becomes loose from all sides. Cover pan with a plate and turn upside down to release cake. Remove parchment paper. Garnish by dusting with 1/4 cup Passover icing sugar (or process 1/4 cup sugar, less 3/4 teaspoon sugar plus 3/4 teaspoon potato starch).

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MENU #3 -low fat menu

Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Cabbage Borscht, Roast Turkey Breast (precarved), Farfel & Mushrooms, Candied Yams, Green Beans Almondine, Cole Slaw, Fresh Fruit Salad, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses

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MENU #4

Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Brisket of Beef, Chicken Fingers, Lockshen Pudding, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Cole Slaw, Honey Cake, Mandlebroit, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses

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MENU #5

Gefilte Fish & Horseradish, Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Chicken, Roast Brisket of Beef, Chicken Fingers, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses

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MENU #6

Chicken Soup & Matzo Balls, Roast Brisket of Beef, Chicken Wings, Pan Roast Potatoes, Green Beans Almondine, Lockshen Pudding, Passover Cookies, Seder Plate, Charoses

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VEGETABLE DISHES
Vegetarian Loaf, Matzo Lasagna, Stir Fry Vegetables, Grilled Vegetables, Apple Farfel Pudding, Farfel & Mushrooms, Potato Latkes, Green Beans Almondine, Broccoli & Mushrooms, Handmade Egg Noodles, Seder Plates, Charoses

SALADS
Cole Slaw, Pickled Beets, Tossed Salad, Cucumber Salad, Fresh Fruit Salad

DESSERTS
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Passover Food Ideas

Vegetarian ideas when pasta is not an option

By DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
Special to The CJN

Festivities and holidays can present a daunting challenge to those whose family members or guests are vegetarians. Especially when your university-aged child returns home and unexpectedly (as your brisket is simmering away in the oven!) advises you that he/she won't be eating meat any more. That's exactly what my 11-year-old did this past August upon returning home from summer camp.

I had to adapt and adapt rather quickly if I didn't want him eating pasta three times a day. Seders, and the rest of the meals during the holiday, are notoriously protein-based with the options usually being either roast chicken, brisket or tzimmes with carrots and yet more beef. Even the soothing and lovingly simmered chicken soup can be problematic for diehard vegetarians. So, to help feed my own child and hopefully assist you in offering up delicious options, I've developed four easy to make but no less scrumptious vegetarian options for the eight days of Passover. You might even find that they become a mainstay during the rest of the year as well.

CARROT AND APPLE SOUP

This comforting and super easy soup can be frozen with excellent results. It's a terrific alternative to chicken soup and then, of course, can additionally be used during the rest of the holidays as a first course.

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 cup sliced shallots
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. each ground ginger, dried thyme and pepper
1 1/2 lb. carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
1 potato, peeled and cut into chunks
1 apple, peeled, cored and cut into chunks
2 cups vegetable stock
crumbled apple chips

In Dutch oven set over medium heat, heat oil. Add shallots, salt, ginger, thyme and pepper; cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until softened. Stir in carrots, potato and apple until well coated. Pour in vegetable stock and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for about 20 minutes or until vegetables are very tender. In batches, puree in blender until smooth. Return to pot to heat through. Serve garnished with crumbled apple chips. Makes 6 servings.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH AND SPINACH 'LASAGNA'

I simply adore this recipe. The squash makes this faux lasagna amazingly sweet while the reduced cream with the spinach provides a rich undertone. In a pinch, you can substitute 3 packages (10 oz. each) frozen chopped spinach for the fresh spinach.

3 lb. fresh spinach, stems removed
3 tbsp. butter
1 cup chopped onion
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp.salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1 cup whipping cream
1 butternut squash, peeled
1/2 cup grated Parmiggiano Reggiano or Parmesan cheese

Wash spinach under cool running water. With just the water clinging to the leaves, cook in large skillet over medium high heat, adding a handful at a time and turning with tongs, until wilted, about 5 minutes. Drain in colander. Thoroughly squeeze all excess moisture out of spinach. Chop coarsely; set aside.

In same skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add onions, garlic, salt and pepper and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes or until softened. Pour in cream. Bring to boil. Boil gently for about 5 minutes or until slightly thickened. Stir in spinach; set aside.

Meanwhile, cut bottom bulb part of squash apart from solid neck section; reserve for another use. Slice squash lengthwise into long slices about 1/8-in. thick. Layer bottom of 3 quart casserole or gratin dish with single layer of squash slices. Cover with 1/3 of spinach mixture. Continue layering squash and spinach mixture, for a total of 4 squash layers and 3 spinach layers, ending with squash. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. (Lasagna can be assembled to this point and refrigerated, covered, for up to 24 hours. Bring to room temperature before continuing.)

Cover casserole with piece of waxed or parchment paper and place on baking sheet. Bake in centre of preheated oven at 400 for 30 minutes. Remove waxed paper. Bake for an additional 15 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 8.

GRILLED PORTOBELLO STACKS

These "open faced sandwiches" are a terrific and simple lunch idea for the holidays.

1/4 cup olive oil
8 medium Portobello mushrooms, stems trimmed
1/2 cup prepared pesto
8 slices roasted red pepper
4 oz. soft goat cheese, crumbled

Brush mushrooms evenly with olive oil. On grill or grill pan, cook, turning often, for 10 to 15 minutes or until very soft. Transfer to baking sheet, grill side up. Spread pesto evenly over mushrooms. Lay 1 slice of roasted pepper over each one. Sprinkle evenly with goat cheese. Broil 2 to 3 minutes or until cheese is melted and light golden. Serve immediately. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Cauliflower and asparagus stew

CURRIED CAULIFLOWER AND ASPARAGUS STEW

2 tbsp. olive oil
2 cups chopped onions
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp. curry powder
1 tbsp. honey
3/4 tsp. cumin
1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper
1/4 tsp. ground coriander
1 head cauliflower, trimmed and cut into florets
1 can (19 oz.) stewed or diced tomatoes
1 can (14 oz.) coconut milk
1 lb. asparagus, trimmed and cut into bite-size pieces
1/4 cup chopped fresh coriander

In Dutch oven set over medium heat, heat oil. Add onions and garlic; cook, stirring, for about 10 minutes or until golden. Stir in curry powder, honey, cumin, salt, pepper and coriander for 1 minute. Stir in cauliflower until well coated. Pour in tomatoes and coconut milk. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 20 minutes or until cauliflower is soft and liquid has been reduced slightly. Stir in asparagus. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until asparagus is bright green and tender but firm. Transfer to serving dish. Sprinkle with chopped fresh coriander. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

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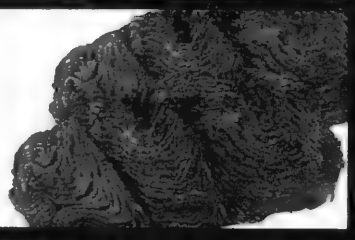

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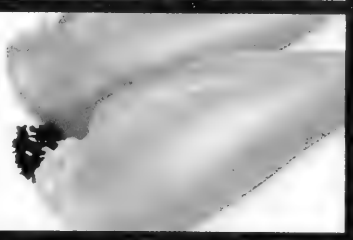

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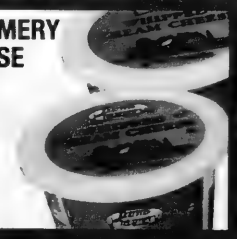

BILLY BEE HONEY
Kosher for Passover
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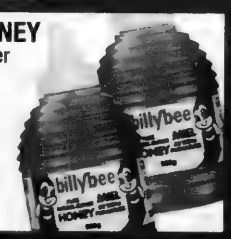

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Passover Food Ideas

Pesach rocks !!!

By DOROTHY LIPOVENKO
Special to The CJN

Preparing for Pesach is like being in the garment business: both work at least one season ahead.

As the last Chanukah candle flickers out, the dreaded P-word – and it's not Purim – creeps out of the shadows. By January, cookie crumbs are being taken down in chametz raids. And February barely turns the corner before popcorn is banned altogether.

But paranoia arrived early this year, thanks to the first days of Pesach being a rare no show in April.

Deadlines were moved up, but it's hard to get psyched with a mop and a jug of Murphy Vegetable Oil Soap when snow's on the ground. The big question? To do or not to do the windows. With the meter still ticking on winter, the windows can wait.

But it hardly matters when the starting pistol goes off. Until the last nano-second, you'll find me on my knees, washing something. If the experts advise us to "work smart," why not also "clean smart"? So this year, I'm heading to my local "house despot" store for a roll of the medium-weight paper renovators use to protect floors while they work. My plan: wash the kitchen floor in advance, cover and rip away the paper at erev yom tov's opening bell.

Actually, I don't mind the holiday's scutwork. This is my mantra, and make it yours too: be grateful for health, happiness and a roof over your head to clean.

But let's face it, Pesach cleaning is a project, and an exhausting one. To start my engines and keep them running, I rely on rock music. And nothing does it like the Rolling Stones, whose song titles can be an uncanny fit for the tasks (and mood) at hand.

So, here's to the greatest rock 'n' roll band ever, one that I'm sure never considered the sub-text of Pesach in its music. Herewith my favourites:

- *Start Me Up* (what else?)
- *Time Is On My Side* (that was my tune two months ago)
- *19th Nervous Breakdown* (and there's more where that came from)
- *The Last Time* (making a vat of home-made gefilte fish)
- *Satisfaction* (when a room earns your Good-Cleaning Seal of Approval)
- *Ain't Too Proud To Beg* (my husband for help)
- *Beast Of Burden* (couldn't have said it better myself)
- *Mixed Emotions* (love the holiday food – dread the extra pounds)
- *Too Tough* (is it just me or is the fridge heavier to move this year?)
- *Let It Bleed* (what's another two-inch gash on the head from banging into walls?)
- *It's All Over Now* (until next year, but with a double Adar, that's almost 13 months away!)
- *If You Really Want To Be My Friend* (you'll take me to a hotel next Pesach)

This year, I've decided to add dairy to the menu to break the monotony of fish. We eat a version of this eggplant dish often during the year – should be nice with crunchy matzah.

YUMMY EGGPLANT

Wash and cut a medium eggplant into small dice, leaving the peel on. (After discarding two inches from the top, you should have a five-inch long eggplant to work with). Line an oven pan with foil, shpritz with Pesach cooking oil spray and scatter the dice on top. Brush very lightly – and I mean lightly – with oil and bake at 375 until brown, soft and slightly crispy. (Check after half an hour and keep checking every 10 minutes. Watch that it doesn't burn).

In a large skillet, put a medium peeled and diced Yukon gold or red potato. Add a small chopped red onion, a seeded, chopped red pepper and 1-1/4cups of tinned tomatoes with juice. If tomatoes are whole, break them up in the pan. (If this product is not available, use some tomato juice and chopped fresh tomatoes.)

Mix in the following spices: garlic powder (to your taste), a dash of black pepper, one teaspoon of ground cumin (more if you prefer). Add one tablespoon chopped flatleaf Italian parsley. Stir in 1/2 cup of good quality tomato sauce and 1/2 cup of water.

Simmer about 15 to 20 minutes, covered, until potatoes are soft. Stir occasionally, adding more water or tomato juice if necessary to prevent sticking. You should have a nice sauce, but not too runny. Remove from heat, stir in eggplant and crumble in a one-inch chunk of feta cheese. Adjust seasonings if you want.

Serve immediately, but I think it tastes best warm, not hot. Serves two as a main course, four as an appetizer.

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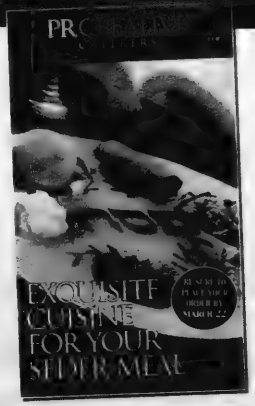

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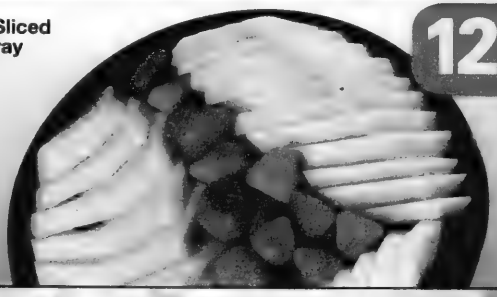

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You can eat healthy during the holiday

By JENNIFER LIBMAN
Special to The CJN

Marni Wasserman, chef and cooking teacher, tells her students that eating healthy during Passover can be simple and delicious.

"It can be done with foods many people already eat throughout the rest of the year," she says.

A graduate of the Institute of Holistic Nutrition in Toronto as well as a certified chef from The Natural Gourmet Culinary Institution in New York City, Wasserman is founder of Delicious Knowledge, a two-year-old company that focuses on teaching people about and how to cook whole foods.

"Whole foods are those that are as close to nature as possible. They are unprocessed and unrefined, or processed and refined as little as possible, before being consumed. Whole foods typically do not contain added ingredients, such as sugar, salt or fat. Eating during Passover does not mean you need to give up those ideals," Wasserman says.

"During Passover, many people seem to think they have no choice but to indulge in heavy meal after heavy meal. By cooking with fresh ingredients, such as vegetables or small amounts of fish or chicken, people can avoid the mostly packaged products that are made specifically for the holiday. Not only are these items often more expensive than fresh ingredients, but they are also filled with processed ingredients."

Each March, Wasserman holds a cooking class in her home where she teaches people innovative and healthy Passover recipes that they can serve during the seders or throughout the rest of the week.

She says this is a great opportunity for people to try new ingredients such as quinoa, or leafy green vegetables such as kale or collard greens.

QUINOA WITH PORCINI MUSHROOMS AND CURRANTS

1 cup quinoa
2 cups water or vegetable broth
salt
3/4 cup dried porcini mushrooms
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 cup minced red onion
1 garlic clove
1 stalk celery
1 cup dried currants
1/2 cup toasted pinenuts or pecans
freshly ground pepper
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley or thyme

Rinse quinoa and place in large pot and dry toast on a low heat for a few minutes. Add 2 cups of water and bring to a boil with salt. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

Combine 1 cup of water with porcini mushrooms in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove the pan from the heat and let the mushrooms soak for 20 minutes. Then drain the mushrooms, reserving the mushrooms and the liquid separately. Roughly chop the mushrooms.

Warm the olive oil in a medium pan over medium-low heat. Add the onions and celery and cook until the vegetables are soft, about 7 minutes.

Add the reserved mushrooms, the garlic and the currants and saute until the currants are heated through, about 2 minutes.

Add the pinenuts, quinoa, salt and black pepper to taste, and the mushroom soaking liquid. Cook until the liquid has been absorbed, about 2 minutes. Stir in the chopped parsley and serve hot.

SIMPLE COLLARDS WITH PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS

6-7 cups chopped collard greens
2 cups water
2 tsp. minced garlic
1/3 cup thinly sliced scallions
2-3 portobello mushrooms, cut into thin slices
olive oil to taste at the end
salt to taste

Wash collards, remove stalks and stack 4-5 leaves. Roll like a cigar and slice into thin ribbons. To cook collards, place water in skillet with a lid. Bring to a boil and add the prepared collards. Cover and cook over high heat for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain in a colander and set aside.

Heat the oil in same skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and scallions and saute for about 30 seconds. Turn the heat to medium high and add the mushrooms and a pinch of sea salt to draw out some liquid. Cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring constantly until mushrooms are tender.

Reduce heat to low, stir in cooked collards, cover and cook for 1-2 minutes until hot.

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Passover Food Ideas

Vegetables dress up the meal

By DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
Special to The CJN

Passover falls a tad early this year – although as Carolyn Blackman, talented food editor of *The CJN* has remarked, Passover never falls early or late, it's always right on time! – making the pickings for local vegetables somewhat light.

I've chosen to navigate the season bemusedly this March, treading between deep winter favourites such as beets and carrots, and heartier year-round fare such as cucumbers. Fennel and mint are a classic Italian pair, and here, with sweet roasted beets, make a winning combination. You will need a blade slicer with a 1/4-inch julienne blade to make the cucumber noodles, but it's well worth the purchase to enjoy these faux but utterly delicious "noodles." Sweet, honey glazed carrots never fail to win rave reviews.

CUCUMBER NOODLES

3 seedless cucumbers
2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1/4 tsp. each salt and pepper
2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil

Trim ends of cucumbers. Using a blade slicer with a 1/4-inch julienne blade, cut each cucumber into long 1/4-inch julienne strips, slicing until you reach the core. Then rotate the cucumber a quarter turn and continue slicing and rotating until only the core is left. Bring large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Blanche cucumber noodles for 1 minute. Drain and refresh under cold running water to stop the cooking.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat. Add cucumber, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Cook, tossing gently for about 2 minutes or until "noodles" are heated through. Transfer to serving bowl. Sprinkle with basil. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

ROASTED BEETS WITH FENNEL AND MINT

Fennel is kitniyot, but if you are not Sephardi, feel free to omit it and increase the mint to 2 tbsp. It will still be delicious, since the stars of the dish are the beets anyway.

3 large beets, trimmed
1 tbsp. sherry vinegar
1/2 tsp. fennel seeds, crushed
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp. chopped fresh mint

Tightly wrap beets in double thickness of foil; place on baking sheet. Roast in centre of preheated 425 oven for 1 to 1-1/2 hours or until very tender. Cool. (Beets can be made up to 2 days ahead.)

Whisk together vinegar, fennel seeds, mint, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in oil until mixture is well emulsified.

When beets are cool enough to handle, peel and cut into thin slices. Fan slices around serving bowl. Drizzle vinaigrette over. Sprinkle with basil. Serve at room temperature. Makes 6 servings.

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Nuclear Iran would threaten U.S. as well as Israel: Biden

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JERUSALEM — The Obama administration has boosted U.S. defence ties to Israel and will close ranks with its ally against any threat from a nuclear-armed Iran, U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden said Monday prior to a trip to Israel.

Biden arrived in Israel Monday afternoon to deliver a message to the Israeli public about U.S.-Israel relations, the Iranian nuclear program and the Middle East peace process.

The most senior U.S. official to visit Israel since President Barack Obama took office in January 2009, Biden is widely expected to caution his hosts not to attack Iran preemptively while world powers pursue fresh sanctions against Tehran.

In an interview with the Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Biden emphasized Washington's efforts to place greater international diplomatic pressure on the Iranians, as well as unilateral measures imposed by the U.S. treasury.

Asked about the prospect of an Israeli attack, he said, "Though I cannot answer the hypothetical questions you raised about Iran, I can promise the Israeli people that we will confront, as allies, any security challenge it will face. A nuclear-armed Iran would constitute a threat not only to Israel, it would also constitute a threat to the United States."

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Ehud Barak said Monday that Iran does not yet pose an existential threat to Israel.

"Iran isn't an existential threat to Israel at the moment, but it has the potential to develop into one, and we are working to prevent that," said Barak, speaking before the Knesset's foreign affairs and defence committee.

Biden, however, emphasized the Iranian threat and reiterated the U.S. commitment to Israel. The Obama administration "gives Israel annual military aid worth $3 billion," Biden said. "We revived defence consultations between the two countries, doubled our efforts to ensure Israel preserves its qualitative military edge in the region, expanded our joint exercises and co-operation on missile-defence systems."

Israel, which is believed to have the region's only atomic arsenal, bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1981, and in 2007, launched a similar sortie against Syria.

Those tactical challenges and U.S. reluctance to see a new regional war have led some analysts to predict Israel will eventually come round to a strategy of "containing" Iran, which denies its controversial uranium enrichment is for bombs.

Biden, who was scheduled to be in Israel until Thursday, was not expected to take part in indirect Israeli-Palestinian talks that would be spearheaded by Obama's special envoy, George Mitchell and could be announced during his visit. Biden will, however, be briefed on them.

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden *[File photo]*

U.S.-Israeli tensions flared over Obama's early push for a complete freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank.

Obama has since embraced a more limited 10-month moratorium on new building announced by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in November.

Obama has been trying to reach out to the Muslim world, a priority he has highlighted with high-profile visits to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and with a planned visit to Indonesia later this month.

"We certainly believe that when the United States effectively builds bridges with Muslim communities, this allows us to promote our interests, including interests that Israel benefits from," Biden told *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

"The construction freeze was a unilateral decision by the Israeli government, and it is not part of an agreement with the American administration or with the Palestinians," he said. "It's not everything that we wanted, but it's an important action that has significant impact on the ground."

Biden's meetings in Jerusalem were to begin Tuesday morning, when he was to meet with President Shimon Peres at the President's Residence in Jerusalem. He was then to visit Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his advisers at the prime minister's Jerusalem residence. Following a private session, the two leaders were to hold a joint press conference.

Biden is to address the Israeli public at Tel Aviv University on Thursday, when he is expected to discuss U.S.-Israel ties and Obama's vision for the peace process and for dealing with the Iranian nuclear threat.

Biden's Israel visit is a year too late

By ALUF BENN

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I looked over the schedule for U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit and found it hard to believe.

It included an extensive meeting as well as a more limited meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, dinner with the prime minister and his wife, Sara, at their official residence, a helicopter tour with Defence Minister Ehud Barak and a speech at Tel Aviv University.

A draft of his speech wasn't made available to me, but I'll go out on a limb and guess that Biden will expound on his declarations of love, support and limitless commitment to the security of Israel and its prosperity.

With so much attention, it's a shame he's arriving a year late – a year that his boss, President Barack Obama, wasted on fruitless diplomatic moves that only further compromised the shaky stature of the United States in the Middle East. Obama and his advisers expected the hand that he extended to the Arab world and Iran, the president's reference in his Cairo speech to passages from the Qur'an, and the public and demonstrable distance that he created from Israel would soften the Muslims and Arabs' residual hostility for the United States. It didn't work.

Columnist Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times*, who recently visited the Saudi capital, Riyadh, quoted a disappointed highly placed Saudi as saying: "Things are worse now than before, because our hopes were so high after Cairo." The Iranians have ignored Obama's gestures of friendship and subsequent threat of sanctions, and have simply continued to pursue their nuclear program.

In Israel, Obama has aroused concern that on the one hand he would exert heavy pressure and hit American aid to Israel in order to expedite an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the establishment of a Palestinian state; and on the other hand that the United States will reconcile itself to an Iranian nuclear bomb. The Israelis, who'd gotten used to pampering and special gestures from former presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, suddenly sensed they didn't have a friend in the White House.

Biden's visit is designed to open a new chapter in relations between Netanyahu and the U.S. administration, with a two-fold message: recognition of the political importance of Israel and its supporters in America in advance of the November Congressional elections; and giving Netanyahu the credit he's not yet earned for his statement in support of "two states for two peoples" and his settlement construction freeze. He will get it now under the threat of a preemptive war against Iran.

Israel has a justifiable reputation as an apprehensive and nervous country – and as a serial attacker of nuclear reactors. To calm Israeli nerves and ensure that the Middle East is not set aflame, Obama has no choice but to use the tried and true methods of the past: supporting, stroking and promising loyalty.

Brown vows to change universal jurisdiction law

JTA

LONDON — British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he will change legislation enabling Palestinian groups to obtain arrest warrants against Israeli political leaders on suspicion of war crimes.

However, in practice, the legislation is likely to wait until after a general election in the United Kingdom.

In the March 4 *Daily Telegraph*, Brown wrote that Britain is committed to "universal jurisdiction" in serious cases of war crimes. But he added that Britain must make sure that individuals with political interests can't have arrest warrants issued against foreign leaders in cases where there isn't sufficient evidence.

In order to overcome this problem, Brown announced March 4 that his government is considering changing the law to require the consent of the Public Prosecution Service prior to the issuance of such an arrest warrant.

Gordon Brown

Brown added that the government's suggestion will be put before the parliamentary justice committee. Justice Minister Jack Straw indicated the committee will have to present its conclusion to the government within one month. However, since the United Kingdom is on the verge of an election campaign, and the prime minister might announce the election date before the date the committee has to present its conclusion, it might be too late to enact the law before the election.

Israeli officials and military officers, unwilling to risk having an arrest warrant issued against them, have been avoiding the United Kingdom.

Britain wants to continue to be involved in the Middle East peace process, and the British government is aware that it would be marginalized if Israeli politicians refuse to visit Britain.

Israeli British Ambassador Ron Prosor welcomed Brown's announcement.

"We particularly concur that 'Britain cannot afford to have its standing in the world compromised for the sake of tolerating such gestures,'" he said, quoting from Brown's piece in the *Telegraph*.

The Conservative Party's spokesperson Justice, Dominic Grieve, said: "This morning Gordon Brown wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* that 'Britain cannot afford to have its standing in the world compromised' by spurious and politicized war crimes prosecutions. This afternoon, he kicked the whole issue into the long grass. The Conservatives would have supported him in resolving the problem, but he has chosen to duck it instead."

Fishing for Jews in Russia's muddy waters

By ANNA RUDNITSKAYA
JTA

MOSCOW — This spring, Howard Flower and his assistants plan to go to Russia's westernmost region, Kaliningrad, on a fishing expedition: they're fishing for Jews.

Flower, the aliyah director of the Russian office of the International Christian Embassy, a pro-Israel evangelical group, plans to look through telephone directories for Jewish-sounding names and meet with local leaders in an attempt to find far-flung Jews, some of whom might not even realize they're Jewish, and talk to them about moving to Israel.

Determining who is Jewish in Russia is more of an art than a science.

In the 2002 Russian census, the country's most recent, 233,000 Russians self-identified as Jews. Jewish leaders here and abroad consider the figure an underestimate, but can't agree on the actual figure or how to determine it.

"Anyone who works in Jewish organizations knows that the real number of Jews is higher than records show because many people do not receive any services and thus are not registered anywhere," said Rabbi Yosef Hersonski, head of the Khamovniki community in Moscow. "Probably they are not interested. But if their mother was Jewish, we consider them Jews."

One of Russia's chief rabbis, Berel Lazar, estimates the number of Jews in Russia at one million to two million; he considers as Jews all those with a Jewish mother. NCSJ, a U.S.-based advocacy group for Russian-speaking Jews, estimates that Russia has 400,000 to 700,000 Jews, and one to 1.5 million in the former Soviet Union as a whole.

A representative for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the largest Jewish aid group active in Russia, declined to speculate on a figure.

"We have not yet found reliable data based on sound methodology about the number of Jews in Russia," JDC representative Rina Edelshtein said.

Across Russia, approximately 100,000 Jews are registered with their local Jewish community organizations. To be registered, one has to prove Jewishness.

It's often not a simple thing.

Official records tend to be a mess. In the Soviet era, ethnicity was delineated on adults' internal passports. Those with two Jewish parents were registered as Jewish, but the children of mixed marriages could choose the ethnicity of either parent. Since Jews suffered discrimination in the Soviet Union, the products of intermarriage usually did not register as Jewish.

The situation was captured best perhaps in a joke popular at the height of the Soviet Jews' struggle for immigration to Israel.

"How many Jews are there in the USSR?" Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev asks the head of the KGB.

"Two-and-a-half million," the KGB head replies. "But if we let them leave, there will be six million."

By the time the Iron Curtain fell and Soviet Jews obtained the right to emigrate, there were 1.8 million Jews in the Soviet Union, including 570,000 in Russia, according to 1989 census data. Most have left since then, moving to Israel, the United States and Germany.

The Israeli Embassy in Moscow says it knows only about those who qualify for aliyah, or immigration to Israel, under Israel's Law of Return. Under this criteria, anyone with a Jewish grandparent is eligible.

The Nativ organization, which deals with aliyah in the former Soviet Union, estimated that 530,000 Russians meet the criteria for aliyah, according to embassy spokesman Alex Goldman-Shaiman. How many are legitimately Jewish is unknown, he said.

Mark Tolts, a demographer at Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the author of the "Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe," estimates that only about 255,000 Jews live in Russia. He bases his figures on census data.

"If you speak of a million Jews, show me the method with which you counted them," Tolts said. "Given the proliferation of mixed marriages among the Jews of the former Soviet Union in the last generations, it is very difficult to empirically determine the number of Jews according to Halachah. Demographers base their figures on the statistic data they have. These are mainly census results, vital and migration statistics."

Tolts says that 1.5 million people did not state their nationality during the 2002 census; he guesses that at least 20,000 were Jews.

However, Tolts' figure of 255,000 refers only to the so-called "core Jewish population," the aggregate of those who, when asked, identify themselves as Jews or, in the case of children, are identified as such by their parents. It does not include those of Jewish origin who report another ethnicity in the census. Russian passports dropped the ethnicity field in 1994.

To complicate matters, some Russians of Jewish lineage are baptized yet still identify as Jews when asked about ethnicity.

"The main dilemma is who should be called Jews," said Mark Levin, the executive director of NSCJ.

Flowers, of the International Christian Embassy, called counting Russia's Jews "one of the trickiest questions facing man."

His organization recently provided the Jewish Agency for Israel with a list of 1.2 million people in Russia whose names sound Jewish, all of whom were found in online and print telephone directories.

In 2004, a similar list of 30,000 names among St. Petersburg residents was examined. The Jewish Agency chose 10,000 that seemed Jewish and called them. More than 2,000 expressed some interest either in immigrating to Israel or in Jewish community events, according to Flowers.

Along with halachic and ethnic standards, he said the methodology introduced a new way of counting Jews: "phonetically."

Israel warns Palestinian Authority

By AVI ISSACHAROFF AND AMOS HAREL
© Ha'artz Daily Newspapers Ltd.

Israel has conveyed messages to the Palestinian Authority over the past few days that it must contain the popular protests that have recently erupted in the West Bank, stop PA officials from participating in them and keep them from turning violent, Palestinian sources told *Ha'aretz*.

They said Israel also told the PA it must reduce incitement regarding the Temple Mount and Jerusalem, and curtail its campaign against the use of Israeli products.

Israeli officials said that if the PA does not cut down on the incitement and keep the protests and boycott campaign in check, Israel will reduce cooperation with the PA and increase its arrests in Palestinian-controlled areas, the Palestinian sources said.

Over the past few months, arrests by Israel in PA areas have declined, and the Israel Defence Forces has been limiting the entry of troops into those areas.

The messages to the PA were delivered during several conversations between senior Israeli security officials and their Palestinian counterparts, as well as by political figures. The Palestinian sources said Shin Bet security service chief Yuval Diskin had discussed the matter with the PA official responsible for civil matters in the West Bank, Hussein al-Sheikh.

Mahmoud Abbas

The PA has sponsored several rallies in the villages of Bil'in and Na'alin, west of Ramallah, some of which have been attended by PA officials. In recent weeks, the PA has also backed protests in the village of Nebi Salah, north of Ramallah, and in Umm Salamuna in the Bethlehem region. Palestine Liberation Organization officials are prominently involved in clashes in the Jerusalem area and have come out against what the PA describes as the Judaization of Jerusalem.

In addition, PA President Mahmoud Abbas has spoken out sharply against the inclusion of Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs and Rachel's Tomb, near Bethlehem, in a list of Jewish heritage sites.

The PA has so far done nothing to curtail the protests and, as of Sunday, had conveyed no message to its grassroots activists to maintain a lower profile at upcoming rallies.

Dead Sea rises slightly

After years of drought-like conditions that saw the water level of the Dead Sea plummet by 15 metres, the water level rose by eight centimetres this winter, the Water Authority said. Water levels have also risen back to the critical "red line" in several subterranean aquifers for the first time in years, and the mountain and coastal aquifers have regained the water levels of last year. According to the Water Authority, this winter's rainfall has covered water deficits of the past year, but not the past five years. It noted Lake Kinneret's water level went up to the lower red line (213 metres) for the first time since July 2008.

Arab League backs talks

The Arab League agreed to support the resumption of indirect peace talks with Israel. The Arab foreign ministers at an Arab League meeting March 3 in Cairo agreed in principle to support four months of indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinians. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who was at this week's meeting, has said he would abide by the decision of the league's ministerial committee. Abbas has said he won't return to direct talks until Israel halts all settlement building in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. Talks have been stalled for more than a year. The league will meet in July to assess the talks' progress.

Rocks thrown from Temple Mount

Clashes broke out between Israeli police officers and Muslim rock throwers at the end of Friday prayers on the Temple Mount following a sermon on a recent Israeli decision to include two West Bank shrines on a list of national heritage sites. Rocks were thrown from the direction of the mosques above toward Jews praying below at the Western Wall plaza. Israeli police entered the Temple Mount compound to quell the rock throwing. The stone throwers retreated inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque. After talks with the Muslim Waqf, which administers the compound, police allowed worshippers to exit the area. Rocks were also thrown at police by young Arabs at several locations in east Jerusalem and the West Bank. A Waqf official said the clash followed a mosque sermon on Israel's decision to include Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem as Jewish historical sites.

– files from JTA and Ha'aretz

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Canada

Weiss won't ordain female rabbis

JTA

NEW YORK — Rabbi Avi Weiss has backed away from the idea of ordaining women as Orthodox rabbis under the title "rabba."

Rabbi Weiss, a prominent modern Orthodox rabbi who guides the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in the Bronx, had taken heat from the Orthodox community since he made the announcement in January that he would use the feminized version of rabbi for his student, Sara Hurwitz, who had been using the title "maharat."

The Rabbinical Council of America, an umbrella organization consisting mostly of modern Orthodox rabbis, had been considering expelling him from the organization, the New York *Jewish Week* reported, though the veracity of that report is still under debate.

But Rabbi Weiss, the founder and leader of the Yeshivat Chovevei Torah rabbinical school, and the RCA apparently have reached an agreement.

"It is not my intention or the intention of Yeshivat Maharat to confer the title of 'Rabba' upon its graduates," Rabbi Weiss said in a March 5 statement.

"Yeshivat Maharat prepares women for positions of religious leadership in the Orthodox community. Each student who completes its course of study in Tanach, Talmud, Halachah and Jewish thought, and is deemed fit by her faith, knowledge of our Mesoret, ethical integrity and temperament to assume positions of religious leadership in Orthodox institutions will be confirmed as manhigah hilkhatit, ruhanit, toranit (Maharat)."

The RCA concurred in its own statement, which it issued in conjunction with Rabbi Weiss'.

"We are gratified that during the course of these conversations, Rabbi Weiss concluded that neither he nor Yeshivat Maharat would ordain women as rabbis and that Yeshivat Maharat will not confer the title of 'Rabba' on graduates of their program," the organization wrote.

IMPORTANT NOTICE / AVIS IMPORTANT

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The Government of Canada has Funds Available for Projects to Commemorate the *M.S. St. Louis* Incident

In 2008, the Government of Canada launched the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP). Under the CHRP, funding is available for commemorative and educational projects that provide recognition of the *M.S. St. Louis* incident of 1939 which affected the Jewish-Canadian community in the context of the restrictive immigration policies of the day, and that promote the Jewish-Canadian community's contributions to building Canada. Eligible Canadian organizations with a mandate relevant to, or a demonstrated partnership or link with the Jewish-Canadian community can apply for funding.

For more information on how to apply, please contact the CHRP at 1-888-77MULTI (1-888-776-8584) (toll-free) or by e-mail at **CHRP-PRHC@cic.gc.ca**.

Program guidelines and application forms can also be downloaded from the CHRP's website:

www.cic.gc.ca/proposals

Le gouvernement du Canada offre du financement pour des projets commémoratifs en lien avec l'incident du *M.S. St. Louis*

En 2008, le gouvernement du Canada a lancé le Programme de reconnaissance historique pour les communautés (PRHC). Dans le cadre du PRHC, un financement est offert pour des projets communautaires commémoratifs et éducatifs visant à reconnaître l'incident du *M.S. St. Louis* de 1939, qui a touché la communauté juive du Canada et qui découle des politiques d'immigration restrictives de l'époque, et à faire la promotion des contributions de la communauté judéo-canadienne à l'édification du Canada. Les organismes canadiens qui disposent d'un mandat pertinent ou qui entretiennent un partenariat ou un lien manifeste avec la communauté judéo-canadienne peuvent présenter une demande de financement.

Pour de plus amples renseignements sur la façon de présenter une demande, veuillez communiquer avec un représentant du PRHC, par téléphone, au 1-888-77MULTI (1-888-776-8584) (sans frais), ou par courriel, à **PRHC-CHRP@cic.gc.ca**.

Vous pouvez également télécharger les directives du programme et les formulaires de demande sur le site Web du PRHC :

www.cic.gc.ca/propositions

Canada

Comedian Joey Elias serves up first DVD

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Beloved Montreal comedy scene stalwart Joey Elias wants you to check out his douche bag. Not an actual one, mind you. Rather, his new DVD of the same name.

Though he's been performing standup comedy for 20 years, Elias is now releasing his inaugural video offering, titled *Joey Elias: Douchebag!* The Toronto DVD launch takes place March 17 at Absolute Comedy club (2335 Yonge St.), where he'll be touching off a four-night string of performances.

The Montreal launch was on March 4 at The Comedynest.

Five dollars from each sale of the $25 DVD are going to the Montreal Children's Hospital diabetes clinic. Elias said the rest of the money helps repay the cost of production.

Speaking to *The CJN* from Montreal last month, Elias said there was never any hurry to put out a DVD per se; instead it "just felt like the timing was good" and that any opportunity to benefit the children's diabetes clinic was one he would take.

So why call it Douchebag?

"It's from the last joke on the video. And honestly, it's not a bad word. It's an actual thing," Elias said.

Filmed live at Montreal's Studio Juste Pour Rire last October, the DVD showcases an hour of Elias at his witty best.

Fans of his comedic stylings will recognize some tried and true material from his many years on the comedy circuit. For instance, Elias' riff on his stints entertaining the troops in Afghanistan and what it means visiting them as a Jew never gets tired.

Douchebag! is also peppered with new gags, and features a lot more edge to Elias' delivery. To wit: his take on why it's never a good idea to fake a heart attack to gain quicker admission to a hospital – in this case, Montreal's Jewish General Hospital. To reveal any more than the premise here would ruin the joke.

Asked about his new attitude, Elias said that his mood at the time of filming was influenced by the bad breakup of a long-term relationship, as well as his recently diagnosed Type II diabetes and the terminal illness of a close friend.

"I brought [the diabetes] upon myself. I just didn't take care of myself and take family genetics and history into consideration," he said. "What I discovered from all this was what I call 'Angry Joey'. It's the closest I'll ever get to George Carlin. He'd rant and rave about stuff that bugged him. It took him 20 years to figure out that anger did work [in comedy]. It took me 15. So yeah, I'm a little more edgy, but I like to think that I say the things people think. At least, that's what I'd like to think. People seem to like it."

For more information or to purchase the DVD, visit www.joeyelias.com.

Joey Elias

Correction

The article "Artist paints portraits of Olympic athletes" (March 4) should have said that for more information, readers can call 416-928-6772 or visit www.airdgallery.org. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

TORONTO AUTHOR JOSEPH KERTES TO RECEIVE U.S. JEWISH BOOK AWARD THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK

Toronto author **Joseph Kertes** is to receive the 2009 National Jewish Book Award in fiction in New York this week for his book, *Gratitude*.

The Hungarian-born Kertes, who founded Humber College's creative writing program and is dean of creative and performing arts at Humber, previously won a Canadian National Jewish Book Award for the book, a Holocaust story that was inspired by a family anecdote.

Kertes has said that the story "haunted me my whole life." Although the events happened before his time, he said he tried to shape them into a literary story with deeply imagined characters. "What the story says to me – and what I hope sets it apart from others on the subject – is that all of us – victims, perpetrators, Christians, Jews, saints and criminals alike – are capable of making mistakes with tragic consequences," he said on his website, www.josephkertes.com.

The award is one of the top honours awarded anywhere in the world for Jewish literature. *Gratitude* is published by Viking Canada – Penguin.

* * *

Literary Competitions & Awards

• A top U.S. intelligence analyst of Chinese affairs in the last quarter-century, **Jay Taylor**, has won the 2010 Lionel Gelber Prize for his book, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Belknap Press, Harvard University). The prize was announced recently by **Noah Rubin**, chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize Board and grandnephew of **Lionel Gelber**.

• Non-fiction authors **Sarah Abrevaya Stein** and **Kenneth B. Moss** will share the top prize of $125,000 (US) in the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish literature, to be handed out in Jerusalem on March 31. Judges were deadlocked over whether Stein or Moss' book deserved to win. Stein wrote *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (Yale University Press), and Moss wrote *Jewish Renaissance in the Russian Revolution* (Harvard University Press). The second-place category was suspended.

• Submission deadline is April 30, 2010, for the J. I. Segal Awards competition, which seeks works on Jewish themes in eight categories from authors, educators and filmmakers. Prizes are to be awarded in a gala ceremony in November at the Jewish Public Library, Montreal. 514-345-2627, ext. 3017. www.jewishpubliclibrary.org

Judy and David

* * *

Names in the News: Poet **Roger Nash**, who has won many literary awards including the Canadian Jewish Book Award, has been named the poet laureate for Sudbury, Ont. The Laurentian University philosophy professor was a former president of the League of Canadian poets. Born in England in 1942, Nash has also served as cantor in Sudbury's Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• **Michael Nathanson**'s riveting play *Talk* continues to March 20 at St. Lawrence Centre, Jane Mallet Theatre. Various post-show discussions titled "Talk After Talk" have been scheduled, including one with American human rights advocate **Martin Luther King III** on March 20. www.hgjewishtheatre.com

• Sundays on Bloor features On Being a Jazz Vocalist, with acclaimed jazz vocalist **Heather Bambrick**. Bambrick examines the role of the vocalist in jazz, including the fusion of styles within the genre, influences over the years, making a tune your own and the fundamentals of jazz singing. A co-presentation with the Jazz Performance and Education Centre, Toronto. $9, drop in. Includes light refreshments. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Sunday, March 14, 2 p.m. music@mnjcc.org

• *Red's in the Hood* is a family musical with **Judy & David**, the **CharActors** and other performers. "Little Red Riding Hood like you've never seen it." $26 to $16. City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 New Westminster Drive, Vaughan. March 20 and 21, at various times. 905-326-7469, www.cityplayhouse.ca

• The Centre for Women's Studies in Education's series on Yiddish Women Writers, presented by **Frieda Forman**, continues at OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., on March 10 and 17, 7 p.m. E-mail, cwse@utoronto.ca

• Toronto Jewish Film Festival has opened a "blazingly creative" cutting-edge website to announce its 18th annual festival, which runs April 17 to 25. The website offers details of TJFF's yearlong programming events, a highlights calendar, trailers and a blog that includes interviews with filmmakers and a photo gallery. Check it out at www.tjff.com. It's now also possible to follow TJFF on Facebook and Twitter as well.

Kevin Bundy, left and and Michael Rubenfeld in *Talk*

Drake gets three Juno nominations

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Toronto rapper Drake was nominated for three awards at last week's Juno nominations at the Royal York Hotel.

The singer, and former star of *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, was nominated for single of the year for *Best I Ever Had*; for rap recording of the year for his EP *So Far Gone* and for new artist of the year. The 24-year-old has yet to release a full-length album.

Aubrey Drake Graham is the son of Dennis Graham, a drummer who worked with Jerry Lee Lewis. Drake was raised by his Jewish mother in Toronto's Forest Hill neighbourhood and attended Forest Hill Collegiate Institute.

Sunplace, the debut CD from the Toronto group Jaffa Road, was nominated for world music album of the year. The group combines original and ancient poetry sung in Hebrew, Spanish and English with pulsating dub grooves, belly dance rhythms and ambient electronic textures.

Jaffa Road is made up of Aaron Lightstone, Aviva Chernick, Chris Gartner, Sundar Viswanathan and Jeff Wilson.

Meanwhile, Toronto producer and songwriter Howie Beck, who quipped in the *Toronto Star* that he'll be "putting the Jew in the Junos," was nominated for adult alternative album of the year for *In Public*.

The Juno Awards will be held in St. John's, Nfld., on April 17 and 18.

Jaffa Road: Sundar Viswanathan, Jeff Wilson, Chris Gartner, Aviva Chernick and Aaron Lightstone

Bluish examines Jewish identity

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Toronto Jewish Theatre's current production of *Bluish* is a calibrated celebration of Jewish identity.

Janece Shaffer's play, which is directed and produced by Ari Weisberg, deals with gradations of Jewishness within the context of an evolving romantic relationship.

Scheduled to run at the Toronto Centre for the Arts until March 14, it is ostensibly a comedy. But as is usually the case, the gentle humour masks issues that belie its levity.

Ben Kishman (Ron Boyd) and Beth Richardson (Melissa Battey-Pratt) are a young couple in love and on the cusp of matrimony. He is Jewish and she is a Christian. But in fact, she may be a member of the tribe.

Doubts about her identity arise after a medical test confirms that she is a Tay-Sachs carrier. Tay-Sachs, a genetic disorder, affects mainly Ashkenazi Jews.

Bluish, which is set on a fairly sparse stage consisting of a few pieces of unadorned furniture, explores the manner in which Ben and Beth cope with the sudden discovery that she's Jewish on her mother's side.

Ben doesn't really care whether his fiancée is Jewish. He may even be disappointed that he has bagged a Fran Drescher rather than a Grace Kelly.

The reason is clear. He's an atheist who has nothing more than a loose affiliation with Judaism, based on guilt and the horror of the Holocaust.

As he explains, "Well, there's blue and then there's blue-ish. Just like there's Jew and being Jew-ish."

Boyd, a skilled actor, conveys Ben's ambivalence effortlessly.

Beth's journey toward Judaism is not an easy one. After learning from Ben's inquisitive sister (Carrie Adelstein) that she is partially Jewish, Beth rides a mixture of emotions ranging from rejection to acceptance.

"I don't know who the hell I am," she says after the discovery is made courtesy of the Internet. "What do I know about being a Jew?"

But after randomly passing a lighted menorah in a window, visiting a synagogue with Ben's solicitous father (Bob Cooper) and warming up to Ben's brassy mother (Andria Siegler), Beth embraces Judaism, much to Ben's bemusement and confusion.

Beth completes her "conversion" by cooking a traditional Sabbath meal, baking a challah, lighting the candles and chanting a prayer.

"So pretty, huh?" she says, both mystifying and amazing Ben.

As Beth, Battey-Pratt is fairly convincing. Her chemistry with Boyd, however, leaves something to be desired, at least in the first half of the play. Until that juncture, the emotion that best sums her up is probably exasperation.

Nonetheless, *Bluish* works as an exploration of what it means to be Jewish in a modern, secular and frenetic society.

Melissa Battey-Pratt and Ron Boyd have lead roles in *Bluish*.

Music Project has chutzpah

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — Ask Idan Raichel how well he plays the piano and he'll tell you he "really sucks."

You wouldn't know it to listen to his music, though, nor to watch him perform. He and five of the many musicians who form part of the Idan Raichel Project were the opening act of the annual Chutzpah Festival in Vancouver last Thursday.

Performing before a packed auditorium at the University of British Columbia's Chan Centre for Performing Arts, they filled the centre with the melodic sounds of music, influenced by Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, India and Israel.

Raichel, 32, has sold some 300,000 records since he released his first album eight years ago. He started out playing in bars and then as backup for other Israeli pop singers, but by 2002, he ventured out on his own, attracting a variety of musicians to a project that changes shape, style and sound with every song.

There are some 75 musicians who have participated in the project, some as young as 16 and others in their 80s. Raichel composes and arranges many of the tracks, plays the keyboard and collaborates with the other vocalists and musicians.

Idan Raichel

Although several of his songs are sung in Hebrew, Raichel is quick to point out that his is not a Jewish project. "Sure, we have Jewish influences. For example we had a cantor, Yehia Tsubara, join us for a few songs. But before anything else, I see myself as an Israeli artist. Not everyone in the group is Israeli, but it's definitely an Israeli project."

In Israel, the project is considered part of the mainstream music scene, while abroad it falls under the category of world music.

Raichel hopes to create a DVD of his music in the coming months, set in the shadow of the King David Tower in Jerusalem. "I'd like to play there and in-between the songs talk to people and discuss the music," he said. "I'm trying to find an interesting concept."

Raichel said he and his fellow musicians were incredibly jet-lagged after arriving in Vancouver via Seattle. After their one and only performance in Vancouver, they were off to Boston and New York, stopping briefly in Israel before heading to Europe.

Raichel said he was unfazed by the travel schedule. "You lose sense of time when you're on tour, and it's a great feeling – not exhausting at all," he said.

"Once you release an album and get a positive response, it changes your life," he added. "It's a great privilege to make a living from your art."

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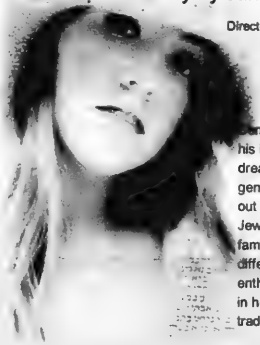
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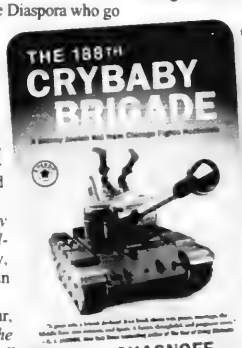
Books & Authors

Stories spotlight Diaspora Jews in the Israeli military

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

In Israel, almost all non-Arab Israeli citizens over 18 are conscripted into the army. Typically, men serve for three years and women for two.

There are also many young Jews from the Diaspora who go to Israel for the express purpose of joining the army. These volunteers are known as *hayalim bodeim*, the Lone Soldiers.



Joel Chasnoff, a standup comedian in New York City, is one such Lone Soldier. At 24, the Ivy League graduate left his home and made aliyah. He joined the Israeli army, and though he wanted to become a paratrooper, he was inducted into the 188th Armoured Brigade.

The 188th Crybaby Brigade: A Skinny Jewish Kid from Chicago Fights Hezbollah (Simon and Schuster) is Chasnoff's wry, at times irreverent, account of his stint in an Israeli armoured brigade.

Written with lots of sophomoric humour, as well as serious insightful commentary, *The 188th Crybaby Brigade* is half *MASH*, half *Full Metal Jacket* and takes us through Chasnoff's basic and advanced training and his stint in a patrol unit in Lebanon.

One of the main reasons Chasnoff decided to leave everything and serve in the Israeli army was his belief that as a Jew he had to do his bit for the State of Israel.

Chasnoff had an Israeli girlfriend, Dorit, and since he believed one day he'd get married and live in Israel, he felt that if he didn't do his stint in the army, as Israelis did, he would feel like a freeloader.

Ironically, back home in America, everyone encouraged him to go to Israel and join the army. In Israel, everyone he met thought he was crazy.

But a few weeks into basic training, as he's on leave and strolling through a market with a rifle slung around his shoulders, he takes great pride that he doesn't have to feel guilty about taking without giving back; that he's earned the right to call Israel home.

As with *MASH* and other army movies, Chasnoff pokes fun and highlights the inane absurdities of army life, such as learning to put up a tent in the dark or being offered combat rations with chocolate spread in tin cans stamped "Kosher For Passover 1985."

One time in Lebanon, Chasnoff's tank fired three rounds and ordered an artillery strike against a poor hapless dog they mistook for a Hezbollah guerrilla.

Chasnoff has a witty, sarcastic bent. He sees the army as an alternate universe ruled by aliens who tell him to do one thing, make him do another, and yell at him for doing that and not the first thing.

But, like *MASH*, *The 188th Crybaby Brigade* has a serious side to it. As a 24-year-old in a world populated with 18-year-olds, and as an American, Chasnoff can never fit in. Yet as an outsider, Chasnoff is in a unique position to offer interesting commentary on the state of the Israeli army.

He is bewildered, for instance, that he, a skinny American kid, is one of the best soldiers in the platoon. He is disturbed that inductees can wave medical-excuse permits to shirk long hikes and physical activities, as if this was grade school physical education.

He can't believe that there is a 10/4 snack rule in place. Twice a day, every day, the recruits stop whatever they are doing, sit in a circle and eat snacks as though they are in kindergarten.

What happened to the army he idolized as a kid, he wonders? "If a skinny, lactose-intolerant Jew from the suburbs is the strongest soldier in your platoon, how safe can Israel be?"

The 188th Crybaby Brigade provides an interesting take on basic training in the Israeli army. It offers serious, thoughtful and insightful commentary mixed with juvenile and sexual humour and the colourful sort of language only Israeli soldiers can dream up.

***

Lone Soldiers by Herb Keinon (Devora Publishing) is a more serious look at the unique plight of the Lone Soldier.

Keinon interviews 14 of these soldiers from the Diaspora and tells us their stories. Who are they? What brought them to Israel? What motivates them?

Yaniv trains in couner-terrorism combat.

They are a huge mix from all over the world, including the United States, Russia, the Dominican Republic and Ethiopia. Four of the 14 are women.

Yaniv, a former police officer and martial arts instructor from Toronto, is a unique case among unique individuals.

We are not entirely sure what he does. His last name is classified because he works in a special counter-terrorist unit. At 31, Yaniv is almost older than everyone else in his unit. His fellow soldiers call him Grandpa. He stands out physically as well. He is more than six feet tall and rippled with muscles. He trains instructors and soldiers involved in anti-terrorist combat martial arts, particularly the Israeli mix called Krav Maga.

He talks about what it was like growing up as an immigrant in Toronto at a young age. He moved to Canada from Israel after spending some time in France. His father also did security work, which Yaniv cannot talk about.

Although he spent some time in Israel in his 20s and even did some basic training, he decided to return to Israel and commit to a minimum of two years in the army during the Second Lebanon War.

It is estimated that about 35 per cent of Lone Soldiers are female and one-third are religious, and 60 per cent serve in combat units. At least five were killed in the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

With a foreward by Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak, this 160-page, fully illustrated glossy book provides an interesting and informative look at the motivations behind the phenomenon of the Lone Soldier.

MARCH BUBBIE APPROVED EVENTS

PASSOVER FOOD DRIVE
Sunday, March 14 • 1:30 pm
Entertainment with Rita and Alex Maslov.
Join our Passover Food drive on behalf of the National Council of Jewish Women Canada.

YIDDISH AFTERNOON
Monday, March 15 • 2 pm
Bella Sanderson, shares her extensive knowledge as she leads our popular Yiddish afternoon.

OPEN HOUSE AND SPEAKER
Wednesday, March 17 • 2 to 4 pm
Rachel Aber Schlesinger, will lead a discussion regarding current research about seniors and their relationships.

DINNER AND "FIDDLER ON THE ROOF" WITH JOSSI ABRAMOVICH
Thursday, March 18 • 5:30 pm
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Canadian leads Israeli team to kidney disease finding

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

HAIFA — Prof. Karl Skorecki, a Canadian who made aliyah in 1995, has just led a research team to a significant genetic finding in the field of non-diabetic kidney disease.

Skorecki is a researcher at the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology and the Rambam Medical Center in Haifa. His team includes researchers from Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University and the National Institute of Health (NIH) in Washington, D.C.

Kidney disease affects some 40 million people in North America, half a million of whom suffer from final or end-stage kidney disease requiring life-sustaining dialysis or transplantation.

"This is a significant finding," said Skorecki, a 56-year-old Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto (CHAT) graduate who made aliyah with his wife and five children in 1995 after spending a sabbatical at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot in 1991.

Until recently, it was thought that only certain rare types of kidney disease were genetic in origin. The new finding suggests that genetic factors play an important role, appearing in almost all forms of kidney disease, with one of the highest ever reported genetically-based set of risk markers for a common disease.

In September 2008, scientists at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md., designated the importance of gene MYH9, on chromosome 22, as an important genetic marker for kidney disease in African-Americans. Skorecki's team took this research one step further and narrowed it down to one particular even more predictive "risk allele," or any of the forms in which a gene for a specific trait can occur.

The finding, which was published in the current issue of *Human Molecular Genetics*, goes a long way to explaining why African-Americans have a four-fold higher rate and Hispanic Americans a two-fold higher rate of end-stage kidney disease than Americans of European ancestry.

Skorecki was, however, careful to explain that simply possessing the risk allele does not mean an individual will get kidney disease. "The risk allele heightens the susceptibility of an individual, and although in this case that is very powerful – increasing susceptibility by three to 10-fold – it is not Mendelian. In other words, if your dad has it, it is not certain that you will definitely get it, too," he said. "Most people who have the risk allele will not get kidney disease."

More often than not, those who do get the disease get it as a secondary condition, as the result of a primary factor such as HIV-AIDS, taking certain drugs, or even consuming a high-salt diet.

For example, the finding explains why African-Americans with AIDS frequently get HIVKN, HIV-related kidney nephropathy, while people of European ancestry hardly ever get the condition.

Skorecki also said that although the risk allele is most prevalent among African and Hispanic Americans, it could be present in anyone with African ancestry, though the frequency is much higher in west and south Africa that in north and east.

Interestingly, Ethiopians seem to be protected from the risk allele, a fact that may hold the secret that connects the function of the gene with healthy kidneys. Skorecki and his team are currently working with Ethiopian test cases in Israel, in collaboration with researchers in Ethiopia.

Karl Skorecki

'Research does depend on money and equipment. But more so, it depends on human interactions with excellent students and very strong colleagues and there is no shortage of that in Israel'

In addition to determining susceptibility, the discovery of the risk variant of the gene makes it relatively easy and cheap to screen at-risk populations, a key measure for the prevention of kidney disease. This could especially prove important in regions of the world where dialysis and transplantation are not available and end-stage kidney disease is fatal.

Skorecki's group will meet with U.S. public health officials in April at the NIH to determine who to screen, what the implications are for transplantation, and other immediate public health questions. "It's the fastest I have ever seen a finding turn into public health policy," Skorecki said. "It's very gratifying to see that the work one does gets an immediate response in terms of public health."

In addition to dealing with public heath questions and studying the Ethiopian case, Skorecki and his team are continuing to bring the research to the next plateau. Although they have discovered the risk allele and know how to detect its presence, no group has yet succeeded to find the "causative mutation," the way in which this allele distorts the function of the kidney's filtering cells. "That's the holy grail that everyone is competing for," he says.

Skorecki and his team are taking several paths to get there: studying the evolutionary history of the risk allele and conducting experimentation on the molecular level.

The hope is that this work will ultimately lead to the development of a drug or recognition of an existing drug that might serve as a preventative or therapeutic solution for kidney disease. "The finding has shed light on the basic physiology of the kidney, and this is a necessary precursor for the design of potential treatment," Skorecki said.

He has worked on many medical research projects since he arrived in Israel 15 years ago, not all of them related to kidney disease and genetics. He has also participated in cancer and stem cell research.

"I am extremely impressed with the high level of research taking place in Israel. The country has so many other problems and lacks the economic infrastructure of countries like Canada, the U.S., and the countries of Europe, yet the productivity of our research in Israel has certainly been as good or better than [the research I did] before we moved to Israel," Skorecki said.

"Research does depend on money and equipment. But more so, it depends on human interactions with excellent students and very strong colleagues and there is no shortage of that in Israel."

He also said that the country has a fluid scientific culture that encourages the free exchange of ideas; special study populations, including Druze and Ashkenazi Jews (though that's not relevant to his current research), and ahead-of-the-curve legislation on stem cell research.

Even before he became a scientist, he had a great appreciation for the country. "I have always loved Israel – since CHAT," Skorecki said.

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Jewish, Arab kids team up in doubles competition

Compiled by CJN Staff

• **JAFFA, Israel** — Ninety Jewish and Arab players from across the country teamed up recently for the Jaffa Doubles Coexistence Winter Regional Tournament, a program of the Israel Tennis Center (ITC).

Players from three ITC facilities participated in the event, the fourth in a series of uniquely structured competitions designed to advance positive relations between Jewish and Arab children in Israel using mixed tennis doubles as a vehicle.

"We have been preparing for almost two months for this tournament. Most kids don't get to play doubles that often, but in the Doubles Coexistence teams, we spend lots of time playing doubles and working on doubles tactics, communication and positive reinforcement. I hope today it pays out," said Yaniv Skira, manager of ITC Be'er Sheva. The Be'er Sheva team was joined by players from Jerusalem and host Jaffa.

All matches were played in mixed Jewish-Arab doubles, in four different categories, from mini-tennis with soft balls to full-court games, based on participants' tennis level. With almost 100 matches played in total, teams accumulated points for each match they won.

"Communication is a key element in doubles tennis, but here it is even more significant because of the cultural and linguistic barriers with which the players must cope," said Shachar Yanai, director of the ITC Doubles Coexistence Program.

Tennis brings children together.

Conducting team competitions is an essential component of the ITC's way of building and enhancing co-operation and trust between Arab and Jewish participants. The common interest they share as a team is intended to create positive feelings that will be mirrored in Israeli society at large.

The Jerusalem team dominated the mini-tennis competitions. Ilan Maman, manager of ITC Jerusalem, said, "We brought a busload of players and their parents, and the way it looks at the moment, we are going to be singing songs of victory in Hebrew and Arabic all the way back to Jerusalem."

The players' parents also teamed up to cheer their kids as the competition reached its final stages.

Yoav, a parent from Jaffa, said: "It's an intense experience for these kids. The team aspect puts a lot of responsibility and pressure on them, but you know that, win or lose, just seeing them – Jews and Arabs – playing in the same team, cheering each other or crying together after a tough loss gives me so much hope."

The trophy-award ceremony was the highlight of the event, with each team shouting its lungs out trying to score extra points for morale.

Jerusalem won the mini-tennis category, while the three-quarter court and full court beginners level award went to Jaffa and the full-court advanced level trophy to Be'er Sheva.

In the overall count of points, the hosts from Jaffa came out on top.

"It was a very close competition, and I am really happy we won," said Rakefet Benyamini, manager of ITC Jaffa. "I told the kids before the tournament that every point counts, and even if they lose one or two matches, they shouldn't be discouraged, [because] this is not a regular tennis competition where once you lose you are out and because they are part of a team and they can still win the overall competition."

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Gold, silver for Olympic athletes

JTA

VANCOUVER — Two Jewish athletes took home medals at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.

Steve Meisler won a gold medal for the United States in the four-man bobsled, pushing his team to a combined time of 3:24:46 in the four-heat race.

Ice dancer Charlie White claimed a silver medal along with partner Meryl Davis.

White's victory edged a fellow ice dancer and American Jew, Ben Agosto, off the medal podium. Agosto and his partner, Tanith Belbin, finished fourth. The pair won a silver medal at the 2006 Games.

Other Jewish competitors in ice dancing, the Israeli brother-sister duo Roman and Alexandra Zaretsky, finished 10th. Their routines included music from *Schindler's List* and *Hava Nagila*, and in one performance, Roman wore a yarmulke.

Israel's third Olympic athlete, skier Mikail Renzhin, finished 35th in the slalom and 55th in the giant slalom.

Laura Spector, a Jewish biathlete from Massachusetts, finished 65th and 77th in two races.

WINTER CLASSIC: The Avenue Road Ducks Midget Junior Select hockey team is shown here, dark sweaters at right, with their cross-town rivals, the Forest Hill Midget Junior Select team. The Ducks defeated Forest Hill 7-4 on a brisk, cold night at the Irv Chapley Outdoor Rink to capture the Lawrence Seligman Trophy as champions of the first ever Winter Classic hockey game. The friendship game raised money for D.A.N.I, a charitable organization that helps kids with physical and cognitive disabilities.

I'm back in the game

"We've brought the pictures!" my son cries happily as he hands me an envelope filled with photographs.

I'm excited. It's been awhile since our pictures have been taken. I remember my husband, Meir, photographing me a year ago, at my theatre debut (there are no small actors, only small parts!). After that, for some reason, the camera was broken, I think by me. Not sure.

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

Anyway, I open the envelope, and sigh: my lovely family. Here my two kids are stamping on ants, here they're fighting to death at a party, and here they're hugging a smiling chubby lady. There's that chubby cow again, holding my husband passionately… posing her double chin… Hold on, who's that fat cow?

Meir holds me as I sob. "You're not that fat." He tries again. "Really, only on the hips, the belly and the arms, that's it."

I wanna make it clear: I've always been the hot chick, the one all guys drool over, to my husband's displeasure. The one dressed in a provocative way, the one other girls hated. I want girls to hate me again!

"Forty, maybe 50 pounds you've gained, since we came to Canada," Meir comforts me (do I detect a note of contentment?)

The next day, I enter a Weight Watchers class. Eight slim models enter the room, along with three regular women, and two fatties – one of them is me, the other is the lecturer. I drink coffee and look hatefully at the models. The lecturer offers some awful recipes, but at recess, I convince the ladies that adding mayo, yellow cheese and fried onions would make them edible.

I stay with the class for a month and then quit. Meir, as usual, yells at me for wasting his money (I paid a year in advance), but showing him in black on white (the dark denim on my whitish belly) that I'm only gaining weight silences him.

Next, I try a mysterious and a quite scary group, which treats me like a hopeless drug user. The only nice part is that when I admit to being a compulsive eater, liar, murderer, etc., they, in ecstasy, cheer, and you know how much I adore homage. Anyway, there's this cute hotdog stand next door, and when Meir caught me running toward it, in a gruff shout, he forbade me to return.

On TV, I see some old, wrinkled, synthetic-looking ladies dancing as if they're in the middle of a panic attack. You can also see their young and sexy "before" pictures. A blond delivery guy brings them brownies and yummy stuff to eat, so I sign up for the weight-loss plan.

First, there's no truth in advertising. My delivery guy is not blond at all (there aren't many blonds in China). Second, again, I gain weight. Nobody knows why. "Sue them!" advises my son. God bless him, he's gonna be a lawyer. "Strange," says Meir.

Not really. I eat what they deliver, up to 12 p.m., and then I turn to the food in my homely kitchen.

So I start a new trend. Even though I'm getting fatter, I spread the news about my getting thinner. I declare at every opportunity that I'm losing weight, and that I'm starving. Believe it or not, the other night at the movies, when I was in a rush, and standing in that long lineup for popcorn, I even sensed some girls hating me again! I'm back in the game, baby, back in the game!

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

APRICOT LENTIL SOUP

3 tblsp olive oil
1 onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup dried apricots, chopped
1 1/2 cups red lentils
5 cups chicken stock
1 can diced tomatoes
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 tsp dried thyme
salt to taste
ground black pepper
2 tbls fresh lemon juice

Sauté onion, garlic, and apricots in olive oil. Add lentils and stock, bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes Stir in tomatoes and season with cumin, thyme, salt and pepper. Simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in lemon juice. Puree 1/2 of the soup with immersion blender and return to the pot. Serve. Makes 6 servings

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Exercise helps reduce high blood pressure

FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Cardiovascular disease – we have all heard of it, we know the leading causes of it and how to prevent it, yet it is still the No. 1 reason for hospitalization in Canada. A recent study found that 1.29 million Canadians were diagnosed with heart disease in 2005, an increase of 20 per cent over the previous 10 years.

One of the leading causes of cardiovascular disease is hypertension. Hypertension or high blood pressure is diagnosed when the blood flows through your arteries at a higher pressure than normal. The force of the pressure causes scarring, which promotes the buildup of fatty plaque, narrowing your arteries and straining your heart. Left untreated, hypertension can weaken the heart and damage the blood vessels, possibly leading to a stroke, heart attack, chronic renal failure or even death.

Today hypertension is easily controllable with proper diet, regular exercise and medication. The Heart and Stroke Foundation estimates that five million Canadians – 22 per cent of the population – have high blood pressure, an increase of 77 per cent since 1994. But only 16 per cent are actively being treated for it.

A study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in January 2010 found that moderate resistance exercise three times a week for at least 45 minutes and a diet rich in fruits and vegetables as well as healthy, low-fat fibres can reduce blood pressure by 16.1/9.9 mmHg in as little as four months.

Decreasing your blood pressure by just 2 mmHg reduces your risk of a heart attack by six per cent and of a stroke by 15 per cent. Daily aerobic activity at moderate intensity for 30 to 45 minutes will start to lower your blood pressure in as little as two weeks.

Making healthy life choices like limiting your alcohol and salt intake, regular moderate exercise and having a BMI (body mass index) of 25 or less reduces your risk of a heart attack by 55 per cent.

With risk factors such as obesity, diabetes and hypertension rising among Canadians due to physical inactivity, 48 per cent of us still choose to remain inactive. Want to learn more? Visit me at www.felycesfitness.ca

Spanking children

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

I met a fellow who works at a local pet store. He told me, when he was a little boy, his father explained to him that fish will grow according to the size of the aquarium they live in. That night the little boy took his dad's angelfish out of their small aquarium and put them in the bath thinking, "This should make them grow really big."

URBAN WRITER

The fish kid's dad spanked him for his action, which he described as leaving "his ass pretty red."

Home-run-hitting king Mark McGwire and his brother do not talk. According to a recent book written by his brother, they do not communicate, because in 2002, his brother's son, Jay, tickled Mark, which caused him to spill coffee on himself. The hulking baseball giant subsequently turned around and spanked his nephew.

Why are these grown men hitting children?

The fish kid was presented with a formula by the man whom he trusted. He then did what children do. He experimented – not a bad idea at all, and quite creative. He put the fish in a larger body of water. His father then turned around and showed him how wrong it was to listen to him and made sure his boy was afraid of him. "Don't be curious," he essentially said, "and feel unsafe when I'm around."

Mark McGwire showed his nephew how unsafe it was to express himself affectionately and cutely toward him and showed him: "When you do, I will hit you." Would McGwire responded similarly if an adult had done the same?

Children are easy targets for anger. They are small and simple to bully. Do spankers truly believe that hitting children is for the best of that youngster? Is humiliating a little person in their interest – is it a positive way of teaching them lessons in life – or is spanking really an expression of the adult being unable to control his/her anger?

It is clear that many people subscribe to the belief that spanking teaches children life lessons. It is, in fact, an age-old tool used for child rearing and is condoned, and encouraged, in many environments. A very rational and sensible friend told me he has spanked his children, however very infrequently and never when he was angry. He explained there have been times when he felt the only way his child would finally learn something inordinately important – such as stopping at a red light – was if he was spanked.

He said that was not the first course of action, but it was the last and was never administered aggressively or in public. He added, "It could save his life."

Studies show that spanking and corporal punishment delay exploratory skills later on in life. There is also evidence that corporal punishment can create a bullying child, and that later on in life, aggressive behaviour is insignificant to him/her.

While I recognize that parents are forever tired and at times reasoning, logic and explanations are out of the realm of possibility, I fail to see the advantage of physically hitting or spanking a child.

While some parents ideologically believe spanking is the right thing to do and administer it sparingly, it seems that most hit their children out of anger and regret it later on. I can understand why, as being hit by a parent is humiliating. It is embarrassing and weakening for all involved.

The fish kid's ass hurts to this day, not physically but in his head. He never put an angelfish in the bath again, and he grew up scared of his dad. How good is that?

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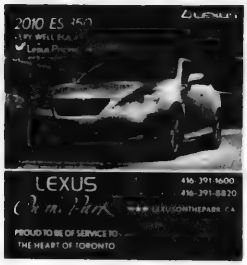

This Week

National

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Rabbi Bernard Baskin celebrates 90 years. *Page 18*

Passover Food Ideas

Mix and Match: New and traditional recipes. *Page 31*

Books & Authors

Remembering J.D. Salinger who died in January. *Page 58*

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Knesset conversion bill worries Diaspora Jewry

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Diaspora Jews are calling on the government of Israel to kill a bill they say would strengthen haredi Judaism at the expense of other Judaic streams and widen the gap between them and Israelis.

The bill now before the Knesset law committee has also come under fire from Natan Sharansky, head of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and from the Jewish Federations of North America, which called it "an affront to world Jewry."

Conservative and Reform Jews in Canada are writing to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asking him to intervene to make sure the bill as it now stands does not pass.

At the heart of their concerns is a provision that would amend Israel's Law of Return by preventing converts to Judaism from automatically gaining citizenship if they had ever entered Israel prior to their conversion. Concerns have also been raised that the bill gives the Chief Rabbinate virtual veto power over Israeli conversions – power it does not have today.

Natan Sharansky

The legislation in question was tabled by Yisrael Beitenu (Israel is our Home) MK David Rotem to fulfil a campaign promise to ease the conversion of tens of thousands of immigrants, mostly Russian, who are not halachically Jewish. The bill he advanced proposed permitting local city rabbis to perform conversions. During parliamentary negotiations, two provisions were added that have caused consternation among Diaspora Jews. The first gives the Chief Rabbinate power to annul conversions. The second affects the Law of Return. Reports suggest the latter provision was inserted to prevent temporary workers and even terrorists from converting and claiming citizenship.

In a letter to Miriam Ziv, Israel's ambassador to Canada, Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl states: "This legislation will have the effect of providing for a path to alter the Law of Return or, at the least, cause undue hardship to anyone in Israel who has come from the Diaspora communities and seeks conversion in Israel."

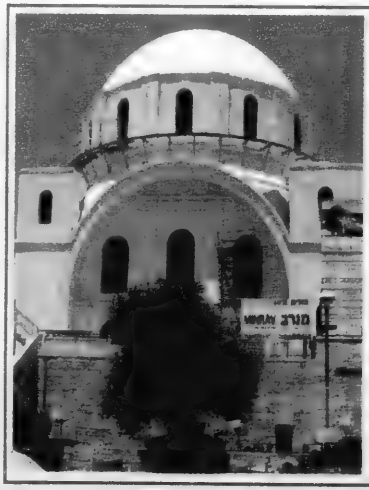
The bill will set back efforts "to create greater accessibility to conversion courts in Israel" while adversely impacting the work of the Masorti [Conservative] movement in Israel, said Rabbi Frydman-Kohl, senior rabbi at Beth Tzedec Congregation, the largest Conservative synagogue in Canada.

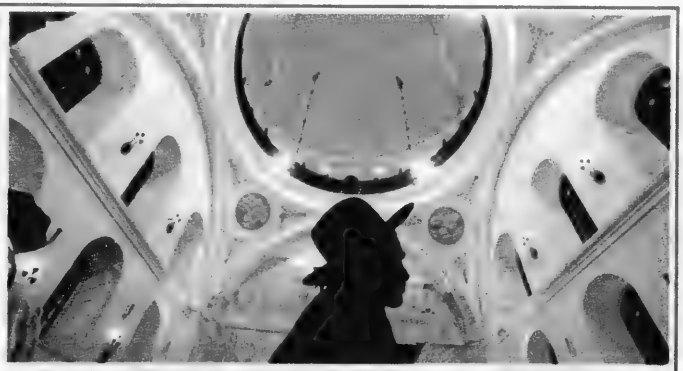
ARZA Canada, which represents Reform Jews, called on its members to write to Netanyahu requesting "your immediate intervention to prevent passage of the legislation," which if adopted, would "have the effect of altering the Law of Return, or at the least, cause undue hardship to anyone in Israel who has come from Diaspora communities and seeks conversion in Israel."

Rabbi Michael Stroh, a spokesperson for ARZA Canada, said "the basis of our concern is the further limitation of the ability of people who want to become Jewish to convert to Judaism, even under Orthodox auspices." (City rabbis in Israel are appointed by the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate.)

While the provision permitting local conversions "might be massageable," the other components of the bill "are horrendous," he said.

Continued on page 24





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A young man stands in the newly renovated Hurva synagogue (see photo at left) in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City. A landmark of the Old City for many years, the synagogue was destroyed by Jordanian soldiers in 1948. It was officially rededicated and reopened to worshippers earlier this week. ***Please see related story on page 53.*** **[*Flash90 photo*]**

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U.S. – Israel relations said to be in crisis – please see page 51

The News in Brief

Canada

Actor Haim Dies

LOS ANGELES — Toronto-born Jewish actor Corey Haim died last week in Los Angeles of what police called an accidental drug overdose. He was 38. Haim, who admitted to past drug addiction, was best known for his teen roles in the 1980s films *Lucas* and *The Lost Boys*. Starting in 2007, he starred for two seasons on the A&E reality show *The Two Coreys* with fellow former teen star Corey Feldman.

Play Posters Removed

KINGSTON, Ont. — The directors of a student theatre group at Queen's University have apologized for a poster with Nazi colours and a Star of David in place of a swastika that was used to advertise a production of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. In an e-mail to the *Queen's Journal* newspaper, the artistic directors of Vagabond Theatre, Nathaniel Fried, who is Jewish, and Ryan LaPlante, said that "in acknowledgment of the unintended response... we have withdrawn the images" and taken down the posters, the *Toronto Star* reported. Fried told the *Journal* he meant no offence, but wanted to use the production, which opened March 11, to compare anti-Semitism in Shakespeare's time to its 20th-century manifestations. Hillel and other campus Jewish groups had complained to Vagabond about the posters.

World

Head Full Of Hebrew

ORLANDO — One of the top defenders in the NBA had the word "defence" inscribed in his hair in Hebrew, as well as in Japanese and Hindi. Ron Artest, a forward for the Los Angeles Lakers, dyed his hair blond and had the word *haganah* shaved and dyed in purple in his hair to match the team's colours for a March 7 game against the Orlando Magic in Florida. There was no word on whether Artest's Jewish teammate, Jordan Farmar, offered any input into the decision.

Lox Ban 'A Lie'

NEW YORK — The organization that reportedly banned lox as unkosher says the media fabricated the story. "They made it up," Yisroel Neiman, a member of Chevra Mehadrin, told LoHud.com. "It's a lie. We never said lox wasn't kosher." The Monsey, N.Y.-based group of haredi rabbis made news last week when it reportedly declared smoked salmon unkosher because of the presence of a parasitic worm. The fishy story was picked up by a number of news outlets, even though the Orthodox Union declared the ban unjustified.

Ralliers Slur General

NEW YORK — Hundreds of protesters marched in front of a New York City hotel where Israel's military chief of staff was speaking at a dinner. Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi called on the international community to stop Iran's nuclear program in his address March 9 at the Waldorf-Astoria. The dinner was hosted by the Friends of the Israel Defence Forces. Outside, some 500 protesters carried signs reading "From the River to the Sea, Palestine Will Be Free," "Israel Is a Terrorist State," "No More U.S. Tax Dollars for Israel" and "Nuremberg Justice For Israeli War Criminals." Some 25 U.S., Jewish and Israeli groups took part. About 100 pro-Israel demonstrators gathered across the street.

Disgraced Native Leader Dies of Cancer

SASKATOON — David Ahenakew, the former national native leader who once called Jews "a disease," died March 12 after a long battle with cancer. He was 76.

David Ahenakew

Ahenakew, former head of the Assembly of First Nations, was charged after a speech and subsequent interview with a reporter in 2002 in which he called Jews a "disease... that's going to take over."

He added: "The Jews damn near owned all of Germany prior to the war. That's how Hitler came in. He was going to make damn sure that the Jews didn't take over Germany or Europe." He was found guilty in 2005 of wilfully promoting hatred and fined $1,000. The conviction was overturned on appeal, and he was acquitted in February 2009 after a second trial, on the grounds he didn't set out to promote hatred against Jews.

Ahenakew, who died in hospital in Shellbrook, Sask., found out he had cancer shortly before his second trial began in November 2008, his lawyer, Doug Christie, told the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*.

He was stripped of his Order of Canada, and at his retrial, he repeated his view that Jews caused World War II.

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IAW fizzles on Canadian campuses

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) turned into Israel appreciation week this year, said Brandon Crandall of Hillel at York.

According to several Jewish groups, IAW, which ran from March 1 to 14 on campuses in 13 Canadian cities, was much milder this year, with fewer anti-Semitic incidents and smaller crowds.

"[At York], it was quite lame, to be honest. [IAW] events were generating about 20 students at most events," said Crandall, who is also a Hillel of Greater Toronto intern. "In previous years, IAW was very heated. A rally usually took place. There were assaults. [There was] intimidation that occurred for the past several years, except this year."

The atmosphere on campus was much more peaceful, Crandall said, adding that pro-Israel events at York generated large crowds of up to 100 students.

An IAW spokesperson said IAW events were well attended.

According to Crandall, IAW may have been calmer this year because of national condemnation of the event, which included statements from Liberal and Conservative politicians, and from James Pasternak, school board trustee for York Centre, who asked the Toronto District School Board to denounce IAW.

"I hope it means that… IAW keeps going downhill until it no longer exists. Really, I hope it means positive things for the Jewish community, because the past few years have been unbearable," he said.

Keith Marnoch, York's associate director of media relations, said there were no major incidents at York this year.

Robert Steiner, assistant vice-president in charge of strategic communications at the University of Toronto, said the same thing about his school.

"It was very low key this year [at U of T]," Steiner said. "I didn't hear of any complaints from anyone about any incidents."

Beca Bookman, a member of U of T's Hillel and a first-year student, was surprised at the atmosphere on campus.

"It was a lot better than I would have expected. It was very quiet for the most part. We had a really good response [to pro-Israel events] and hopefully that aided the student body to understand what's actually going on in Israel," she said.

Beca Bookman

Similar reports came from schools across the country, said Rebecca Cherniak, chair of Israel affairs and advocacy for the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, which helped to organize cross-Canada, pro-Israel education initiatives on various campuses ahead of IAW.

"IAW has been minimal across Canada [this year]. It's been tame. Many of the presentations have been scheduled in rooms that are not in the centre of campus," she said, adding that IAW events weren't well attended.

Cherniak said this change was due, in part, to better organization and planning of pro-Israel campaigns, such as the Truth Campaign and Size Doesn't Matter, a national initiative that helped raise awareness about Israel through a website and a speaker series.

"Last year, there was no centralized organization of how we would... pre-empt [IAW]. Some schools had some success of doing Israel week [last year], but because we were able to have, for the first year, a national strategy… students felt empowered that they were being supported nationally," said Cherniak, who is also president of Israel on Campus at McMaster University.

"I think it's a shift. In past years, we were so ready to react and respond [to IAW activities]. In future years, we know that we can set… our own terms. That was what was so successful about this year," she said.

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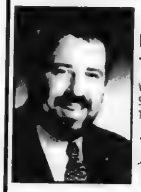

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A saga of Galilee in the 1880s

From the editor's desk...

History becomes saga, narrative becomes epic and the fate of individuals a tightly felt sighing breath of hope and reward in the gripping book by Shulamit Lapid, *Valley of Strength* (The Toby Press).

Lapid lovingly, deftly, painstakingly, with great attention to detail, tells the story of 16-year-old Fania, who arrives in the port of Jaffa in the late 1800s, caring for an infant daughter and a mentally ill brother.

Fania has survived a pogrom in her eastern European hometown of Elizavetgrad. She has not, however, left it behind. She is constantly tortured by the memory of the slaughter of her family and of the horrible physical abuse she herself suffered at the hands of the drunken, anti-Semitic murderers.

The story begins in Jaffa with Fania undergoing a form of marriage with a widower, Yehiel Silas, also young, but still 10 years older than his newly chosen bride. Fania agrees to be Yehiel's wife and mother to his two children. He agrees to provide a home and shelter to the young girl-woman-mother and her two charges. Together they head east and north to a small pioneering community in the Galilee called Gai Oni, (Hebrew for valley of strength). The small community is adjacent to an Arab village of similar name Jaoini.

Yehiel is one of the struggling community's original founders. Their numbers are severely depleted, however, due to the sheer hardship and overwhelming difficulty of bringing forth any food, let alone bread, from the rocky, drought-stricken land.

Gai Oni eventually becomes the village of Rosh Pina, the first settlement in the Galilee. (Rosh Pina is a reference to the phrase in Psalm 118:22. In this context it translates as cornerstone. It is, presumably, as the cornerstone of the return of Jewish settlement to the Galilee, that the settlers in the 19th century chose the name for their newly founded community.)

Lapid tells us the story of the excruciatingly difficult, though not unrewarding, life led by the founders of the village. It is also, of course, the heartbreaking, inspiring story of the history of the first modern returners to the Land of Zion.

Fania is the focal point.

Strong-willed, determined, educated, refined, courageous, unyielding, vulnerable, needy, hard as rock or soft as a cooing dove: she is all of these things. A feminist long before the term had any meaning in our modern lexicon, Fania refuses to surrender to the omnipresent "larger forces" that affect the toll and toil of their daily lives. Whether those forces are the unyielding terrain; the corrupt Ottoman authorities and their cloying footmen; marauding Bedouins; the well-meaning, overseas Jewish philanthropists who made possible the purchase of the land; the climate; the malaria-spreading mosquitoes; the religious, social and other intolerance of fellow Jews; or the dark shadows of her past occasionally casting their ugly darkness over her life with Yehiel, Fania stands astride them all.

VALLEY OF STRENGTH
SHULAMIT LAPID

Her individuality, strength of character and femininity suffuse the story, intended perhaps by Lapid as a metaphor for the land itself: fruitful but scarred, generous but wounded, harsh yet yielding.

Lapid is a celebrated author in Israel. She has won numerous awards at home and abroad for her impressive and diverse body of work. *Valley of Strength* richly exemplarizes why her work has been set aside for such praise.

Lapid powerfully evokes the sense of place that was not only the struggling, infant village on the rock-cragged landscape of the Galilee in the 1880s but also the newly forming society of idealists, pragmatists, farmers and businessmen, young and old, pious and impious, men and women then taking shape in the Land of Israel.

But Lapid's depiction of place is not restricted to the domain of the physical, to geography and topography. Rather, Lapid also depicts the equally difficult terrain of the characters' psyches and emotions.

Valley of Strength tells a macro story of the wretchedly hard and forlorn days that accompanied the first modern efforts at redeeming the land. But it also tells a micro story of love and tenderness, sacrifice and missed moments. Lapid obviously intends the title to refer to more than the name of the tiny settlement that was founded on land bought by Jews for Jews and worked by Jews to its ultimate flowering. The book's name refers as well to the nature of the human spirit and character that were necessary to make that happen.

Valley of Strength (*Gai Oni* in its original Hebrew title), first published in 1982, is regarded as a master work of the modern Israeli canon of literature.

The Toby Press has made it accessible to English-language readers through the excellent translation of Philip Simpson, as part of Toby's ongoing mission of bringing highlight works of classical and modern Hebrew literature to a broader readership. We, the readers, are the great beneficiaries.

– *MBD*

SeeJN

WELCOME MR. PRESIDENT

Israel's President Shimon Peres greets Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva during the welcoming ceremony for Lula's arrival on Monday at Peres' residence in Jerusalem.

[Flash90]

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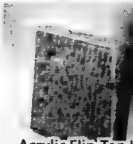

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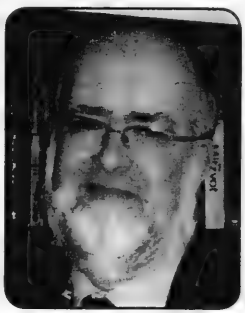
Draft report released on Jewish education

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto is reviewing a draft report about the future of the former Centre for Enhancement of Jewish Education that recommends increasing the level of professionalism in Jewish education, its author says.

Paul Shaviv, director of education at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and director of the federation transition committee working on the issue, wrote the detailed 42-page draft report, which was released early in the new year and includes more than 60 recommendations.



Paul Shaviv

Federation spokesperson Howard English told *The CJN* that "a wide variety of stakeholders" including school administrators, lay leaders, rabbis, representatives of parents' associations and agencies that work with schools, such as JVS, JF&CS and JIAS, are being consulted. A final version is expected to be ready in June.

Last year, the centre – which was known as the Mercaz, and, before a 2007 restructuring, as the Board of Jewish Education – underwent a major downsizing that eliminated 10 of its 14 full-time jobs. As well, its budget was cut from $13.8 million to $12.6 million. At the same time, tuition subsidies were increased by $500,000.

Shaviv said the report has three major thrusts: governance, professional development, and school accreditation.

Its recommendations focus on six areas: governance structure and budget; school improvement and professional and lay-leadership development; school accreditation; easing entry-level access to the Jewish school system; community outreach and inclusion; and the "essential services blanket," which includes professional development grants and city-wide inter-school activities.

A section on tuition assistance recommends that tuition subsidies be administered by a central community office, rather than individual schools. One reason is to be able to assess families with children at more than one school, the report states. As well, it urges having an independent ombudsman to resolve disagreements about tuition assessments.

The same section also suggests that teachers' children receive a tuition break, as they do in most other communities.

Funding of Jewish schools must continue to be given top preference, the report advises. A footnote states that such funding constitutes "the largest domestic allocation of UJA Federation – and by far the most generous funding given to Jewish education by any North American federation. Yet the funding amounts to not more than 10 per cent of the annual budget of most individual schools."

The report also recommended a new name for the federation department: the UJA Federation Centre for Jewish Education (CJE).

The report explains that the term "board" in the centre's former name led many people to believe that the entity was "the equivalent of the [Toronto District School Board] or the Catholic School Board, and could overrule individual schools on all sorts of issues."

While the centre can only exercise limited authority over the schools, according to the report, it "can justifiably expect fulfilment of defined criteria from recipients of funding."

Among the budget-related suggestions are consideration of grants to educators to attend conferences and courses.

As well, an expanded professional development program should be the entity's "central task," linked to an accreditation process, the report states. "The aim of this should result in every Jewish parent knowing that sending their child into a 'CJE-accredited school' is a guarantee of a top-quality education," the report adds.

The report recommends that community education professionals must be included as part of the centre's decision-making body and must be part of its budgetary, policy and decision-making processes. As well, it notes that previously, school administrators were not consulted about Mercaz services.

English – speaking on behalf of the federation and Craig Rimer, chair of its transition committee – declined to comment on the draft report's recommendations and the response to it so far, aside from crediting Shaviv for his "creative... and interesting ideas," until after the final version is issued.

"The content of the report could change significantly by the time it receives final approval," English said.

It's expected to be presented to the federation board in late April or early May.

Four day school principals contacted by *The CJN* last week were either not reachable or declined to comment for this story.

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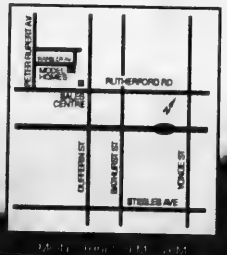

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Excessive exploitation of inexcusable decision

Last week, just as U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden was settling in to his visit in Israel with his host Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Minister of the Interior, Eli Yishai, announced the decision by the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee to approve construction of 1,600 new housing units in Ramat Shlomo in eastern Jerusalem.

The timing of Yishai's announcement was so absolutely horrendous that it could not have been coincidental. Biden was embarrassed. The U.S. administration was furious. It retaliated to this embarrassment of its vice-president with harsh condemnation of Israel. The temperature of bilateral relations between the two countries plunged immediately to a very low, cold level. As of this writing, significant degrees of warmth have not yet been restored.

Yishai should have known that announcing the housing project during Biden's visit in Jerusalem would be an affront to the visiting dignitary and to the government he represented. That he made the announcement, nevertheless, was inexcusable and an indictment of his sorry judgement. It is also an indictment of the archaic electoral system in Israel that confers upon small, single-issue, narrowly based ethnic parties disproportionately significant policy making roles as well as high-handed leverage in forming and wielding a national government.

That there was nothing new in the housing announcement or that it is to take effect in a number of years, does not mitigate Yishai's exceptionally inhospitable, graceless act of publicly embarrassing an invited guest into his home. But precisely because there was nothing new in the Yishai announcement, the increasingly edgier American denunciation of Israel is excessive.

Not satisfied with a public dressing down of the Israeli prime minister by the vice-president, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also weighed into the fray last Friday to berate Netanyahu further in a telephone conversation, much of the content of which was conveniently leaked to the public. Clinton is reported to have made at least four demands of Netanyahu that include: investigating the process that led to the announcement of the Ramat Shlomo construction plans in the middle of Biden's visit; reversing the decision; making a substantial gesture toward the Palestinians enabling the renewal of peace talks, and issuing an official declaration that talks with the Palestinians will deal with the conflict's core issues.

The U.S. is exploiting the Yishai affront to prove its tough, hard mettle in the Arab world by pressuring Israel. This American offensive against Israel, however, is intemperate and counterproductive.

Bullying Israel does not advance the peace process, nor does giving the Palestinian leaders a free ride, absolving them of the hypocrisy of their ongoing doublespeak about peace. Palestinian leaders last weekend incited violence against Jews in Jerusalem with lies and fabrications about Jewish intentions on the Temple Mount. There was no American rebuke. The contrast in American responses is also an affront.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney promised to seriously consider Israel's request for Canadian troops as peacekeepers in the Sinai, replacing a departing Australian unit in the multinational force. Israeli foreign minister Yitzhak Shamir made the request in a meeting with Mulroney just before the end of Shamir's two-day visit to Ottawa.

Dry Bones
JOE BIDEN SAYS THAT IF ISRAEL BUILDS HOMES FOR JEWS IN JERUSALEM . . .
WE WILL LAUNCH SUICIDE ATTACKS AT AMERICAN TROOPS!!!
INTERESTING, BUT I'M NOT BLOWING MYSELF UP ABOUT THIS . . .
. . . UNTIL I HEAR IT FROM OBAMA!
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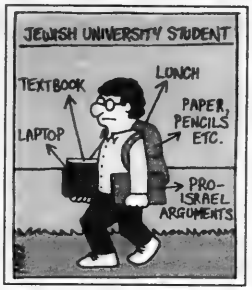
Food bank often teeters on bankruptcy

It is difficult to purchase kosher food when choices in life might come down to keeping kosher or paying the electric bill. Because of those challenges, the Pride of Israel has maintained a communal kosher food bank for the past 15 years. Our volunteers are here every Wednesday morning. They pack kosher food and have kind words for more than 100 people every week.

When we are lucky, the food bank receives donations of both money and food. But despite many individual and community efforts, the food bank at the Pride of Israel often teeters on bankruptcy. In my short tenure at the shul, we have had more than one discussion about what to do in the next week or two when the money and food run out. Somehow, the Pride manages to pull the rabbit out of a hat, though, and we always manage to get through the next week.



The kosher food bank at the Pride of Israel cannot afford to rely on such miracles all the time. I would like to thank all those who have contributed food over the years, and to ask you to continue to step up to the plate. It is not enough to feed someone once. Tomorrow is another day, and our entire community needs to be able to eat.

More specifically, I would like to thank the Ontario-Quebec Rabbinical Assembly for its decision to make an annual commitment to supporting the kosher food bank. It is my hope that the other rabbinical organizations around the city will rise to the standard set by the Rabbinical Assembly.

Rabbi Sean Gorman
Pride of Israel
Recording Secretary, Ontario-Quebec Rabbinical Assembly

* * *

Apartheid Week basis for lawsuit

I was a student at both University of Toronto and York University some years ago. My heart goes out to all students who have to put up with the disturbance of their normal, peaceful studies during Israeli Apartheid Week. In fact, I am appalled that the university executive would allow such an insidious display of anti-Semitic propaganda to engulf the campus and let's be clear: it is anti-Semitic.

One attribute that Jews may possess in an abundant measure is brains. Surely when an identifiable group of students (i.e. supporters of Israel) pays the same tuition fees as others (i.e. the anti-Semites) and is discriminated against, suffers harm (i.e. disruption to their daily routines and impacting negatively on their peace of mind), there is a basis for a lawsuit. I challenge our many brilliant Jewish lawyers across North America to take on all universities that allow this form of hatred to live and grow. When they realize that they are subject to significant financial liability, this "leopard" will quickly change its spots.

Bob Natanson
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Judaism isn't a buffet religion

Writing about a "post-halachic" Judaism, as Rabbi Dow Marmur does, is like referring to the "brainless" or "heartless" human of the future ("Religious revival," March 4). Without Halachah, Judaism is an empty shell, a non-religion, and those who choose not to abide by it should not be cloaked with some sort of new religious vestment. They are, as they themselves will admit, non-observant Jews.

Rabbi Marmur should know that Judaism is a religion of doing, both in a positive and negative way. That's why Maimonides' greatest work was a restatement of the oral law of Israel. He knew that Judaism was and will be accused of being formalistic and ceremonial, ignoring that its uniqueness lies in conferring spiritual value to everyday, ordinary acts.

In the same vein, and in the same issue of *The CJN*, Sheldon Kirshner interviews a new convert to Judaism who says that of the 613 commandments, he decided to follow those that made sense to him ("'It feels good to be Jewish,' says convert Benjamin Errett," Toronto edition). Somebody forgot to teach him that Judaism is not a pick-and-choose proposition or a buffet religion, and that those who do it will just practise a Jewish-style religion.

Jaime Oksemberg
Toronto

* * *

'Morally ambiguous assassinations'

Sheldon Kirshner in his column "Israel's 'Superman'" (March 4) refers to Israel having resorted to "morally ambiguous assassinations." My question to him is as follows: would he have considered as "morally ambiguous" an assassination of Hitler or of his henchmen? A "yes" answer speaks for itself. However, a "no" answer would beg the question: at what level of evil perpetrated against Jews would an assassination become "morally ambiguous"?

Sam Mitnick
Cote St. Luc, Que.

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Biden reaffirms the 'unbreakable bond'

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden's attempt to reassure Israel of American steadfastness survived a steadfast Middle East tradition of self-sabotage.

Biden's intended message in a much ballyhooed speech in Israel on March 11 at Tel Aviv University – that the United States would stand by Israel through thick and thin – was unequivocal. Yet it was clear that he and his speechwriters tweaked the text to encompass references to the Israeli settlement building and Palestinian incitement that almost marred his trip to the region.

Biden started by reaffirming the "unbreakable bond" between Israel and the United States, as he had following his arrival earlier this week. The bond was "impervious to any shifts in either country and in either country's partisan politics," he said to applause.

He added that it was critical for the international community to understand the bond.

"Every time progress is made, it's been made when the rest of the world knows there's no space between the United States and Israel when it comes to Israel's security, none – no space," the vice-president said.

Biden's speech was an opening salvo in rolling back Israeli and Jewish insecurities stoked by President Barack Obama's speech last summer to the Muslim world.

Jewish community leaders in the United States and some Israeli leaders were unsettled by Obama's sharp parallels in that speech between Israeli and Palestinian suffering. And some objected to how Obama emphasized the sequence of the Holocaust and the establishment of Israel. The concerns were exacerbated a few weeks later when Obama met with the Jewish leadership and said he would make public disagreements with Israel.

The White House, which insisted Obama had emphasized the Holocaust to scold the Arab world for allowing its denial to flourish, was frustrated by Jewish unhappiness with a speech that was supposed to have been about outreach to Arabs and Muslims – a point that Biden made in his March 11 remarks.

"We're absolutely convinced this approach will improve not only our security but, as a result, your security," Biden said of outreach to the Muslim world.

Nonetheless, it was clear that Biden took care to hit all the marks that Obama missed in his Cairo speech.

"Incitement against Israel continues, as do the attacks on the legitimacy of Jewish ties to this ancient land," he said, a deliberate nod to Israeli anger that Obama had not referred to the Holy Land's Jewish religious roots in his Cairo address.

Earlier in the speech, Biden recalled his working-class Irish-Catholic dad, "who often spoke passionately about the special connection between the Jewish people and this land."

Stephen P. Cohen, a former Princeton University scholar who is close to the Obama administration and helped draft the Cairo speech, said Biden's speech was not the last word on U.S. closeness to Israel.

"The parallel to the Cairo speech will eventually come from the president himself at the right time," said Cohen, who has just authored *Beyond America's Grasp: A Century of Failed Diplomacy in the Middle East*.

"There has been a good deal of talk that Obama has put a lot of emphasis on the Holocaust as a predisposing element in the creation of the State of Israel. I think this is an important addition to that thinking," he said, referring to the Biden speech, "a correction to that thinking."

Most pronouncedly, Biden earned applause when he said that Iran must not achieve nuclear weapons capability.

"The United States is determined to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, period," he said. "I know that for Israel, there is no greater existential strategic threat. Trust me, we get that."

Notably, however, Biden only spoke of Iran's isolation and did not include the "all options on the table" euphemism for the possibility of military engagement. Obama and his predecessor, George W. Bush, have used the phrase, and Israel still favours it, most recently in a New York speech by Lt.-Gen. Gaby Ashkenazi, Israel's military chief of staff.

Biden was forced into detours from his prepared remarks by Israel's announcement this week that it had authorized 1,600 housing starts in disputed eastern Jerusalem.

"That decision undermined the trust required for negotiations," he said, and under instructions from Obama, "I condemned it immediately and unequivocally." He added, to applause: "Sometimes only a friend can deliver the hardest truth."

Biden seemed galled, especially that Israel made the announcement while he was meeting with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, Palestinian leaders deemed moderate both by Israel and the United States.

"Israeli leaders finally have willing partners who share the goal of peace between two states and have the competence to establish a nation," he said.

"Their commitment to peace is an opportunity that must be seized. It must be seized. Who has there been better to date, to have the prospect of settling this with? But instead, two days ago the Israeli government announced it would advance planning for new housing units in east Jerusalem."

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speak to each other last week in Jerusalem. Biden kept Netanyahu waiting for 90 minutes before he arrived to dinner.

[Flash90 photo]

Biden accepted Netanyahu's explanation that he also had been blindsided by the announcement by his Interior Ministry. The minister, Eli Yishai, has apologized both for the timing and for not giving Netanyahu a heads up. Speculation was rife on both sides of the Atlantic as to what had happened.

The committee making the announcement is jointly run by the Jerusalem municipality and Yishai's ministry. Both Yishai's haredi Shas Party and the Jerusalem mayor, Nir Barkat, have been known for their attempts to make political inroads into Netanyahu's right flank.

In any case, the gaffe had U.S. officials and some in the pro-Israel community wondering whether Netanyahu was fully in control of his government.

The Palestinian Authority also barely averted a PR disaster: it cancelled a ceremony to honor a woman who led the 1978 hijacking of a bus in which 35 Israelis were killed. A traffic circle in Ramallah was supposed to be named for Dalal Mughrabi and a memorial plaque unveiled March 11. The event was canceled March 10 to avoid antagonizing Biden, according to reports.

Cohen wondered whether such events were instigated by hardliners who thrive on isolation. In Israel, he said, there has been a view among some right-wingers that Jews and Israelis "are too vulnerable to our need to be loved."

The full text of Biden's speech can be found on The CJN's website at http://bit.ly/9QicSf.

Canada criticizes Israel over east Jerusalem housing units

Compiled by CJN Staff

OTTAWA — In a rare rebuke of Israel, Foreign Affair Minister Lawrence Cannon added Canada's voice to that of the United States in criticizing last week's announcement of Israeli plans to build 1,600 new housing units in east Jerusalem.

"The government of Canada regrets the government of Israel's announcement of plans for the construction of further housing units in east Jerusalem," Cannon said in a statement.

"Consistent with the positions of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations and other key partners, the Canadian government sees the construction of permanent settlements in east Jerusalem as an obstacle to the prospects for peace."

He added that "Canada believes that all parties should abide by their international commitments" and that the announcement "does not advance the cause of peace in the region."

Cannon said that Ottawa "welcomes the recent announcement that Israelis and Palestinians intend to start indirect peace talks. Canada has consistently held that the way forward for both parties must be through a negotiated settlement of this decades-old conflict."

Meanwhile, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas last week sought guarantees from Washington that it would pressure Israel to cancel its plan for the new units, Palestinian media reported.

U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell spoke with Abbas late last Thursday and urged him not to walk away from indirect peace talks with Israel, a senior Palestinian official quoted in the reports said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he believes the indirect talks will continue as planned despite the crisis with the United States over plans for the new housing and protests by the Palestinian Authority and Arab world.

"The crisis is behind us," sources in the prime minister's office said, adding that proof was U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's invitation to Netanyahu to meet in Washington in 10 days while Netanyahu visits a meeting of the pro-Israel AIPAC lobby group.

Nonetheless, senior U.S. officials said that even though the crisis is over publicly, it will take time to restore trust between the two sides.

The future of talks was raised during a telephone conversation between Biden and Netanyahu on March 11. Biden also discussed the issue with Abbas.

Biden told the Palestinian leader that the United States opposes settlement construction, but is determined to resume talks. He stressed to Abbas that Washington would disapprove of a delay in taking the talks forward.

With files from Ha'aretz

Opinions

Another week of lies and libel

The winter ritual that brands Israel as an apartheid state has come and gone for yet another year – and good riddance. To the unwary, it might appear that the rancour that defines this loathed event was more muted than has previously been the case, but we should not be fooled by such perceptions.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

To begin with, it needs to be recognized that in each of its successive appearances since it first polluted just one campus – the University of Toronto in 2005 – "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW) has grown both in its reach and also in the sophistication with which it directs its assault on Israel and Jewish peoplehood. Forty-nine campuses – including those in 12 Canadian cities – hosted IAW activities during the first week in March, with spillover into a second week of programming at some centres.

IAW has been variously described as a "platform for racism," a "festival of bigotry," and an "assault on truth." Not only is it all of these, it's much more.

What's so unfortunate, however, is that university administrators, in their fixation with upholding what they regard as fundamental tenets of free speech, have been unable to address the divisiveness, marginalization and intimidation that occur when this hallowed freedom is blatantly abused by those whose only objective is to demonize and delegitimize the State of Israel and its supporters.

Given the lies and libels that generally punctuate IAW presentations, it's inevitable that most who attend cannot help but come away with at least a negative stereotype of Jews and what we stand for. It's of even greater concern that, in many instances, the level of invective gets to be so frenzied and hostile that more emerges than just negative labelling, with bigotry and incitement to hatred as the more likely outcomes.

And while it's commendable that mainstream agencies in our community have at last begun to waken from their stupor and initiate programs to enable Jewish students and faculty to push back against those who can do no better to validate themselves than to invalidate us, their efforts should be seen not as an end in itself, but merely as one among many strategies that still need urgently to be invoked if the campus climate is to improve.

Importantly, we've now heard political leaders at both the federal and provincial levels, as well as trustees of the Toronto District School Board, roundly condemning IAW. Surely now is the time to build on their examples – to consolidate the type of moral suasion that will, once and for all, rid our campuses of the IAW plague.

Hebron heritage designation was a misstep

There's a saying in Hebrew, usually associated with driving, that "it's not enough to be right, you also have to be clever." Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu should have thought of this idiom before capitulating to religious and right-wing politicians by adding the Cave of the Patriarchs, or Machpela, in Hebron, to a list of 150 national heritage sites.

Yair Lapid in Jerusalem

Hebron is a veritable powder keg, constantly on the brink of explosion. Nestled in the Judean Hills, it teems with ancient lanes and biblically significant archeology. Its centrepiece – the Machpela Cave – is the second-most holy site for Jews, after Jerusalem's Temple Mount. Purchased by Abraham himself, it's believed to be the burial site of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. This certainly makes it a Jewish heritage site. However, its Abrahamic connection also makes it an important Muslim holy place. The impressive compound, originally built above the cave by Herod 2,000 years ago, houses synagogues and mosques used interchangeably by Jews and Muslims.

Leaders, both military and political, must ensure the lid is kept tightly on the keg that is Hebron. It's been my experience as legal adviser for the Israel Defence Forces in the West Bank that no decision, large or small, concerning Hebron in general, and the Machpela Cave in particular, can be made before it's thoroughly examined to ensure all potential complexities – political, security, humanitarian, religious or legal – are properly analyzed. Only then is the issue brought before the relevant authority to be suitably decided upon.

Not enough thought was given to the last-minute designation of the Machpela Cave as a heritage site, and in the weeks since, its ramifications have reverberated both locally and internationally, with fresh outbursts of violence and vocal condemnations. It might have been meaningful if it were not only declaratory, but the truth is that little will change within the Machpela without at least tacit Israeli-Palestinian co-operation.

Hebron is the West Bank's largest city, with more than 160,000 Palestinian inhabitants. In 1979, Menachem Begin's government formally re-established the city's Jewish presence. It's now home to roughly 1,000 Israelis, mainly concentrated in the historic Jewish Quarter, and it's the only Israeli settlement in the West Bank wholly within the boundaries of a major Palestinian municipality.

Most of the renewed settlement is built on properties owned by Jews before 1948 and presently administered by the IDF's military government. Many of Hebron's erstwhile Jewish residents left after the 1929 massacre, when Arab rioters murdered 67 Jews, injured 60 others and ransacked Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues.

From the outset, the restored Jewish presence in Hebron wasn't welcomed by Palestinians. Jews have been the target of countless attacks, many of them lethal. Settlers have not always been neighbourly, either. Attacks against them have precipitated acts of violence against Palestinians and their property, including in 1994, when Baruch Goldstein, a physician from neighbouring Kiryat Arba, cold-bloodedly gunned down 29 Palestinians praying in the Machpela Cave.

Hebron's state of affairs is subject to unique arrangements between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, which divide it into two areas, known as H-1 and H-2. In rough terms, in H-1, with 130,000 Palestinians and the majority of the city's territory, the Palestinian Authority controls both security and civilian affairs. The Jewish Quarter and its inhabitants and some 30,000 Palestinians reside within H-2. In this area the PA controls civilian affairs for Palestinians, while the IDF is responsible for overall security and civilian affairs relating to Israelis and their property.

Because of Palestinian violence, the IDF has implemented extensive restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement within H-2, aimed at protecting Hebron's Jewish residents and the thousands of people who visit it annually. Almost no Palestinian vehicle can travel on H-2 roads, and nearly all Palestinian businesses have been closed. These constraints have made living in the area difficult, and many Palestinians have left, much to the delight of their Jewish neighbours.

Netanyahu's attempt to add the heritage site designation into this already tightly woven fabric will fail. It also suggests an alarming lack of acumen, a predilection many have come to believe he'd overcome during his second term in office.

Was Moses a war criminal?

This year, in reciting the Passover story and Exodus from Egypt, I suggest extending the discussion to include stories that might have been featured in newspapers, blogs, and nightly news broadcasts of 4,000 years ago (give or take a few centuries).

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

In this not-so-imaginary world, the headlines and video clips highlight stark images of blood flowing in the Nile and the devastation from frogs, boils, locusts and other plagues. The BBC sends a team of reporters and producers to document the devastation in Egypt for a 10-part series – one for each plague. In Canada, daily editorials in the *Toronto Star* attack the government for its pro-Israelite ideology, and the CBC Radio team of Carol Off and Barbara Budd hold moving interviews with carefully chosen Egyptian victims, reached in their servant-less Cairo villas.

These media stories are accompanied by United Nations Human Rights Council resolutions condemning the Israelites for brutal violations of international law and the disproportionate use of force. (European, accompanied by some Canadian diplomats, are seen squirming awkwardly in their seats and wagging their fingers at the Israelite delegation.)

In parallel, the leaders of moral non-governmental superpowers and watchdog groups, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, hold press conferences and give sage-sounding interviews to voice their condemnations, while demanding independent investigations and prosecution of Moses. HRW's Middle East division publishes glossy research reports filled with Egyptian eyewitness testimony and characterizing each of the 10 plagues as collective punishment, a war crime on an unprecedented scale. The Richard Goldstone of the time is appointed to head a committee that collects all of these NGO claims into a United Nations report for use in the case against Moses, Aaron and the 70 Israelite leaders.

Nowhere in these reports is there any mention of the almost 400 years of slavery and brutal treatment that preceded the plagues and march to freedom, with little more than hard crackers for food. Instead, in this narrative, the Israelites are presented as foreign occupiers who conspired with Joseph to steal the land of Goshen from the natives. The record of failed negotiations, which could have ended the conflict peacefully, is completely erased, as are Pharoah's trail of broken promises (peace breakthroughs of the time) to let the Israelites go.

On university campuses, NGO activists mark Israelite Apartheid Week (actually two weeks, but who pays attention to such details?). Frogs and red water are brought in to simulate the suffering caused by the plagues, and mock trials are held, which start with the conclusion that Moses is guilty. At York University, speakers at conferences and mass rallies call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions to punish and isolate the Israelites.

Then, as now, these condemnations and activities are supported by a small but noisy group of disgruntled Israelites, motivated by an exaggerated sense of self-importance and the belief that a right-wing conspiracy led by Moses is responsible for all of the problems. Through grants provided by the New Israelite Fund, these "independent voices" join the demands that the Israelites return to Egypt immediately, apologize and provide compensation for damages.

And these problems did not end with the parting of the Red Sea, or Sea of Reeds, and the drowning of Pharoah's army (another war crime) in hot pursuit of the runaway slaves.

Later, in the desert, as the Israelites prepared for returning to their homeland in the Land of Israel, first Moses and then, 39 years later, Joshua dispatched groups of spies to prepare for the invasion. The biblical text provides many details of these complex intelligence operations, including the role of double agents, but it doesn't describe the nature of the passports they used, or whether they were disguised. Today, this action would have led to pompous denunciations about the invasion of Jericho's sovereignty, and calls for more investigations.

Thus, as our generation struggles for justice, as did our ancestors, the Passover story and the Exodus remain very relevant. The names and details may change, but the overall situation has a great deal to teach us, 4,000 years later.

The Kirshner File

Israel targeted by boycott campaign

Israeli Apartheid Week, which wrapped up last week, has mutated into an annual anti-Israel rant of demonstrations, lectures and cultural events. Started five years ago by the University of Toronto's Arab Students' Collective as a unique five-day show of solidarity "with the people of Palestine and other oppressed nations," IAW has exploded into a two-week Israel-bashing phenomenon in more than 40 cities around the world.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Pro-Palestinian activists regard IAW as an integral part of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign, whose stated objectives are to force Israel to abide by international law and the universal principles of human rights. In practical terms, however, BDS' aim is to demonize and delegitimize Israel as a racist, pariah state.

Comparing Israel to apartheid-era South Africa, the global BDS network believes that Israel should be toppled by non-violent means and replaced by a secular, non-denominational model – the goal of the Palestine Liberation Organization before its formal acceptance of a two-state solution.

BDS was formed in 2005 by 171 Palestinian non-governmental organizations to achieve several specific goals: to end Israel's "occupation and colonization of all Arab lands;" to force Israel to dismantle "the wall," or separation barrier; to pressure Israel to recognize the "fundamental rights" of Israeli Arabs so they can attain full civic equality, and to coerce the Israeli government to let Palestinian refugees return to their former homes and properties in what is now Israel.

A BDS anti-Israel graphic

Despite the clarity of its objectives, BDS is a highly decentralized movement with no fixed leadership, its independent chapters working together in a common cause. Although BDS has not explicitly espoused a one-state or two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and although one of its top strategists, Omar Barghouti, distinguishes between Israel proper and the occupied territories, BDS' support of the Palestinians' "right of return" under United Nations Resolution 194 strongly suggests that it essentially denies Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state underpinned by Zionist principles.

Let's be clear.

If millions or even hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees were to be resettled in Haifa, Jaffa, Ashdod, Ashkelon and Be'er Sheva, Israel would eventually be transformed into a Muslim Arab state by virtue of demography.

Or as the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat once put it in a supreme moment of clarity, the Palestinians, given their much higher birthrate, would ultimately win the battle of the loins, consigning Israel as we know it today to the dustbin of history.

BDS was established by Palestinian Arabs, but most of its supporters and sympathizers are European and North American left-wingers with anarchist and Marxist backgrounds, says a study by the Reut Institute, an Israeli think-tank.

According to Israel's chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, the Palestinian Authority has encouraged BDS.

A number of Jews, both in Israel and the Diaspora, have joined its ranks. Neve Gordon, a Ben-Gurion University of the Negev historian, recently wrote an op-ed piece in the *Los Angeles Times* endorsing BDS as "the only way to counter the apartheid trend in Israel." Israeli academics such as Ilan Pappe, Oren Ben-Dor and Tanya Reinhart have jumped on the bandwagon, too.

In Canada, the anti-globalization writer and political activist Naomi Klein, as well as an outfit known as Independent Jewish Voices, support BDS. In Britain, feminist sociology professor Hilary Rose and her husband, Steven, a neuroscientist, have also been recruited.

BDS considers its Jewish allies important, since they endow the movement with "growing legitimacy" and "moral superiority," as one of its recent communiques observed.

The BDS strategy of smearing Israel as an apartheid state hangs on a slender thread.

As someone who visited South Africa during the waning years of apartheid, I know for a fact that Israel does not fit the classic definition of apartheid South Africa.

Apartheid was a brutally enforced system of institutional racial segregation established by the white Afrikaaner and British elite to maintain its political, economic and social supremacy. Apartheid, which resembled Jim Crow laws in the United States, was based solely on pigmentation. If you were deemed to be white, you were automatically privileged. If you were black, coloured (mixed race) or Asian, you were not allowed to vote in national elections and subjected to a web of onerous and ugly restrictions based exclusively on race.

Naomi Klein

It was as simple and tragic as that.

In Israel, there is no such thing as apartheid based on racial or ethnic origin, as was the case in South Africa until the advent of a multiracial democracy. Apartheid is an alien concept in Israel.

Israeli Arabs are not disenfranchised and are almost always free to live and work where they wish. In conformity with the traditional Ottoman millet system, the vast majority of Israeli Arabs reside in Arab towns and villages on a strictly voluntary basis.

But in terms of budgetary allocations, Arab municipalities are treated unequally. As far as employment opportunities are concerned, Israeli Arabs encounter difficulties. Since 1948, Israel has appropriated much of their land. Anti-Arab racism is a deep-seated problem in Israeli society. Israel recognizes these problems, but the pace of change has been glacial.

Israeli restrictions on Arabs in the West Bank are predicated solely on security, not race. Absent terrorism, Israel would not have imposed restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank. Yet Israel's occupation of the West Bank is a threat to its integrity as a Jewish/democratic state, never mind a blot on its image. Progressive Israeli leaders have recognized that and attempted to alter the unsustainable status quo through negotiations with the Palestinians.

BDS, having cynically overlooked these facts and distinctions, continues to press ahead with its boycott, divestment and sanctions campaign. It has not only affected Israel's academic and cultural exchanges, but put Israeli politicians (Tzipi Livni, the opposition leader) and former generals (Doron Almog and Moshe Yaalon) planning to visit Europe on notice that they may be arrested as war criminals.

Bank of Israel governor Stanley Fischer claims that the boycott of Israeli goods and services – which harkens back to the blanket Arab boycott of Israel – does not pose a real threat to Israel's economy. He may be indulging in wishful thinking, judging by recent developments.

Britain's trade unions have voted to build a mass anti-Israel boycott movement. The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has unanimously passed a divestment resolution. Denmark's largest bank and pension fund has divested from two Israeli companies, Africa-Israel Investments and Elbit Systems. The Belgian-French bank group, Dexia, refuses to work with West Bank Jewish councils.

CUPE has called for a boycott of academic co-operation with Israeli universities. At the 2009 Toronto International Film Festival, boycotters urged filmmakers and audiences to stay away from the program focusing on Tel Aviv. Last year, British academics asked singer Elton John to cancel a performance in Israel, while the Coalition Against Israeli Apartheid criticized the Royal Ontario Museum for exhibiting the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 2007, the assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America called for a boycott of Israeli goods.

Dark clouds are forming, but Israel at present does not find itself in the same dire position as the old South Africa.

Neither non-Muslim states nor the United Nations have imposed economic sanctions against Israel. Most western companies, universities and trade unions have rejected the idea of anti-Israel boycotts, divestments and sanctions. The reason is clear: Israel is not an apartheid state in the mould of pre-democratic South Africa.

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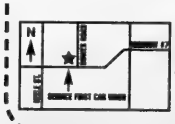
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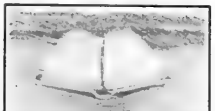
Jewish Life

Seeing the world through Nisan

By RABBI IRA EBBIN

The Talmud teaches us that whoever goes out and sees the first blooms in the month of Nisan should make a blessing. Of course, that may work for people who live in warmer climates such as Israel. But for those of us living in Montreal or other cold places, the month of Nisan may come and go and we might still see snow in May.


Rabbinic Reflections

But rather than use the reference of spring, the Talmud uses the reference of the month of Nisan. While Nisan is referred to as "Chodesh Ha'aviv," the month of spring, perhaps the Talmud chose that reference specifically because it's encouraging us to see the world through the historical eyes of this majestic month.

This unique and special month is filled with momentous events that helped form us as a people. In the month of Nisan, our ancestors tasted freedom for the very first time.

In the month of Nisan, we witnessed God's presence come down to the world through the consecration of the Tabernacle. We were taught the definition of courage and heroism through the martyrdom of the Masada rebellion, and through the rise and fall of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

We also saw the miracle of life through the birth of our patriarch Isaac to his parents at the unheard of ages of 100 and 90 years old, respectively. We witnessed the fragility of life and the importance of appreciating our loved ones with the untimely and tragic passing of Aaron's children, Nadav and Avihu.

In this month of milestones, we were taught to believe in the impossible, as we experienced the miracle of the splitting of the Sea of Reeds with Moses and the splitting of the Jordan with Joshua.

If you go outside during the springtime, you will see the blooms of the trees and flowers, and the beauty of nature. But if you go outside, as the Talmud instructs, in the month of Nisan, you'll see something completely different. Seeing the world through the eyes and lenses of the month of Nisan – perhaps the most majestic month throughout the history of our people – allows us to see the beauty of the new blooms, but it also allows us to see God.

By using this special month and its incredible history of our people as the prism to see the world, one would be led, almost involuntarily, to make a blessing.

Rabbi Ira Ebbin is spiritual leader of the Beth Zion Congregation in Montreal.

Hillel, a sage for all seasons

When I was preparing for my bar mitzvah, a long time ago, my father, the rabbi of a large Orthodox congregation, made a helpful suggestion. "For your speech to the congregation, why don't you say something about the life and teachings of Hillel?"

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

Over the decades, Hillel has remained my hero, the incarnation of wisdom and righteousness.

Hillel, often called The Elder, lived at a time of Herod, 100 years before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

He is perhaps best known for his treatment of proselytes, loving all people and drawing them to the Torah. Two talmudic stories about Hillel and proselytes are especially moving.

The first would-be proselyte stipulated that he would accept the written but not the oral Torah, in which he had no confidence. "Then let us learn the written Torah," said Hillel, and he started teaching him the Hebrew alphabet. On the second day, he gave the letters different names; the bet he called aleph, and the gimmel, he called bet. "But," protested his pupil, "this is wrong!"

"How do you know," asked Hillel. "If it's because of what I told you yesterday? So you relied on oral teaching. Then you must rely on the oral Torah as well."

The second would-be proselyte asked to be taught the whole Torah while standing on one leg. "What is hateful to you, do not to thy neighbour," Hillel said. "This is the whole Torah, and the rest is interpretation. Go and study."

Each proselyte is said to have first approached Shammai, who angrily rejected him. Hillel, however, accepted the challenge of each one on his own level and was thereby accepted by them in return.

For the greater part of his career, Hillel had as his antagonist, Shammai, who was rigid and unbending, strictly literal in his interpretation of scripture and logical to a fault.

His severity is illustrated by his refusal to give his child food on Yom Kippur, until the other sages forced him to do so, and his breaking open the roof of his infant grandson's room on Sukkot, that the child should observe the precept of "dwelling in booths."

Hillel's most famous enactment was the *prosbol*, in connection with the sabbatical year. In his time, the wealthy were adhering to the technicality of the Law, which prohibited the collecting of debts during the sabbatical year, but flouting the principal teaching of the Torah, to help the poor. Although the debt relief was meant to help the poor, creditors responded by making credit scarce when the sabbatical year grew near.

The *prosbol* was Hillel's device for restoring the basic precept of the Torah by enabling creditors to collect debts in the sabbatical year and after. By means of a legal fiction, Hillel allowed the deeper purpose of the Law to succeed.

An intense social conscience informs Hillel's maxims.

- "Separate not yourself from society and believe not in yourself until the day of your death."
- "Judge not your fellow man until you are in his situation."
- "The short-tempered cannot teach, and the shy-to-ask cannot learn."
- "Say not anything that cannot be understood now, in the hope that it will be ultimately understood."

As much as he believed in the need for the knowledgeable to share their spiritual gifts with the ignorant, he believed in the need for each person to discover his own inner gifts. "If I am not for myself," he said, "then who is for me" But if I am only for myself, then what am I?" And not a moment was to be lost, for "if not now, when?"

Once, when parting from his disciples, he told them he was going to perform a mitzvah. "What sort?" they asked. "The bathing of my body," he replied. "Is that a mitzvah?" they asked him. "Yes," he replied. "If the office of keeping clean and fresh the royal statues of the Romans is such a high honour, how much higher an honour is the office of keeping myself clean and fresh when I am created in the image of God?"

For me, and I am sure for others, the most memorable and challenging words of Hillel are these: "In a place where no one behaves like a human being, you must strive to be human."

Jewish Life

Countering hate is not all there is

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

As the now-annual Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) has come and gone – with its ritualistic sloganeering, its pious condemnations of "Israeli atrocities" and, ironically, its utter desecration of Muslim rights and dignity by wilfully ignoring tragic and widespread Muslim-on-Muslim violence and murder, as well as Arab state-sponsored misogyny, and the trampling of gay and minority rights in supposedly "non-occupying" entities – perhaps it's a good time to take stock.

There was a great deal of rhetoric poured back and forth – in speeches, articles, rallies, letters to the editor of major newspapers and so forth – by members of the Jewish community, alternatively decrying IAW as racist or defending it as necessary and a wake-up call for Israel.

Assuming goodwill on both sides of the political spectrum – and that is a reach in certain cases – I'm still disturbed at what this energy tells us about where the priorities of many Jews lie. It's a good thing to articulate one's position and to rebut what one feels are misleading or even mendacious ideas or statements by one's opponents. But in some cases, support for or opposition to IAW, or other issues organized only around the question of Zionism, have become substitutions for any other form of Jewish involvement.

The toxicity of certain kinds of Jewish self-loathing – what historian Alvin Rosenfeld calls "being proud to be ashamed" to be Jews, continues unabated. You know who you are. You rush to the forefront of public denunciations of Israel, as though you can't prove your human rights bona fides quickly enough to those whose objectivity regarding Israel is dubious at best. I don't deny your freedom to speak. What I'm less convinced of is whether your freedom is coupled with wisdom.

Judaism, too, has its annual rituals, and as Pesach approaches, it's worth considering what was perhaps the very first outbreak of anti-Semitism, that of Pharaoh and his followers. Concocting systematic oppression out of the lies of demagoguery, Pharaoh convinces his people that the Jews are a threat to peace and national security and must be put in their place. His heart hardened long before God got around to him.

I don't reject, on its face, anti-Israel criticism, which is the prerogative of democracies (read: Israel alone in the Middle East). But it does often seem, in reading what passes for history in certain quarters – accounts of the "genocidal" war on Gaza and the "racist apartheid wall" – that thousands of bombs had not dropped in Sderot for seven years; that suicide bombers had not streamed through the previously non-walled sections of the West Bank, and that Arabs didn't riot in Hebron in 1929 and massacre Jews en masse. Is this the contemporary version of "hardening of the heart," when we disregard facts in favour of predetermined ideology?

I don't know. But Jewishness is, the last time I checked, a 24/7 identity, not something we invoke as a reaction to IAW organizers. Autonomy, I suppose, can be used to respond to someone else's agenda, or to purposefully construct one's own. Let's not use our liberation from Egypt exclusively to reply to what we perceive as anti-Semitism and have to do with little else that is Jewish. In the end, that sounds like another, more subtle, brand of slavery.

Passover, diabetes and calories

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

The average Israeli gains one to three kilograms over Passover. **[bit.ly/psch26]** Do you think you're so different on this side of the Atlantic?

Whether you've decided to cut down on fat or calories, or are vegetarian or diabetic, there are plenty of Passover dishes you can enjoy.

Nutritionist Fran Berkoff recommends "a good non-stick pan, some chicken broth or vegetable broth for sautéing or as a base for salad dressings. If a recipe calls for a half-cup of oil, try cutting to a third and, if this works, try cutting down even further. Substitute unsaturated oils for chicken fat in traditional recipes and perk up flavours with lemon juice and/or generous amounts of fresh herbs. Instead of piling lots of butter on your matzah, try some jam." **[bit.ly/psch19]**

You can escape the mega-oil, mega-egg, fat-laden dishes if you cook creatively. Even Philip Goldwasser's mother doesn't buy 20 dozen eggs, as she used to when Philip was growing up. How does she do it? "First, use less eggs! Any dish that calls for eggs can usually be lessened by one egg. Not all dishes, but most. Another way to deal with this is to substitute egg whites for eggs. Let's say that you have a recipe that calls for four eggs. You can use two whole eggs and two egg whites." **[bit.ly/psch41]**

More than 20 years ago, Nechama Cohen began to exhibit severe symptoms of diabetes. That change in her life also sparked Cohen to eventually found the Jewish Diabetes Association, to raise awareness about the challenges and solutions for Jews living with diabetes. "Our eating requirements are intimately bound up with our religion, culture and ethnic identity. A Jewish person with diabetes needs to learn how to navigate their way through all these eating opportunities, and stay in control of their blood sugar levels. Go and try to explain to a doctor why you absolutely have to have four cups of wine at one meal and a given amount of matzah. I do not know if anybody knew the carbohydrate content of matzah balls until we came along!" **[bit.ly/psch21]**

The association's guide, *Eating Right for Passover*, is a bilingual English/Hebrew booklet that includes: using a food scale on Pesach; how to time your taking of insulin to coincide with the seder meal; sugar substitutes that are kosher for Passover; illustrations of recommended quantities of matzah to be eaten during the seder; glucose and carbohydrate levels of common Passover wines; and how to water down wine and still fulfil the requirements of the Four Glasses. **[bit.ly/ psch22]**

What can someone with diabetes enjoy on seder nights? Diabetic-Lifestyle.com recommends Spring Vegetable Soup with Scallion and Dill-Flecked Matzah Balls, Beef Brisket with Oranges and Grilled Pineapple with Raspberry Purée. **[bit.ly/psch23]**

And over at Diabetic-Recipes.com, you'll find a Passover menu consisting of Roasted Leg of Lamb, Fresh Asparagus with Lemon and Fresh Strawberries and Rhubarb. **[bit.ly/psch24]**

For blogger T'Mana, Passover reminds her of her diabetes, the bad and the good. When it comes to the Plagues, she sees the following parallels.

- Blood – blood work, blood tests.
- Boils – OK, not the same thing, but diabetic ulcers come to mind.
- Darkness – diabetic retinopathy – what else? **[bit.ly/psch25]**

At the same time, T'Mana says there is also the "Dayenu," much to be grateful for. "Given the state of diabetes care today, we can say that most of us have been 'delivered' from a premature death – or at least, from a much more premature death than we might otherwise have had. All of us have the tools to monitor and treat our condition. Many of us lead 'normal' lives, with diabetes being no more an interruption of that routine than daily prayers… Take a moment tonight, and consider: what still enslaves you? what liberates you? And for what are you grateful – both in terms of your diabetes and in terms of your life in general?"

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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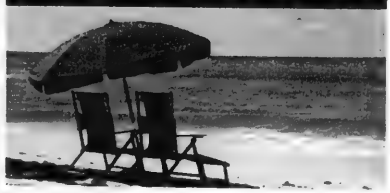

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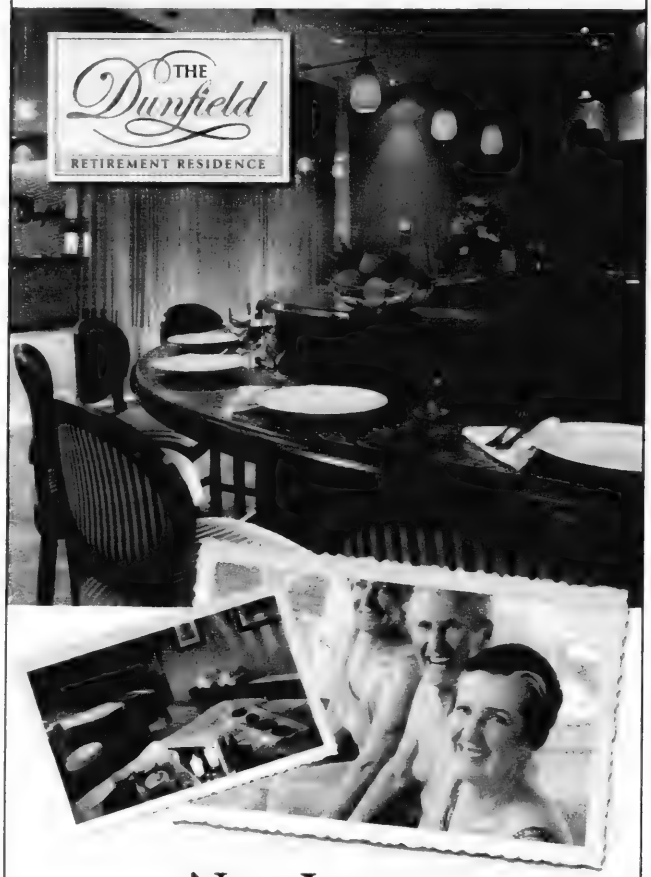

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Leonard Wolinsky Lectures' speakers, from left, Professor Martin D. Yaffe, Professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Jeremy Benstein, with Mira Adler, director, Leonard Wolinsky Foundation; and Professor Eric Lawee, acting director, Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies, York University.

Jewish perspective given on environmental change

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

This year's Leonard Wolinsky Lectures on Jewish Life and Education explored environmental challenges in contemporary Jewish perspective and the relationship of Jews with the natural world.

Held on March 7 at York University, the lecture series featured three speakers who discussed the extent to which Judaism is part of the environmental problem, as well as how it can become part of the solution.

Philosophy and religious studies professor Martin Yaffe, of the University of North Texas, debated whether a Jew can be "a skeptical environmentalist"; history professor Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, of Arizona State University, spoke on the subject of nature and renewal in modern Jewish thought; and Jeremy Benstein, deputy director of the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership in Tel Aviv, examined Jewish legal teachings on environmental issues.

Yaffe, author of *Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader*, raised several interrelated questions. Does the Bible, or Jewish tradition, teach environmental responsibility? Which Jewish teachings address today's environmental crisis? Do ecology and Judaism work together, or are they at odds with each other in confronting the current crisis?

Yaffe said critics who often reflect on professor Lynn Townsend White's 1967 article titled *The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis* blame religion for creating and sustaining the western world's destructive attitude toward the exploitation of nature. Yaffe said such thinkers place a focus on Genesis 1:28 and its declarations of human dominion and obligation to "fill the earth and master it."

This focus has historically resulted in the dispute between an interpretation of absolute control and that of stewardship, Yaffe said. In his attempt to discredit White's attack on the Torah and the theory that humans view land as their own commodity, Yaffe asked what alternative perspectives might be more useful.

Posing counter evidence by looking at the Jewish ecological track record, he said nature should be seen as "a divine moral tool" as well as a creation over which humans have only limited mastery. As evident in Genesis 2:15, God put humans on earth "to work it and to guard it," meaning God wants us to use the planet for our needs while being careful to preserve and not destroy it.

Like Yaffe, Tirosh-Samuelson acknowledged that religions play an important role in creating a sustainable future. She said religions are "the repositories of values and norms that guide human actions toward the natural world," helping shape how we act toward the environment.

Referring to Samson Raphael Hirsch, a German rabbi known as the intellectual founder of modern Orthodox Judaism, Tirosh-Samuelson stated that Jews have the right to rule nature, but must respect their environment according to God's will. Hirsch described improper use of the world's resources as theft from God, she said.

"There is an ethic of responsibility towards nature," said Tirosh-Samuelson, emphasizing that each creature belongs to God and that humans have privileges that entail obligations. Progress coupled with self-discipline and growth, and balanced by conservation and protection, are the Torah's ecological agenda, she suggested, stating that the world "is a chain of giving and receiving."

Benstein, who has published articles exploring the relationship Jews have with the natural world and the ways in which Judaism contributes to social-environmental issues, concluded the lecture series by discussing the "tragedy of the commons" and how the ecological crisis can be remedied.

Benstein offered both an environmental analysis of Judaism and a Jewish perspective on environmentalism, as he examined the dilemmas and questions we face when evaluating religion's role in the care of creation. What he called "the environmental predicament" can be viewed as a challenge able to be better managed through regulation.

Jewish teachings, such as the laws of damages found in Exodus, suggest that people can hurt each other through harming the land. Since the commons belong to everyone, altruism is expected, Benstein said.

"Our society is far from ideal. For too long we have enjoyed the fruit and paid no heed to preserving the fruitfulness. One imperative, then, for long and good lives here on the earth, for us collectively as a society, is treating the natural world with reverence and restraint."

Israeli doctor recalls IDF's Haiti mission

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

They were two "meaningful," unusual weeks in the life of an Israeli physician.

Or as Dr. Ofer Merin put it, "It was a privilege to help people in need in a chaotic situation."

Merin, a heart surgeon, deputy director of the Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem and a lieutenant-colonel in Israel's army reserves, was in Toronto last week to discuss Israel's much-lauded mission of mercy in Haiti.

Within 24 hours of the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake that displaced three million Haitians, killed more than 200,000 and injured some 300,000, Israel dispatched a fully equipped field hospital to the impoverished Caribbean nation.

Merin, who received part of his training at Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital, was in charge of the tented facility.

To Merin, Haiti was terra incognita, "a country none of us knew," he said in a talk and slide show at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation presented by the Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation, the Speakers Action Group and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Dr. Ofer Merin

Yet the Israeli medical team – consisting of 40 doctors, 20 nurses, 20 paramedics and medics and 20 lab and X-ray technicians and administrators – was ready for the challenge.

"We responded very quickly," said Merin, whose improvised field hospital treated 1,111 Haitians, performed 315 operations and delivered 16 babies, including a set of twins.

The Israelis left in two aircraft – a passenger plane carrying personnel and a cargo plane with 30 tons of equipment, including ultrasound machines and incubators. Their flight to Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, took 16 hours.

Although they were unfamiliar with Haiti, three Israeli physicians who preceded them to their destination sent vital intelligence, thereby preparing the way.

The fully operational Israeli field hospital was set up in a soccer field in the centre of the city and was split into surgical and internal medicine branches.

"The word spread very quickly where we were," Merin said. "Some patients arrived in wheelbarrows."

Each patient was registered and photographed, their vital medical information entered into a laptop computer.

Most patients were treated for open limb fractures. Limbs had to be saved, because most Haitians can't afford prosthetics, Merin said.

In general, Haitians with life-threatening injuries received priority, he noted.

But in some cases, this rule was waived. "We had to be flexible," he explained.

Patients were sent away within a day of surgery, but Merin and his staff had no idea where "home" was, since so many residential buildings were destroyed by the powerful earthquake.

Despite all efforts, 13 Haitians treated by the Israelis died.

Merin said he worked under a weighty burden of emotional stress. "There is no good answer as to how we maintained our sanity," he said.

Before starting his day, he jogged for an hour.

Having finished their tour of duty, the Israelis left behind their equipment, and a lot of goodwill.

For a nation whose international image requires improvement, the mission was a public relations triumph for Israel.

Corrections

The article "Toronto Paralympian heading to Vancouver" (March 11) contained incorrect information. Canada's first Paralympic Games were the Summer Paralympics held in Toronto in 1976. We regret the error.

***

A caption that accompanied the story "Righteous Gentiles get posthumous honours" (*CJN*, March 11) incorrectly identified the man on the left side of the photo as Amir Gissin. In fact, the man in the picture was Yaron Ashkenazi, executive director of Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.

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Fashion show to raise awareness of abused women

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Goldie Plotkin isn't interested in helping a charity's public relations department. She's interested in bettering lives.

"Obviously there are many charities that need our help," she said of Chabad Lubavitch of Markham and its charity fashion show, which will be held on March 21.

"Some organizations have wonderful marketing tools and great PR agents. A lot of their money goes for PR and ads," she said. "[There are] very obscure, very well hidden charities, I guess they don't have PR, they're not part of the hoo-haw of Toronto."

Alternative Short-Term Emergency Housing (ASTEH) is one of these charities.

ASTEH, a joint initiative between Jewish Family and Child (JF&CS) and Jewish Women International of Canada (JWIC), is a shelter for abused Jewish women and their children that includes kosher amenities and emotional support for its clients.

"I like to support a charity where every single penny we give goes to the charity. It's not going to pay for advertising, our money goes straight to helping a mother with her children," Plotkin, the fashion show's organizer, said.

Chabad holds a charity event either every year or every other year, and about 20 per cent of proceeds goes to local charities.

For Penny Krowitz, the executive director of JWIC, the show isn't just about funds, it's about raising awareness for an issue that many in the Jewish community would rather ignore, she said.

Goldie Plotkin

"Unless you need it, you don't pay attention to it... many people say to me, 'I didn't know [the shelter] existed,'" she said.

Because ASTEH is a joint initiative between JF&CS and JWIC, the shelter provides social work services as well as volunteer services such as babysitting children while clients are in court or helping women find an apartment when they're ready to leave.

"The issue of violence against women, particularly in the Jewish community, is not really one people like to talk about," Krowitz said. "We want to feel that we are different from the rest of society. Unfortunately, that isn't true."

One of Krowitz's aims, both for the fashion show and through JWIC in general, is to promote education about this issue.

Penny Krowitz

"Many people don't understand what constitutes abuse against women. This will give us an opportunity to educate the public... as well as being the recipient of fundraising dollars."

Krowitz sees the fashion show as a good forum to spread her message.

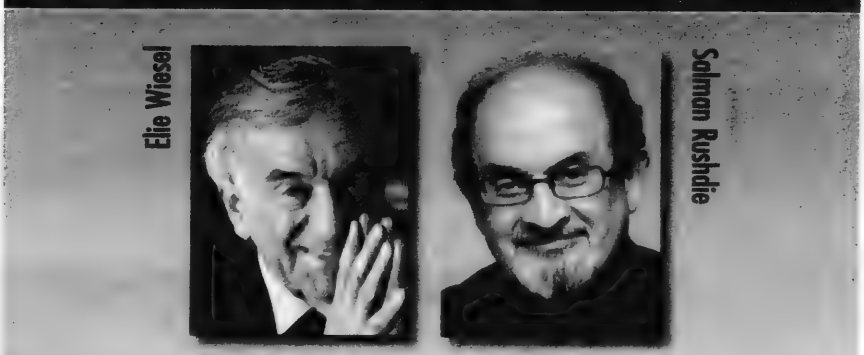
"There will be predominately women [at the show]. Women need to be aware of this both for their own lives and the lives of those they care about," she said.

The fashion show, called a Celebration of the Generations, will be at the Hudson Bay Company's flagship location on Queen Street and will include about 45 models of all ages.

"All [of Chabad's] activities include grandparents, parents, children. We celebrate all the different life cycles," Plotkin said. "I'm not about size zero models, that's anorexia. I want to show very healthy women, beautiful women."

Plotkin expects about 400 to 500 people to attend the show, which will include a raffle and a speech by Judy Feld Carr, who rescued more than 3,000 Jews from Syria.

Tickets are $65, and $36 for students and seniors. For more information or to order tickets, call 905-886-0420, ext. 227, or visit www.chabadmarkham.org.



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Phase II of Lebovic Community Campus construction underway

New Schwartz/Reisman Centre slated to open in Fall of 2012

By Barbra Green & Daniel Horowitz

The second phase of construction on Vaughan's Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Jewish Community Campus is well underway, further transforming what was barren farm land just a decade ago into an unprecedented model of Jewish life in North America.

After a period of relative quiet, the cranes and excavators returned to the 50-acre site just north of Bathurst Street and Rutherford Road in December to resume their duties.

"We have reached a very important milestone in the development of both the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus and the Jewish community-at-large," said Lou Greenbaum, past chair of the Lebovic Campus Development & Building Committee. "It's a marvelous feat and it says volumes about the success and the vibrancy of the Jewish community in Greater Toronto."

Construction on the state-of-the-art Schwartz/Reisman Centre at the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus is underway.

"When we found this land in 1999, there were no roads, no sewers, no water," said Leo Goldhar, the former co-chair of the Land Acquisition Committee and the former chair of the Lebovic Steering Committee, and the recently named chair of the UJA Joint Campus Committee. "When I hired the architect, Guela Solow-Ruda, she prepared a master plan showing the schools, community centre, affordable housing, seniors' housing. Seeing it on paper is one thing, but seeing it come to life is quite another. We already have built a phenomenal high school with TanenbaumCHAT at the Kimel Family Education Centre, and the Schwartz/Reisman Centre (SRC) is now under construction. Our community has risen to the occasion and we have set a new standard in Jewish communities."

The state-of-the-art SRC – a hub of health and wellness, arts and culture, education and, of course, recreation – will encompass approximately 100,000 sq. ft. in two of the campus' busiest buildings. It will include the Phil Granovsky Sports & Recreation Pavilion, a cutting-edge Fitness and Conditioning Centre, the Gorman Shore Goodman Childhood Education Centre and a Community Arts Centre.

"Laying the foundation for this growing, thriving Jewish community is a source of great pride for us and our family," said Gerry Schwartz, co-chair of the Tomorrow Campaign, who along with his wife, Heather Reisman, provided the lead gift for the SRC. "The Schwartz/Reisman Centre, at the heart of this amazing campus, will be a resource – a beacon – for community members of all ages and interests."

The existing Sydney & Florence Cooper & Family Sports Hall, a vast gymnasium complex already in use at TanenbaumCHAT at the Kimel Family Education Centre, will ultimately connect to the SRC, creating just one of many practical shared spaces on campus. The shells (or superstructures) of the Community Services Pavilion and the Conference & Celebration Pavilion will also be built during this phase, along with a significant portion of the Sharp Family Atrium.

"To see this project, this incredible campus moving forward means so much to my brother Wolf and I," said Joseph Lebovic.

Completion of the Schwartz/Reisman Centre is slated for the spring/summer of 2012, with a grand opening slated for the fall. The Mount Sinai Family Health and Wellness Centre, on the third floor of the Community Services Pavilion, is scheduled to open at the same time.

Completion of the Schwartz/Reisman Centre is slated for 2012.

CJN columnist, 90, reflects on life and Judaism

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

This weekend Rabbi Bernard Baskin will celebrate his 90th birthday with family and friends.

"I think if one is in good health and is lucky enough to reach 90, it's a source of celebration," he said in a telephone interview last Wednesday from Boca Raton, Fla., the day after his March 9 birthday.

The rabbi – who served Hamilton's Temple Anshe Sholom from 1949 until his retirement 20 years ago, and who still maintains an office there as rabbi emeritus – believes that "if one reaches old age and is in relatively good health, one should persist in trying to maintain some kind of involvement in life."

This year marks the third winter he has spent in Florida, but he is still lecturing and preaching, he noted. In fact, he was anticipating a trip to Edmonton to speak to the Jewish community there April 15.

In Hamilton, in addition to having headed Anshe Sholom – which he says is the oldest Reform congregation in Canada, taking into account the age of its cemetery – Rabbi Baskin has also been involved in interfaith work and community cultural matters.

Recognition he has received for his work includes a 1959 honorary doctorate from McMaster University, and a B'nai Brith Humanitarian Award for his interfaith involvement. As well, he served on the university's senate, was voted into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction, and is a former Negev Dinner honoree.

A regular columnist for *The CJN* for some 50 years, Rabbi Baskin has also written many articles and book reviews for the *Hamilton Spectator*. His *CJN* column now appears once a month.

Rabbi Bernard Baskin

In 2008, to mark his 60 years with Anshe Sholom, the congregation held a public event attended by 450 people, and published a book of Rabbi Baskin's writings, *The Essential Bernard Baskin*. The temple now has 420 families, making it the largest of Hamilton's three synagogues, and is headed by Rabbi Jordan Cohen.

Rabbi Baskin has had a lifelong interest in books; as a youngster he thought he might teach English literature in a high school when he grew up, and following his retirement, he and his late wife, Marjorie, who died five years ago, ran a book business, mostly selling Judaica. Last year, he donated 8,000 volumes to the University of Alberta, following a suggestion from an Edmonton bookseller with whom he was acquainted.

The rabbi has given book talks at McMaster and at the Hamilton Public Library, where he served as chair for many years. He also gives 12 lectures a year to groups of 80 to 100 people at the temple. "It keeps me intellectually stimulated," he said.

Lecturing, preaching, keeping up with world politics and "reading that matters," as well as his ties with family and friends, all lead to "a rather full and I would say interesting life," the rabbi said.

"Older people, if they're able, should choose to remain in life, not withdraw. This requires the luxury of good health, [but] even people who are not in excellent good health should try to maintain some kind of involvement," he advised. "I think withdrawal leads eventually to a kind of inertia, both physical and mental, and that leads to, I think, a quick demise."

To stay healthy, the rabbi said, "one has to be realistic about one's diet, to try to remain within reasonable good weight, to maintain some kind of regimen of exercise, to stay alert, to have a schedule, to have friends, stay away from smoking if possible, alcohol in moderation. All these things lead to better health, one hopes.

"And then, of course," he added dryly, "you have to choose your parents very carefully."

A native of New Brunswick, N.J., Rabbi Baskin was raised in an Orthodox home in Brooklyn, N.Y. His father, Rabbi Samuel Baskin, served a large congregation there.

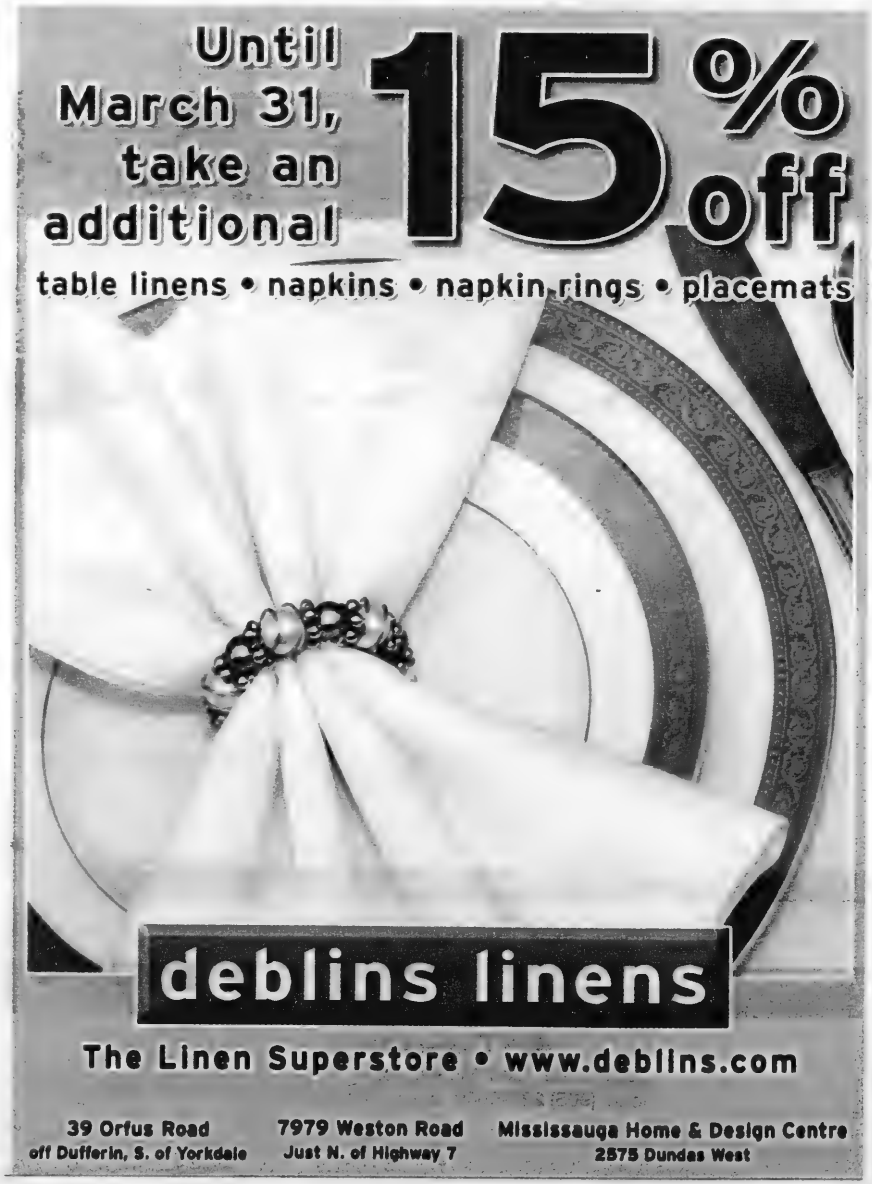
A graduate of Brooklyn College, Rabbi Baskin was ordained at the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York in 1947, before serving congregations in Denver and then Baton Rouge, La. The seminary later merged with Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College.

Rabbi Baskin said that as he grew up, he became increasingly less convinced that Orthodoxy was for him. "I found it quite restrictive. I also found that many of its teachings were things I couldn't accept, which seemed to in many ways contradict what I thought about the universe," he recalled.

At one time, he considered becoming a Conservative rabbi.

His father never argued with him about his choice, he said. "I'm sure he would have liked if I had become more Conservative, but… I think he was pleased that I chose the rabbinate to serve in the Jewish community."

Continued on page 19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Seen major changes in Reform Judaism

Continued from page 18

Reflecting on his long career, Rabbi Baskin said he both liked and found meaning in the rabbinate.

"I've lived through such momentous and cataclysmic events as the Holocaust, the Second World War, and, of course, the birth of Israel," he said. "The Holocaust has made for tremendous changes in Jewish life. We no longer have a community in eastern Europe, which was the dominant community until North America. We no longer have a community in the Arab countries. At one time, we had a strong Sephardic community in the Arab countries. That's all disappeared with the birth of Israel."

Rabbi Baskin's late brother, Leonard, the well-known American artist.

Israel – which Rabbi Baskin said he visited with congregants before such trips became popular – "has become the centre of our concern, the centre of our involvement."

Having visited a dozen times, and with a granddaughter who has made aliyah and is serving in the Israel Defence Forces, the rabbi said he has "a strong connection with Eretz Yisrael."

Since his ordination, he has seen major changes in Reform Judaism, and in Judaism in general. Women are now routinely ordained as rabbis and cantors in the non-Orthodox movements, and in the Reform movement, there has been a return to more ritual and greater use of Hebrew at services.

"I think that's all favourable," Rabbi Baskin said. Speaking of ritual in particular, he said he thinks that "for Judaism to exist and continue, you need things like ritual to add colour and meaning to Jewish life."

On a personal note, Rabbi Baskin wanted to talk about his family and how proud he is of them: his son David, a former president of Holy Blossom Temple whose wife Joan Garson is president of the Reform Zionist umbrella, Arzenu; daughter Judith, an author and professor of Jewish studies at the University of Oregon; daughter Susan, a music teacher who used to teach at Leo Baeck Day School; and seven grandchildren.

Judith Baskin

As well, he added, his late wife was head of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, and his late brother, Leonard, was a well-known American artist who illustrated *A Passover Haggadah* and whose works are in major museums.

When the rabbi arrived in Hamilton in 1949 – succeeding noted philosopher Rabbi Emil Fackenheim – he and his wife intended to stay only a few years.

But with the birth of their children and their growing involvement in and appreciation of the community, "fate ordained otherwise," Rabbi Baskin said.

BOOK FAIR

Netivot HaTorah Day School library supervisor Achim Berger shares the joy of reading with senior kindergarten students, from left, Philip, Eitan and Mikey, while he rings up their purchases at the school's annual Scholastic Book Fair as parent Adina Lipson looks on.

[Rebecca Ansel photo]

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Greater Toronto Area

Oil discovery changed a Galician community

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Drohobych, situated at the confluence of two rivers in Galicia, was a remote, tradition-bound town when a significant quantity of oil was discovered in the vicinity in the mid-19th century.

The discovery changed Drohobych, modernizing and catapulting it into the industrial era.

For Israeli scholar and lecturer Shalmi Bar-Mor, the industrialization of Drohobych is a microcosm of what modernity wrought in Jewish communities in eastern Europe more than a century ago.

Shalmi Bar-Mor

"This is really the story of capitalism," said Bar-Mor, who was in Toronto recently to speak on the topic at an event sponsored by the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada at Congregation Habonim.

"This small place became an industrial centre," added Bar-Mor, the director of the Education Culture Heritage Organization, based in Mevasseret Zion.

Drohobych had a population of about 18,000 and was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire on the eve of the event that transformed it.

Nearly half of its inhabitants were Jewish, while the remainder were Ukrainian, Polish and Russian.

Bar-Mor, a former Hebrew University historian who headed Yad Vashem's education department from 1972 to 1995, doesn't know what quantities of oil were discovered there. "But it was a lot for the time," he said.

Indeed, the refinery that was built to accommodate the flow was one of the biggest in Europe.

Jews were involved in the oil business from top to bottom as developers, investors and workers, said Bar-Mor in an interview.

The boom altered the socio-economic structure of the town, nourished an artistic awakening within the framework of the Enlightenment and opened up the Jewish community to the wider world.

A middle class, with an intelligentsia, emerged. Progressive Judaism took hold as Orthodoxy became more insular. Jews entered the professions and were increasingly Polonized, noted Bar-Mor, whose parents immigrated to Palestine from Poland in the 1930s.

With Drohobych prospering, Jewish painters such as Maurycy and Leopold Gottlieb developed their craft.

Bruno Schultz, the Jewish writer, graphic artist and literary critic widely known as the Polish Kafka, was born in Drohobych and lived there until the Nazis killed him.

After World War I, Drohobych briefly became part of the West Ukrainian National Republic and then was incorporated into newly independent Poland.

When Germany occupied it, almost 40 per cent of its residents were Jewish. Many Jews were murdered during the Holocaust – Bar-Mor has no figures – but some survived.

Drohobych passed into Soviet hands after World War II, its economy buttressed by the oil refining, machine, woodworking and food industries.

Now within the territory of post-Soviet Ukraine, Drohobych, with a population of 77,000, no longer has a functioning Jewish community, much less Jews. The building that once housed a synagogue has been converted into a furniture warehouse.

"There's nothing Jewish there anymore," said Bar-Mor, who has twice visited the town in the past five years, most recently last summer. "What you see is a void."

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Israeli media judge housing announcement harshly

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Israel last week was met with controversy when Israel's Interior Ministry announced plans for 1,600 new homes in east Jerusalem, prompting Biden and the U.S. administration in Washington to strongly criticize the announcement. The controversy arose just as Israel and the Palestinian Authority were set to resume indirect peace talks.

According to Reports

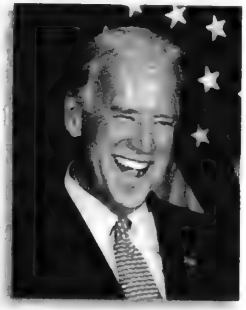
By PAUL MICHAELS

Headlines in Canadian news media on March 10 were almost uniform: "Biden condemns Israel over new homes" (*National Post*); "Biden condemns Israel's latest settlement plan" (*Ottawa Citizen*); "Biden condemns Israeli settlement expansion move" (*Edmonton Journal*); "U.S. hits Israeli east Jerusalem plan" (*Winnipeg Free Press*); "Biden slams new Israeli settlements" (*Toronto Sun*).

The *Toronto Star* carried two reports by Olivia Ward. Her lead story, "Middle East talks stumble," dealt with Biden's reaction to the housing issue. Ward's second story, "Washington 'committed' to ensuring Israel secure," described the main thrust of Biden's visit – to assure Israeli leaders that the United States will do everything necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and, thereby, also to convince Israel not to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

The *Globe and Mail* was alone in placing Biden's comments on Iran front and centre. In Paul Koring's story, "Biden aims harsh words at Iran on visit to Israel," he confined Biden's reaction to the housing announcement to the latter part of the report.

In Israel, media analysis and comment was harshly critical of the Interior Ministry's move, especially its timing while Biden was just beginning his visit and, as some commentators noted, was blindsided.



Vice-President Joe Biden

The March 10, *Jerusalem Post* editorial "Dysfunctional government" called the Interior Ministry's announcement "a staggering example of diplomatic obtuseness" and added that "the timing of the announcement immediately threatened the 'proximity talks' in which Netanyahu has stressed Israel has a profound interest. It united the Palestinians, the Arab world and much of the international community in a chorus of anti-Israel condemnation."

In his *Ha'aretz* column headlined "Broken glass," Ari Shavit wrote that "The [Iranian] threat against Israel is unprecedented. Our need for the United States is unprecedented. At this critical juncture, any national interest should be subservient to the supreme interest of strengthening this alliance."

In " Visiting Biden slams E. J'lem housing plan" (Mar. 10), *Ha'aretz* reporters noted that Netanyahu told Biden that he did not know in advance about the decision to authorize the additional construction.

They added: "Netanyahu also told Biden that the planning and building councils are not under the government's direct authority, and that his administration tries not to interfere with their work. 'No one was seeking to embarrass you or undermine your visit,' the prime minister reportedly said. 'On the contrary – you are a true friend to Israel.'

"Nevertheless, a high-ranking official in Jerusalem said Netanyahu has 'no problem' with construction in Jerusalem and has no intention of apologizing for building there."

On Mar. 10 CBC News Network's *News Now*, host Carole MacNeil interviewed Mark Regev, Netanyahu's spokeperson.

MacNeil: "Is your prime minister embarrassed that he didn't know about this [housing announcement]"?

Regev: "Well let's say it wasn't our finest hour. But anyone who works in a democratic system [knows that] only in totalitarian countries does the central government control every aspect of society. When you have local governments, when you have different ministries, these things are bound to happen. Obviously you want to try to keep it to a minimum… The most important thing is that… we want to move forward in the peace process, we want to deal with the issue of Iran to make sure they don't go nuclear – there's a whole series of issues where Israel and the United States – and also Canada – are working together to try to deal with these challenges."

This column recently argued that housing and settlements, although an important final status issue, are not "the" key impediment to progress on peace, as much of the world claims, and that other more critical final status subjects need to be examined.

However, with incidents such as the controversy described above, "settlements" are all the international community is likely to remain fixated on in the foreseeable future.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

Neuroscience links Israeli, Palestinian scientists

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Neuroscience professor Mark Gluck has been working for seven years to bridge the gap between Israeli and Palestinian doctors and scientists in his field.

Gluck, professor of neuroscience at Rutgers University-Newark and co-director of the Rutgers Memory Disorders Project, has been an active partner with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Al-Quds University medical school in east Jerusalem in setting up joint brain research exchanges and conferences – a mission he discussed in Toronto last month at an event co-hosted by the Maimonides Society of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Young Health Professionals.

Gluck, along with Hagai Bergman, professor of neuroscience at Hebrew U, spearheaded the first international scientific conference hosted by the Israeli and Palestinian universities in June 2005. The landmark event focused on interdisciplinary approaches to understanding Parkinson's disease and took place on both campuses.

While the conference brought together more than 200 researchers and physicians from Israel, the West Bank, Jordan, England, France, Canada and the United States, Gluck said science was not his only focus. The three-day program was his symbolic response to the increase in anti-Israeli boycotts in academia at the time.

The boycott movement began in Britain in 2002 to protest Israel's treatment of Palestinians. More than 120 scientists and scholars from across Europe urged a ban on educational and cultural links with the Jewish state.

"I feel a strong connection with Israel, and when I first heard about the boycotts, it offended me twice over," Gluck said. "These are my fellow Jews. They're also my fellow scientists. They're my brethren. So my feeling was that Rutgers could to do something about this by organizing an international conference in Israel with leading scientists."

Gluck said the initiative exceeded his expectations, as he did not think his team would be able to get the Palestinians involved as partners. He said the conference allowed Rutgers to improve Israel's relationship with the Arab world, which is crucial to the nation's long-term strength.

The 2005 conference was not a one-time thing, Gluck said, as a second international convention focusing on Alzheimer's disease was held in May 2008. Gluck organized the three-day event, co-hosted by Rutgers-Newark, Hebrew U and Al-Quds University, with his colleagues in Israel and the West Bank.

Hebrew U, Al-Quds set up joint brain research programs

Gluck was one of over 50 scholars, scientists and students from the United States and Europe who shared findings at the conference, which provided another chance for Israelis and Palestinians to collaborate, he said.

More than 20 Palestinians attended the sessions at Hebrew U, and though some already had permits to work in Israeli hospitals, Gluck said he spent months arranging entry for over a dozen Palestinians from the West Bank who would normally be denied easy access.

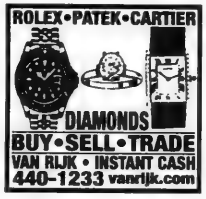
Gluck said one of the main goals of the 2008 conference was to set up a new Middle East Collaborative Research Consortium on Brain Disorders to benefit the entire region. He said the opportunity was "a novel one for Israeli-Arab co-operation [that] promotes Israel as a valued neighbour for regional health care."

Gluck said he began to build trust by meeting with families of the Palestinian students, but with the outbreak of war in Gaza in December 2008, communication between the Arabs and the Jews was shut down. "The program was put on hold due to politics and discomfort," he said.

In response to the conflict, Gluck and Dr. Adel Misk, a leading Palestinian neurologist affiliated with Al-Quds, established the Rutgers-Israel Biomedical Research and Education Exchange. The project has grown into a program for study and collaborative research, bringing Rutgers students and faculty to Israel and Israeli scientists and students to Rutgers. Gluck said certain initiatives have also provided opportunities for Rutgers students to participate in collaborative programs with Palestinian universities.

In future efforts, Gluck said Rutgers will assist in the establishment of a Palestinian Neurosciences Institute at Al-Quds University. Housed on the Abu Dis campus, it will provide training and research support for Palestinian medical students, doctors and scientists.

The Palestinian Neurosciences Institute will also administer a broader Palestinian Neurosciences Society, open to Palestinian scientists, doctors and students worldwide. The society will apply for recognition from international organizations and seek representation at global conferences.



Israel conversion bill angers Diaspora Jews

Continued from page 1

The annulment provision "suggests someone who converts to Judaism could have their conversion overturned," contrary to longstanding Jewish practice, Rabbi Stroh said.

And the clause restricting application of the Law of Return to people born Jewish or those converted abroad (providing they've never visited Israel prior to their conversion) violates an ancient principle of Judaism, which "does not make any distinction between those born Jews and those who convert. They're 100 per cent Jews," he said.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl said the legislation started out trying to decentralize the conversion process in Israel by giving that power to local rabbis. But during negotiations to advance the bill, "Rotem essentially capitulated to the chief rabbi, so he made the situation worse. The chief rabbi will determine who at the local level is okay to handle this. It only appears to decentralize, but in a sense, it only strengthens the hand of the chief rabbi."

Over the past 10 years, the haredi establishment in Israel had continued to "devalue" Reform and Conservative Judaism, and in the last two years, it has devalued "liberal Orthodox rabbis," limiting the acceptance of their conversions, he said.

Rabbi Stroh said that "the whole thing is a political manoeuvre by the Israeli Orthodox rabbinate to get more control and power over Jews and the State of Israel."

That's a view shared in Israel by Rabbi Michael Melchior, former minister for Diaspora relations. He said the dispute over the bill, and the threat by the Ashkenazi haredi party (United Torah Judaism) to bolt the government over the bill are "a classical example of how we mess up things at the highest level."

Rabbi Melchior said Rotem's bill, before it was amended at the behest of haredi parties (Shas and United Torah Judaism), resembled one he had proposed years ago.

"The bill was an attempt, without breaking all the principles and rules regarding conversions, to make conversions a little bit easier" by permitting city rabbis across Israel to perform them, he said.

By treating all of Israel as a single jurisdiction for the purpose of conversion, a convert could choose any rabbi he felt comfortable with, and it would prevent a second rabbi from overturning that conversion, he said.

As the bill proceeded through the deliberative process in the Knesset, the Chief Rabbinate wanted a clause inserted to give it sole authority to annul conversions, while "the ultra-Orthodox, who control everybody and everything, made a big fuss about this," Rabbi Melchior said.

They will support the bill only if conversions are limited to rabbis approved by the Chief Rabbinate – effectively shutting out moderate rabbis, he added.

It would put an end to the country's conversion institute, which has special religious courts headed by Rabbi Haim Druckman, established to streamline the process, and which includes the input of Conservative and Reform Judaism. The institute "was a real, serious attempt to do something for the unity of the Jewish people," he said.

(The conversion courts have experienced a crisis in recent years, in part as a result of rabbinic court rulings that voided thousands of conversions.)

Giving the Chief Rabbinate sole authority over the legitimacy of conversions is a departure from current practice and gives the chief rabbi authority that does not exist now in Israel, Rabbi Melchior said.

The result, he predicted, is that "more Jews will feel estranged from the State of Israel. Israel speaks to all Jews and the children of Jews, and we cannot afford to send a signal to the non-Orthodox world that they are not welcome in the State of Israel."

Rabbi Stroh said controversies such as the conversion bill make the job of the Reform movement in Israel that much harder. "Orthodox control makes Judaism very unpalatable to many Israelis," he said. In effect, it gives religion a bad name and "makes it hard for Reform and Conservative to bring Judaism to Israelis."

In a news release, the Jewish Federations of North America, which represents 157 federated communities and 400 smaller centres, called on the Israeli government to enter a dialogue with Diaspora Jews before amending the Law of Return.

That issue "is of urgent importance to our communities," the news release said.

"We implore the Israeli government to seriously consider the concerns and sensitivities of Diaspora Jews before acting on such proposals. Changes to the Law of Return could adversely affect many members of our community by preventing them from making aliyah and becoming Israeli citizens. Any action of this type would be an affront to world Jewry."

Sharansky, a former MK, said the bill went from one intended to address question of conversions by municipal rabbis to one affecting citizenship and the issue of who is a Jew.

"The last thing Israel needs is to open a front against the many Jews who live in the Diaspora," he told the *Jerusalem Post*.

Echoing the language of critics of Israel's haredi parties, Rabbi Melchior said, "I'm very sad… The Torah does not allow us to embarrass or hurt the feelings of people who want to convert to Judaism, and that's being forgotten in the power play and politics."

Rabbi Melchior is not optimistic about the resolution of the issue. Although the bill is currently in limbo, "the Zionist parties probably couldn't care less" about concerns of North American Jews. "It's not a big issue in Israel. It's not something that concerns them. What concerns the political establishment is to preserve the coalition [government]."

Still, he worries that Israel can ill afford "a world war with the Reform and Conservative movement and the major Jewish organizations."

With files from Ha'aretz

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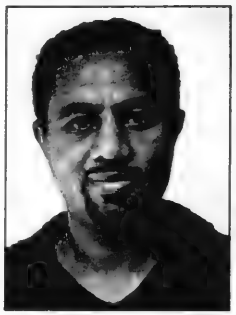
Policy on non-Jewish refugees urged for Israel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The Israeli government should enact a formal policy for non-Jewish asylum seekers in Israel, says the founder and director of a refugee centre in Tel Aviv.

"Israel needs a policy that protects these refugees," said Yohannes Bayu of the African Refugee Development Center. "Israel must deal with this situation sooner rather than later."



Yohannes Bayu

Here recently as the guest of the New Israel Fund to create awareness about the issue, Bayu said the absence of a such a policy makes it difficult for refugees to receive proper care, humanitarian aid and residency.

Bayu – a 38-year-old Ethiopian Christian from Addis Ababa who was granted political asylum in 1997 after a 23-day hunger strike – estimates there are close to 20,000 asylum seekers in Israel, mainly from the African countries of Sudan and Eritrea.

"They have no rights, can't legally work and are not eligible for welfare," said Bayu, a temporary resident who hopes to become an Israeli citizen.

By his estimate, most of the asylum seekers are single, range in age from 25 to 35, are well educated and have been in Israel since 2006.

And the majority have fled political persecution, he added.

"It's very hard for them to manage," he said in a telephone interview before an appearance at Temple Emanu-El in Toronto late last month. "They are suffering."

In his view, Israel should pass legislation that would provide the refugees with their basic needs – housing and medical assistance – and allow them to look for employment.

"This population can support itself if given the chance to find jobs," he said. "This would solve a lot of problems."

Robert Walker, director of communications at Israel's embassy in Ottawa, noted that Israel is aware of the problem.

In a statement, he said: "Israel understands the pain of African asylum seekers, and is committed to finding a reasonable solution. On the one hand, Israel recognizes the suffering of those seeking refuge, but at the same time, Israel's concerns cannot be ignored.

"Israel is a very small country, and the cost of thousands of refugees places a significant strain in terms of security, socio-economic costs, and the Jewish and democratic nature of the state. Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu has made it clear that Israel remains open for war refugees, but it cannot allow thousands of illegal immigrants to infiltrate the country."

According to a recent report in *Ha'aretz*, Israel's foreign ministry has launched a campaign to justify Israel's policy of expelling refugees from the province of Darfur in Sudan.

In a defence of this policy, the ministry claims that Al Qaeda terrorists might try to enter Israel as refugees.

Bayu's organization, with an annual budget of about $300,000 (US), has given more than 4,500 African refugees shelter, food, medical attention, trauma counselling and lessons in Hebrew and English since its establishment in 2004.

He has received grants from the United Nations and from Israeli non-governmental organizations, primarily the New Israel Fund.

Living in Jerusalem but based in Tel Aviv, he directs a staff of nine workers and some 120 volunteers.

Bayu has personally taken his case to the Knesset and politicians and has worked closely with the Israeli media.

In 2008, he was nominated person of the year by the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Achronot*.

"Most Israelis are sympathetic," he observed, "but the [Israeli] government does not have a good attitude toward refugees."

Bayu says he left Ethiopia – which has good ties with Israel – in fear of his life after working for a non-governmental organization pressing for democracy.

Monitored, harassed and twice imprisoned by the Ethiopian government without formal charges being laid against him, he was tortured while in jail.

"There is no judicial process or rule of law in Ethiopia," he said. "The government does what it wants. It was not safe for me to remain in Ethiopia. People I know have disappeared."

Asked why he chose Israel as a haven, he replied, "Israel is a democratic country and experienced in accepting refugees. It's a place where I feel safe."

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March 3 - March 18, 2010

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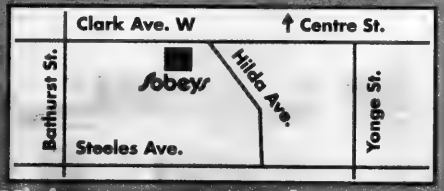

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

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Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

To send in digital photos, please visit

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and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

To the best looking 65-year-old ever. Happy birthday Cindy Breslin. Your loving husband George.

Happy 90th birthday Abe Shniffer! From your loving wife Gloria, children and grandchildren.

Amanda & Adam are engaged! Delighted parents are Deana & Yosi Ullman, Evy Moskowitz & Bob Morris and Jeff Moskowitz. Wedding will take place August.

Mazel tov to Pamela Gallowitz & Michael Cytrynbaum on their engagement. Thrilled parents are Rosalie & Jeff Gallowitz and Mona & Louis Cytrynbaum.

Sadie & Ozzie Ginsler are thrilled to announce the birth of their baby sister, Penny Julia. Proud parents, Yael & Brian Ginsler.

Ethan and Asher welcome the birth of their new brother Zachary Ariel. Proud parents, Rachel & Frank Zand.

Hudson and Peyton are excited to announce the arrival of Mason Cooper and Madison Sierra on Nov. 10. Parents, Robyn Feldberg & Jarred Katz.

Mazel tov Lucas, Erica and Alexis Taylor's birth. Grandparents, Tom & Debby Jacobs, Sol & Naomi Baum. Great-grandparents, Masha Weintraub, Anne Padber, Kalmen Baum.

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadlines: Please note that because of the Passover holiday, the deadline for both the April 1 and the April 8 issues is March 22. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0029, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Saturday, March 20

CHARITY BINGO

Simcha/Kadima, Na'amat Canada, are holding the 15th annual charity bingo, Bialik Hebrew Day School, 7:30 p.m. Tickets $20 includes cards, refreshments, door prizes, auction. 416-636-5425.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah's Torah class, 10-11 a.m., Vayikra. Open to the public.

PESACH INSTITUTE

Study with **Rabbi Wayne Allen**, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, "The Four Sons Through History," following Minchah, 6:45 p.m.

Sunday, March 21

ARE UNIVERSITIES SAFE?

Prof. Pekka Sinervo, University of Toronto, will discuss events that have changed how the Jewish community perceives universities, 10 a.m., Temple Emanu-El adult education program. 416-449-3880.

GAMES NIGHT

Games Jewish Singles Play, 7:30 p.m., Beth Torah Synagogue. Ages, 21-39; 40-69. $8. **Mollie**, 416-733-3634 or mollie_rothman@yahoo.ca.

GALA FASHION SHOW

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham presents a fashion show hosted by **Erica Ehm** and featuring speaker **Judy Feld-Carr**, Arcadian Court, The Bay Queen St. store will remain open after the show. Portion of proceeds donated to ASTEH. Doors open 5:30 p.m., tickets $65, $36 students and seniors. 905-886-0420, ext. 227, chabadmarkham.org.

OUT OF THE MATZAH BOX!

A pre-Pesach program for children 2-6 and their parents hosted by Associated Hebrew Schools. Make your own Haggadah, matzah covers, 3:30-5 p.m., Kamin Education Centre. Pre-register, **Pearl Greenspan**, 905-889-3998, ext.337, or pgreenspan@ahschools.com.

ISRAELI SOCIAL ISSUES

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Brotherhood Shabbaton presents young Israel emissaries **Gal Meshoulam** and **Yuval Derry**, who will discuss current social issues. 9:15 a.m. $5 includes breakfast. 416-633-5500.

Monday, March 22

MEDITATING MONDAYS

Temple Har Zion's Meditating Mondays, which usually take place on the final Monday of each month will take place today, due to Passover. Program begins 8:15 p.m. Explore kavanah and healing, beginners welcome. 905-889-2252.

Tuesday, March 23

FILM AND BOOK REVIEW

Adath Israel's book and film review series continues with *The Visitor*, 8 p.m. Facilitator by **Heather Kassel**. Members $10, non-members $15. Please view film in advance.

NOT OPTED OUT

Beth Tikvah's Men Club hosts a meeting for family or friends of inter-dating or inter-married couples, attended by facilitator. No charge, non-members welcome. **Moe Horenfeldt** 647-282-0277, mhorenf@idirect.com.

PASSOVER HAGGADAH

Rabbi Martin Berman, Shaar Shalom Synagogue, continues his three-part series, Tip Toe through the Passover Haggadah, 7:45 p.m., "The Story of *Kitniyot*: No Rice, No Beans? Where Did This Come From?" www.shaarshalom.ca.

Continued on page 29

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Continued from page 28

Wednesday, March 24

MUSIC AND TORAH

Beth Emeth continuing education presents **Cantor Aaron Bensoussan** in a six-part program, Explore Faith and Spirituality through Music and Torah, Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. Tonight's program, "Talking to God." No charge. 416-633-3838.

LGBT COMMUNITY

New Israel Fund of Canada, the First Narayever Congregation and Canada-Israel Committee present "The Aguda: Tragedy and Recovery, Supporting Israel's LGBT Community," 7:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation. 416-781-4322.

JEWISH TORONTO

Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada (Toronto) and the North York Central Library present "The Toronto Jewish Community; Portrait of our Past (1900-1930) with **Harold Troper**, 8 p.m., library auditorium, 5120 Yonge St. www.jgstoronto.ca.

Thursday, March 25

LGBT COMMUNITY

New Generations New Israel Fund of Canada, Kulanu Toronto and Miles Nadal JCC present "The Aguda: Tragedy in Israel's LGBT Community," 8 p.m., Miles Nadal JCC. RSVP 416-781-4322.

HOME SAFE TORONTO

Winchevsky Centre will screen *Home Safe Toronto*, a film about how families live with the threat of homelessness, 7:30 p.m., at the centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave. Facilitated by **Laura Sky.**

OTHER NEWS

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP, **Judy**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or judy@djds.ca.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m., followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m., followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

BAYCREST VOLUNTEERS

The Museum at Baycrest seeks volunteers for two projects over the summer. An online catalogue project requires volunteers who have computer and research skills, and are detail oriented. The Museum on Wheels is a bedside art program that requires volunteers with a background in art and/or anthropology, and previous experience working with an elderly clientele. 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, or alefkovitz@baycrest.org

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com, for info on the following groups.

When You're About to Separate: What to Tell the Kids, March 24, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 6:30-9 p.m.

Develop a Successful Business Relationship with Your Child's Other Parent, March 25, Lipa Green Centre, 7-9 p.m.

Effective Parenting: Four-session group for parents of children 2-11 years, begins March 25, 7-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

100th ANNIVERSARY

The Stashover-Slipia Congregation is 100 years old in Toronto in 2010. Call to find out how you can support, reconnect and help us celebrate, 416-789-1333 or Stashover100@bell.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or to drive seniors to medical appointments. **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

Circle of Care Hospice and Jewish Hospice are looking for volunteers. 30-hour training program begins April 12. **Mindy Shiel,** mshiel@circleofcare.com or 416-635-2900, ext. 467.

COMMUNITY SEDERS

Temple Har Zion's second seder, March 30. Adults $60, children $30. Deadline March 23. thzpassoverseder@gmail.com, 905-889-2252, ext. 232.

West Toronto Jewish Community Association holds its potluck Passover seder, March 30, 6:30 p.m. $25 adults, $10 children, $60 maximum (plus Passover dish to share). **Francine**, 416-588-9436, passoverseder@rogers.com.

LIBRARY EVENTS

Beth Tzedec Max and Beatrice Wolfe Library, March 22, screens *Waltz with Bashir*. **Heather Kassel** will review film. Dessert 1 p.m., screening, 1:30 p.m. $15.

March 24, 7:30 p.m., "Afghanistan-Pakistan: Solve One, Solve Them Both?" presented by **Simon Henderson**, Washington Institute for Near East Policy. 416-781-3514, ext. 225.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday dance, March 21, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Active Seniors, Miles Nadal JCC, March 18, 1:30 p.m., "Everything You Need to Know About Pensions," with **Olivia Chow** and other experts. Ext. 155.

Association of Jewish Seniors, Aileen Carroll, minister responsible for seniors, speaks, March 18, 9:45 a.m., Shaarei Shomayim. Members free, guests $2.

Passover seder, Bernard Betel Centre, March 30, 6:30 p.m. Tickets, $20, on sale at Betel Centre. Reservation only. **Tammy**, 416-635-2860.

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group presents "An Afternoon of Song" featuring **Mickey Lewin**, March 18, 2-4 p.m. $5. 416-221-3433.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. for discussion group, Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-9444.

BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Lecture, "A History of Jewish Humour," March 23, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Family programs include preschool dance Sunday, 11-11:45 a.m.; Shabbat Party, Fridays 10:30-11:15 a.m.; Deborah's Sing-a-Long, Tuesdays 9:30 a.m.; Parent & Tot Playzone, Wednesdays 10-11 a.m., and Sports with Jay: Mighty Munchkins, Sundays from 10-10:45 a.m. Ext. 4235.

New programs at the culinary arts studio include Passover Desserts Almost Too Good to be True, with chef **Ellen Grossman**. March 22 from 12:30-3:30 p.m. Ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Passover seder, March 29, 7:30, presented by Chabad of Midtown, Miles Nadal JCC, JF&CS. Led by **Rabbi Deitsch**. At Miles Nadal JCC. RSVP before March 19, $50 adult. $25 child ages 3-12. After March 19: $60 adult, $35 child, 416-516-2005 or www.chabadmt.com.

March 21, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Sundays on Bloor, "Folk Dance Israel: The Social History of a Movement," $9 drop-in ($5 student with valid ID). Light refreshments. Ext. 154

Monday, March 22, 7-9:30 p.m., cooking with chef **Elise Burton**. Learn to prepare a "matzahless" Passover meal. Info: jewishlife@mnjcc.org, ext 0.

Exploring Israeli Society, March 22, 6-8 p.m. Topic: "Israel Is Changed and Challenged: Globalization and Post-Zionism." $15 drop-in fee. Info: jewishlife@mnjcc.org, ext. 154.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

WORLD AFFAIRS CONFERENCE: Grade 8 delegates from Bialik Hebrew Day School attended the World Affairs Conference at Upper Canada College. During the conference, they participated in plenary sessions and workshops that addressed issues of leadership as they relate to the question: "Our Brave New World: Globalization or Neo-Colonialism?"

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 48

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Wanoumou, Margaret	Feb. 23/10	103 Whitney Place
Kater, Carole Rica	Feb. 26/10	
Brevdo, Alexandre	Feb. 25/10	Private
Kreuzer, Rifica Rebecca	Feb. 26/10	
Lichtenstein, Natalie	Feb. 26/10	613 Clark Ave W
Obodovsky, Mikhail	Feb. 26/10	131 Gailcrest Cir
Ferenci, Eugene	Feb. 27/10	Private
Shames, Mirla	Feb. 28/10	5 Christine Cres
Margusina, Keyla	Feb. 28/10	Private
Tchiprout, Jacques	March 1/10	7 Townsgate Dr
Sitzer, Debra	March 1/10	3 Bucksgreen Rd
Cone, Rena	March 2/10	90 Savoy Cres
Kalechstein, Bela	March 1/10	Private
Weinberg, Sheldon	March 3/10	12 Emily Crt
Wayne, Edward	March 3/10	Private
Shulman, Melvin	March 2/10	
Climans, Allan	March 4/10	7071 Bayview Ave

The family of the late

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Would like to express heartfelt appreciation for the many acts of kindness and support shown to us during the recent illness and passing of our beloved Saul. Please accept this as our personal thank you.

Rhoda Eisen-Nussbaum,
Marvin & Myrna Nussbaum,
Helen & Laurie Reiss.

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On Campus

Kingston fraternity comes of age

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Kingston's Alpha Epsilon Pi colony, a Jewish fraternity, officially became a chapter last week. The group supports Jewish students on campus.

Kingston's chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi [AEPi] has become a man. Metaphorically speaking.

On March 15, at a charter ceremony, the Jewish fraternity recognized Kingston's AEPi colony, which is located at Queen's University and incorporates St. Lawrence College and Royal Military College, as an official chapter of the international organization.

Kingston's fraternity, called Kappa Phi, was originally started in 2006 as a colony, the first step toward becoming an AEPi chapter, with some 10 founding members. This year, the group, which supports Jewish events and life on campus, will have about 43 members.

"[The charter ceremony] is akin to a bar mitzvah," said Andrew Borans, the executive director of AEPi International. "It's a coming of age… they're stable. They're no longer having their hands held by [the international organization]."

In order to become a full-fledged chapter, each colony must prove it's sustainable and that it's involved in social, athletic, philanthropic and Jewish/Israel programming on campus.

"We provide [guidance] to all colonies, but this particular one has been very good… they have excellent leadership, excellent commitment to wanting to do the right thing, to wanting to be strong on campus," Borans said. "I believe Jewish kids are now coming to Queen's University because they know there's a strong AEPi there."

As an official chapter, Kingston's AEPi will be allowed to vote on international issues and will have more independence in its day-to-day operations.

When the AEPi colony was originally established in Kingston, Jewish presence on campus wasn't very strong. This, according to Borans, could have acted as a deterrent for prospective students.

"The issue is that sometimes Jewish families feel that if Jewish life is weak, it won't be a good experience for their son or daughter," he said. "Now [students] can have a chance to socialize. I see [the fraternity] becoming much stronger because now, after being chartered, they will grow considerably and more Jews will come to Queen's."

David Warshafsky, a first-year commerce student at Queen's and AEPi's charter chair, saw this first-hand when his older brother considered going to Queen's.

"My brother, he had friends who wanted to come to Queen's, but there [was] no Jewish community out here. My cousin wanted to come, but his parents wanted him to go to [the University of Western Ontario]," Warshafsky said, adding that the fraternity has helped lure Jewish students to Kingston.

"The [Jewish] community's gotten a lot bigger. I've spoken to people in Grade 12 who now seem more interested to come to Queen's. The frat helped because… it gives [Jewish students] a comfort level."

The fraternity's goal is to foster a sense of community and Jewish values through social and philanthropic events such as barbecues, rush football games and initiatives such as selling roses on Valentine's Day for charity.

While the group has partnered with Hillel in the past for various events, it also offers Jewish students an alternative to Hillel, said Daniel Zimmerman, the chapter's president.

"[AEPi] presents another face of the Jewish community in Kingston. A lot of people that go to Hillel are from Toronto, from specific schools. There's kind of a Hillel crowd," Zimmerman said. "AEPi is a little more diverse. It helps… people who might feel uncomfortable going to Hillel because they're not in that crowd."

For Borans, having a group like AEPi is essential in cities with smaller Jewish populations.

"It's a lot more important than in a place that has thousands and thousands of Jewish kids," he said. "In smaller places, there's very few Jewish outlets. We're a major… reason why Jewish kids feel comfortable at Queen's."

York tribunal to determine Hossain's fate

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A tribunal is set to convene this week to determine Salman Hossain's future at York University.

The three-person board, which will include representatives of student, staff and faculty, will hold a closed-door hearing to determine whether Hossain has violated the university's Student Code of Conduct, said York spokesperson Keith Marnoch.

Hossain's alleged postings on his website, filthyJewishterrorists.com, could form part of the evidence heard by the tribunal, Marnoch added.

The website, which was no longer operating late last week, called for the murder of Jews and described terrorism as "A Jewish Passover Celebration." Police are investigating whether Hossain breached the Criminal Codes's provisions against promoting hate or advocating genocide.

Marnoch said Hossain was suspended last week "for being unco-operative with the [disciplinary] process."

After ignoring phone message and e-mails, Hossain was finally contacted by York's dispute resolution office and the hearing was scheduled, Marnoch said.

He remains suspended pending a determination by the tribunal.

Canadian Jewish Congress called the case "black and white" and said Hossain should be expelled.

"The question I put to the tribunal is that when you have a student who advocates mass murder of fellow Jewish students, should that not be remedied with his expulsion from the university?" asked Congress CEO Bernie Farber. "It would seem the rational and logical answer is yes."

PASSOVER FOOD IDEAS

Substitutions for the holiday

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

At some point during Pesach preparations, we've all tried to convert a mainstream recipe into a Pesach one, only to discover that we don't have a clue as to what to substitute for a chametz ingredient. This is why I started compiling my list of Passover substitutes. I've added some great new substitutions this year. If anyone has any other substitutions that they would like to share, please let me know at ztlog@verizon.net.

1 oz. baking chocolate (unsweetened chocolate) = 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 1 tbsp. oil or melted margarine

16 oz. semi-sweet chocolate = 6 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 1/4 cup oil and 7 tbsp. granulated sugar

14 oz. sweet chocolate (German-type) = 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 2-2/3 tbsp. oil and 4-1/2 tbsp. granulated sugar

1 cup confectioners' sugar = 1 cup granulated sugar minus 1 tbsp. sugar plus 1 tbsp. potato starch pulsed in a food processor or blender

1 cup sour milk or buttermilk for dairy baking = 1 tbsp. lemon juice in a 1 cup measure, then fill to 1 cup with Passover nondairy creamer or milk. Stir and steep 5 minutes

butter in baking or cooking – use pareve Passover margarine in equal amounts. Use a bit less salt.

1 cup honey = 1-1/4 cups granulated sugar plus 1/4 cup water

1 cup corn syrup = 1-1/4 cups granulated sugar plus 1/3 cup water, boiled until syrupy

1 cup vanilla sugar = 1 cup granulated sugar with 1 split vanilla bean left for at least 24 hours in a tightly covered jar

1 cup of flour – substitute 5/8 cup matzah cake meal or potato starch, or a combination sifted together

1 tbsp. flour = 1/2 tbsp. potato starch

1 cup corn starch = 7/8 cup potato starch

1 tsp. cream of tartar = 1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice or 1-1/2 tsp. vinegar

1 cup graham cracker crumbs = 1 cup ground cookies or soup nuts plus 1 tsp. cinnamon

1 cup bread crumbs = 1 cup matzah meal

1 cup matzah meal = 3 matzahs ground in a food processor

1 cup matzah cake meal = 1 cup plus 2 tbsp. matzah meal finely ground in a blender or food processor and sifted

3 crumbled matzahs = 2 cups matzah farfel

1 cup cream cheese = 1 cup cottage cheese pureed with 1/2 stick butter or margarine

chicken fat or gribenes = 2 caramelized onions. Saute 2 sliced onions in 2 tbsp. oil and 2 tbsp. sugar. Cook until the onions are soft. Puree the onions once they are golden.

1 cup milk (for baking) = 1 cup water plus 2 tbsp. margarine, or 1/2 cup fruit juice plus 1/2 cup water

1 1/4 cups sweetened condensed milk =1 cup instant nonfat dry milk, 2/3 cup sugar, 1/3 cup boiling water and 3 tbsp. margarine. Blend all the ingredients until smooth. To thicken, let set in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

1 cup wine= 13 tbsp. water, 3 tablespoons lemon juice and 1 tbsp. sugar. Mix together and let set for 10 minutes.

for frying: instead of chicken fat, use combination of olive oil or vegetable oil and 1 to 2 tbsp. pareve Passover margarine.

eggs: Passover egg substitutes don't work quite as well as the chametz egg substitutes. For kugels, matzah balls, fried matzah and some cakes, the recipes will probably be OK. However, if you want to avoid them (and I do) you can add one extra egg white and 1/2 tsp. of vegetable oil for each yolk eliminated when baking. Use only egg whites as the dipping to coat and fry meats.

Italian Seasoning = 1/4 tsp. each dried oregano leaves, dried marjoram leaves and dried basil leaves plus 1/8 tsp. rubbed dried sage. This can be substituted for 1-1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning.

curry powder = 2 tbsp. ground coriander, 1 tbsp. black pepper, 2 tbsp. red pepper, 2 tbsp. turmeric, 2 tbsp. ground ginger. Makes 2/3 cup.

pancake syrup = use fruit jelly, not jam, and add a little water to thin. I always like to combine the jelly and water in a microwave-safe bowl and heat it gently before I serve it.

seasoned rice wine vinegar = 3 tbsp. white vinegar, 1 tbsp. white wine, 1 tbsp. sugar, 1/2 tsp. salt. Mix to combine. Makes 1/4 cup

vinegar = lemon juice in cooking or salad, grapefruit juice in salads, wine in marinades.

water chestnuts – substitute raw jicama

orange liqueur – substitute an equal amount of frozen orange juice concentrate

SOY SAUCE SUBSTITUTE

This soy sauce substitute doesn't taste exactly like the real thing, but it makes a flavourful alternative for Pesach stir fry.

2 tbsp. beef broth
1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. oil
1/8 tsp. garlic powder
black pepper to taste
1/4 cup boiling water

Combine all the ingredients. At this point, you can either use the sauce as is, leaving for an hour to give the flavours a chance to blend; or, for a thicker, richer sauce, boil the liquid until it is reduced by half, to about 3 tbsp. Store in a sealed container in the refrigerator. Makes 2/3 cup. Use the sauce within 3 to 4 days.

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Three chocolate desserts and a *macaron*

By DAPHNA RABINOVITCH
Special to The CJN

Last year, I developed a Passover dessert story for *The CJN* titled "Three chocolates and a macaroon." Well, this year, I've revisited the theme but changed it, as you can see, to "Three chocolate desserts and a macaron." Did I simply omit an "o," hoping for a new angle on desserts or a reader's faulty memory? Heavens, no!

Macarons, those dainty French (flourless) cookies are now all the rage, appearing in patisseries in France, in New York, and even on dessert menus in restaurants. And the best thing is that they're perfectly easy to make at home. Less dense and more airy than a traditional coconut-based macaroon, macarons are typically made with ground almonds and piped about the size of a large walnut. They keep well in an airtight container at room temperature and can be an array of rainbow colours – you get to choose.

And chocolate, well, what can I say? Who doesn't love chocolate? The Chocolate Sorbet is smooth, delectable and rich, with nary a tablespoon of cream in sight. The Chocolate Cashew Toffee is incredibly rich and decadent with the saltiness of the cashews cutting some of the richness and making it sinfully addictive. Lastly, the Individual Chocolate Almond Cakes beg to be served with a rich jewel like raspberry puree piped decoratively around each guest's plate, perhaps with a dusting of cocoa as well.

CHOCOLATE SORBET

1 cup granulated sugar
2 cups water
12 oz. high quality bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten.
1 tsp. vanilla

In saucepan set over medium heat, whisk together sugar and 2 cups water, until sugar is completely dissolved. Whisk in chocolate until melted and smooth.

Very gradually and whisking constantly, whisk chocolate mixture into egg yolks. Return to saucepan. Using wooden spoon, stir until custard thickens slightly and leaves a path on the back of spoon when a finger is drawn across it. Be careful not to boil the mixture. Transfer to bowl. Stir in vanilla. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about 2 hours or until completely chilled.

Process sorbet in ice cream machine according to manufacturer's instructions. Spoon sorbet into freezable container; freeze until firm or for up to 3 days. Makes 6 servings.

CHOCOLATE CASHEW TOFFEE

1 lb. unsalted butter or hard margarine
2 cups granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
3 cups salted cashews, whole or pieces
8 oz. bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

Lightly grease a large baking pan; set aside on large hot plate or wire rack.

In 6-quart heavy bottomed saucepan, bring butter and sugar to boil over medium-high heat, whisking until smooth. Boil, stirring occasionally, for 15 to 20 minutes or until mixture is a deep golden colour and candy thermometer reads 300F (hard ball stage). Immediately stir in cashews and pour mixture onto prepared pan. Spread evenly with spatula; sprinkle chocolate immediately over top.

Let stand for 1 minute to allow chocolate to melt; spread until evenly covered. Freeze until firm. Break into coarsely sized pieces. Toffee can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 10 days. Makes about 3 pounds.

FRENCH ALMOND MACARONS

6 oz. blanched whole almonds (about 2 cups)
1 cup granulated sugar
1 tbsp. potato starch
4 egg whites
pinch salt
4-5 drops red or green food colouring
4 oz. bittersweet chocolate, melted

Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper and set aside. In bowl of food processor fitted with metal blade, process together almonds, 1/4 cup of the sugar and the potato starch until nuts are very finely ground. Transfer to bowl; stir in 1/4 cup sugar.

In bowl of electric mixer, beat egg whites with pinch of salt until soft peaks form. With machine running, gradually add remaining 1/4 cup sugar, beat until glossy stiff peaks are formed. Fold in food colouring until desired colour is achieved. Fold in almond mixture.

Continued on page 36

This Passover, ask a 5th question:

COMPLETE SEDER DINNER INCLUDES:
Seder plate
Matzo
Old fashioned dill pickles
Tzimmes with fresh prunes, yams & carrots
Gefilte fish made with white fish & salmon
CHOOSE ONE
Cabbage borscht with tender beef flunken
OR
Homemade matzo ball soup
CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw
CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
OR
Pickle Barrel famous B.B.Q. chicken
OR
Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze
CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
Roasted mini red potatoes with fresh herbs & Kosher salt
CHOOSE ONE
Green beans with caramelized onions & toasted almonds
OR
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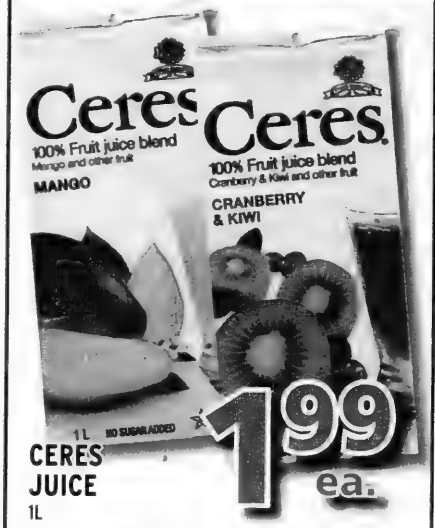

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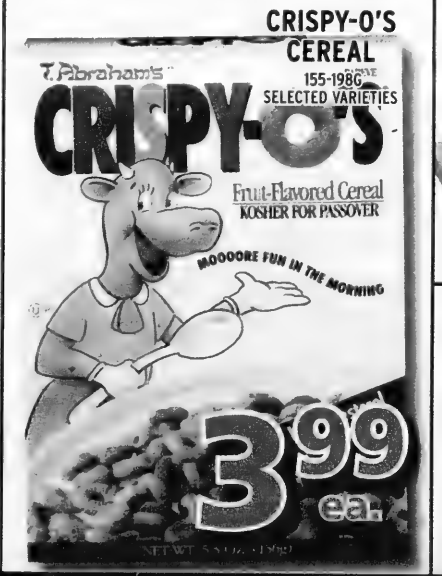

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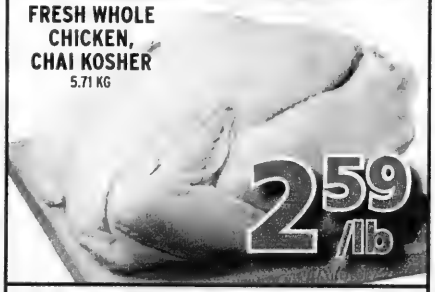

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Sweet ending to the seder meal

Continued from page 34

Transfer mixture to piping bag with 1/4-in. opening. Pipe peaked mounds of batter onto prepared baking sheets, roughly the size of kisses, spacing about 1-1/2 in. apart. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes or until a light crust is formed on the surface of the macarons.

Bake in preheated oven at 300 for 25 minutes, switching pans from top to bottom halfway through baking, until crisp. Cool completely on pans on racks.

Spread melted chocolate on underside of half of the macarons. Sandwich with remaining macarons. Will keep in airtight container at room temperature for up to 5 days. Makes 2-1/2 dozen macarons.

INDIVIDUAL CHOCOLATE ALMOND CAKES

2 oz. almond paste (not marzipan which will have wheat in it))
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup unsalted butter or hard margarine, softened
6 eggs
3 tbsp. fine matzah cake meal
pinch salt

Chocolate Batter
12 oz. high quality bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped
1/3 cup granulated sugar

Grease eight 4-oz. ramekins and place on baking sheet; set aside.

Chocolate Batter: In top of double boiler set over hot – not boiling – water, melt together chocolate and sugar, stirring until smooth.

Meanwhile, break almond paste into small pieces into bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. Add sugar; pulse until mixture looks quite grainy. Add butter; pulse until mixture is homogenous. Add eggs, cake meal and salt; pulse until combined, stopping to scrape down sides occasionally. Scrape chocolate mixture into processor. Pulse until mixture is combined and there are no streaks.

Divide batter evenly among prepared ramekins. Bake in centre of preheated 350 oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until top of cake springs back when lightly pressed and cake tester comes out with a few moist crumbs clinging to it. Cool for 15 minutes. Run small paring knife around edge of ramekins to loosen cakes. Turn out onto individual plates to cool completely before serving. (Cakes can be made up to 1 day ahead and stored, well covered, at room temperature). Makes 8 servings.

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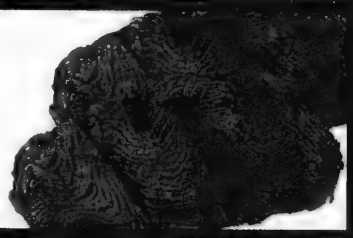

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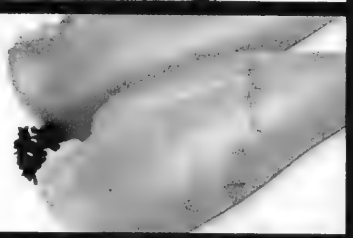

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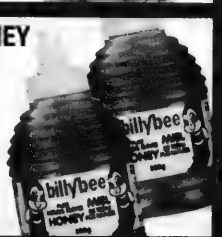

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HEALTHY NEVER TASTED SO GOOD

Add variety with the versatile eggplant

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

Eggplant can add a sophisticated flavour to dishes, and its exotic taste and texture lends itself to preparation in a variety of different ways. Eggplant is wonderful in salads, soups, main courses, casseroles and side dishes and can be roasted, sautéed, grilled or baked.

A medium size eggplant will weigh around one pound and provides 4 cups of chopped eggplant. A 1-pound eggplant yields about 1-3/4 cups cooked puree and will serve 3 people.

EGGPLANT LASAGNA

2 tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic minced
1 large eggplant, washed and cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2 cups sliced mushrooms
1 16-oz. can tomato sauce
1 16-oz. can tomatoes, with liquid
1 tsp. oregano
1 tsp. basil
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
2 cups shredded mozzarella
1 cup cottage cheese (or more)
1/4 cup chopped parsley
6 matzah
3/4 cup grated parmesan cheese

In a large saucepan, saute the onion and garlic in the olive oil until onion is softened. Add the eggplant, mushrooms, tomato sauce, tomatoes, oregano, basil pepper and red pepper. Cover and cook over medium heat for 15 minutes. Uncover and cook 25 minutes more. In another bowl, combine the cottage cheese, mozzarella and parsley. Rinse the matzah under cold water and let sit on paper towels for 5 minutes. Preheat oven to 350.

Lightly grease a 9 x 13-in. pan. Layer 2 slices of matzah on the bottom of the dish. Cover with 1/3 of the cheese mixture, 1/4 cup Parmesan, and then eggplant sauce. Repeat 3 times, with the last layer to be the parmesan cheese. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes until heated through. Serves 8.

HONEY GLAZED ROASTED VEGETABLE MEDLY

1/4 cup honey
1/4 cup olive oil
3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. minced garlic
salt and pepper
1 tsp. dried thyme, or more to taste
8 to 10 red quartered red potatoes,
3 to 4 sliced zucchini,
2 thickly sliced onions,
2 red peppers cut into chunks
4 carrots cut into chunks
1 large sweet potato cut into chunks
1 eggplant peeled and cut into 2-in. cubes, salted, placed in colander 20 minutes, rinsed in cold water

Preheat oven to 400. In a bowl, combine the honey, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, crushed garlic and thyme and mix to combine. Grease a roasting pan and in it combine the potatoes, zucchini, onions, red peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes and eggplant. Drizzle the honey mixture over the vegetables and then mix to make sure everything is coated. Season with salt and pepper. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes stirring every 10 minutes making sure nothing gets too burnt. Serves 8.

For your vegetarian guests

CHEESY EGGPLANT ROLLS

1 large eggplant, cut into 10 thin slices, salted, placed in colander 20 minutes, rinsed in cold water
10 slices smoked mozzarella
3 to 4 plum tomatoes cut into 10 thick slices
3 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1 tbsp. dried oregano
balsamic vinegar and olive oil, for drizzling (optional)
marinara or tomato sauce, warmed

Preheat a grill pan to a medium heat. Brush liberally with oil. Pat dry eggplant with paper towels. Grill eggplant slices 8-10 minutes, turning once after 5 minutes. Remove the slices from grill pan to a plate. Place a mozzarella slice in centre of each slice. Top with a tomato slice and sprinkle with parsley and a little oregano. Roll up the eggplant slice and secure with a toothpick. Place the roll back on grill pan, seam side down. Heat until mozzarella begins to melt. Remove from the grill pan to your serving platter. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar. Serve hot with marinara sauce. Makes 10.

food Basics

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Fish recipe passed down through the generations

BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Many traditional family recipes handed down orally from one generation to the next disappear because the recipes were never written down.

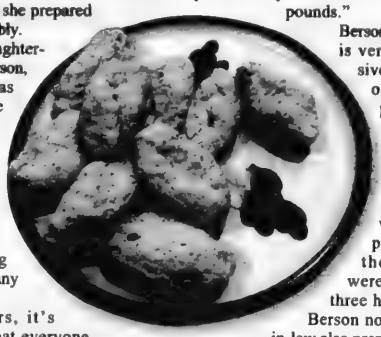
Joan Weinberg's family decided her gefilte fish recipe was too precious to lose. In recent years, the two younger generations have dedicated time and effort to perpetuating Weinberg's culinary legacy.

Although she was born in Warsaw, Weinberg had never heard of gefilte fish until she came to Canada. She and her mother, Elizabeth Ramet, arrived in 1949, after spending the war years in Russia.

"My mother started making gefilte fish in Toronto to please my husband," Weinberg recalls, explaining that the late Sydney Weinberg was from Opatow, a town in Poland where people ate a sweet gefilte fish.

Ramet kept all her recipes in a little notebook that survives today. But the 60-year-old tattered book now has more sentimental than practical value because Weinberg cooks from memory. "When I learned to cook, there were no measurements."

She says she improved on the original gefilte fish recipe her mother gave her, but she never wrote anything down. After 60 years of making this traditional dish, she knows it by heart. When her children married and had children, the amount of fish she prepared increased considerably.



Weinberg's daughter-in-law, Barbara Berson, says the family was aware that the recipe was not written down.

"We used to tease my mother-in-law about getting her gefilte fish recipe. We talked about learning to make the fish many times.

"At our seders, it's the special dish that everyone enjoys. We knew it was a lot of work," Berson says.

Two years ago, Berson and her daughter, Leah Weinberg, 14, offered to help make the fish.

"I had the time and Leah was old enough to help.

"As we were preparing the fish, I scribbled down the recipe. Mine is for five pounds. My mother-in-law makes eight pounds."

Berson says gefilte fish is very labour intensive. "There's a lot of chopping and peeling."

She says it would take her mother-in-law all day to make the fish, but with two extra pairs of hands, the fish patties were made in about three hours. However, Berson notes her mother-in-law also prepared the fish the night before and there was an additional two hours of cooking to be done after she and Leah left.

The following Passover, Leah and her cousins Ariel, 14, and Rebecca Weinberg, 11, helped their grandmother make the gefilte fish.

Leah even documented the experience with photographs and turned the fish-making into a slide show for her graduation project at the Downtown Jewish Community School. Mixing the fish and chopping the vegetables is hard work, but with her cousins around to share the pain, there was a party atmosphere, she says. "We were laughing a lot."

Her hands didn't smell very good after she had formed her share of the 65 patties. "I had to wash them twice to get the smell off."

Berson says the traditional foods are an important connection to being Jewish. "I feel that learning to make gefilte fish is one of the great ways of carrying on a family tradition and honouring my mother-in-law."

BUBBIE JOAN'S GEFILTE FISH

5 lb. ground fish (mostly whitefish, with a little pike and pickerel, plus the bones or 10 lb. (5 kg) whole fish
5 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup matzah meal
4 medium cooking onions, sliced
1 Spanish onion cut in chunks
5 carrots, peeled
5 tbsp. sugar, plus extra to taste
5 tsp. salt
2 tsp. pepper
additional salt and pepper to taste

The night before, place ground fish in a large bowl and add some of the salt, pepper and sugar. Mix gently. Place bones and head in a separate bowl and add some of the salt, pepper and sugar. Cover both bowls loosely and refrigerate overnight.

To prepare cooking broth, distribute carrots and sliced onions equally in three large pots and add water to cover vegetables. Add remaining salt, pepper and sugar to taste, divided into each pot, and bring to a boil. Distribute bones and heads to each pot. Bring to a boil and then reduce heat to simmer.

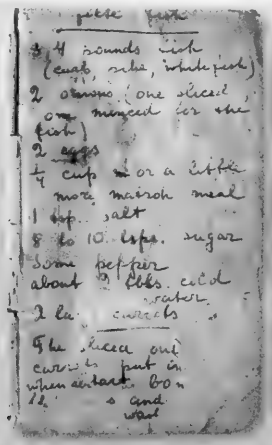
While bones are simmering, prepare ground fish. Add matzah meal, salt, pepper and sugar to taste and mix gently.

Grind Spanish onion in a food processor. Add beaten eggs. Add onion/egg mixture to fish and mix well.

Prepare a small bowl of cold water. Form the fish into small patties the size of your palm, wetting your hands frequently to keep fish from sticking to them. Place patties into the pots of simmering broth and continue simmering for two hours. The broth should show the occasional bubble.

Remove fish with a slotted spoon. Place on serving platter(s). Cover loosely and refrigerate.

Strain the bones and vegetables from the fish broth and refrigerate the broth. Save carrots and slice into thin rounds. Garnish individual portions with carrot rounds and serve with chilled broth. Makes approximately 50 pieces.



Elizabeth Ramet's original gefilte fish recipe

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Cooking ideas from Israel

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR
Special to The CJN

Ask two Jews a question and you'll get three opinions. Controversy, controversy. In politics you expect it, but it's true even in cooking.

Take the much maligned, yet oh so beloved Jewish appetizer that graces every holiday table, from the weekly celebration of the Sabbath to Passover: gefilte fish.

In the Middle Ages, Jewish mystics viewed fish as signaling the coming of the Messiah. No wonder it is served for every holiday! Fish was expensive in Europe, and the gefilte fish recipes were developed as an economical way to stretch it so that every family member could get a taste.

But wherein lies the controversy? Do we open a jar or make it ourselves? Or "doctor" the jarred variety? Do we like it sweet or peppery? With some guests adoring it and others repelled at the very sight, do we even serve it at all?

As Passover approaches, Jewish cooks the world over plan a festive repast. Traditionalists wouldn't dream of celebrating the holiday without treasured family recipes. For eager innovators, the holiday cries out for some enticing new way to honour the ancient symbols.

This year I'm skipping the gefilte fish drama and going with Moroccan-Style Hot Fish, a recipe I found in a beautiful cookbook by Janna Gur, the founder and editor of *Al Hashulchan* (*On the Table*), a leading Israeli food and wine magazine.

The Book of New Israeli Food: A Culinary Journey (Schocken Books) is at once a cookbook, a beautifully photographed coffee table book and a fascinating culinary history lesson on the diverse cuisine of Israel.

For dessert, Balkan Jews customarily serve a rich, savoury pastry at every important meal, a tradition that led to the creation of the Passover mina, Gur noted. Matzot become the crust of this Passover pie.

"Baking delicious cakes without flour is a challenge," she writes. Gur's Flourless Chocolate and Pistachio Cake combines almonds and pistachio nuts with chocolate for crunch and flavour.

The following recipes are adapted from *The Book of New Israeli Food*.

MOROCCAN-STYLE HOT FISH

1/2 cup olive oil
10 whole garlic cloves, peeled
2 coarsely chopped sweet red peppers
2 hot red peppers halved and seeded
1 cup coriander (cilantro), coarsely chopped
1 cup parsley, coarsely chopped
2 tbsp. Moroccan paprika (you can use any kosher paprika, but it is not as hot)
salt to taste
6 portion-sized steaks (with the bone) of grouper, halibut or other firm fleshed saltwater fish
1 lemon, sliced for serving

Heat the oil in a large, wide pan and sauté the garlic and both kind of peppers for 2 minutes. Add herbs, paprika and salt and sauté for a couple more minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour in 2 cups of water and bring to a simmer. Taste and adjust seasoning (once you add the fish it will be difficult to stir the sauce and play with flavours).

Carefully add the fish chunks (ideally in a single layer), cover and simmer gently for about 25 minutes until the fish is done and the sauce thickens. Serve with lemon wedges.

Variation: The dish can also be prepared with boneless fillets. In this case, the sauce should be cooked without the fish, and when ready (thick, spicy and delicious), fillets should added and cooked in the sauce for 8-10 minutes. Yield: 8 servings.

MINA DEL PESACH
Passover matzah pie

Crust:
8 to 10 matzahs
olive oil, for brushing
Filling:
1/4 cup oil
2 to 3 onions, chopped finely
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 1/2 lb. ground beef or lamb
salt and coarsely ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
4 eggs
2 to 3 tbsp. matzah meal
1 to 2 potatoes, cooked and mashed
1/2 cup pine nuts, roasted
1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped (optional)
3/4 cup chicken stock

Dip matzahs in cold water for a few seconds, wrap in a towel and leave 10 to 15 minutes until soft and flexible.

Fry onions in oil until golden. Add garlic and meat and continue frying until meat is done. Add spices, remove from heat, cool slightly and add eggs, matzah meal, mashed potatoes, pine nuts and parsley. Mix well.

Preheat oven to 350. Grease 12-in. round baking dish. Brush wet matzahs on both sides lightly with oil and arrange on bottom, draping enough over sides to later cover filling.

Spoon half the meat mixture into baking dish and flatten. Cover with a layer of matzahs and top with remaining half of meat. Fold matzah draped over side of dish to cover filling, brush with oil, place additional matzah on top and brush with oil.

Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven, spoon stock over pie and return to oven for another 5 minutes. Cool slightly and serve.

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Breathe in the atmosphere shopping at Machane Yehuda

By SYBIL KAPLAN
Special to The CJN

Jaffa Road was considered Jerusalem's main thoroughfare, so named because it was the beginning of the highway that led to the port of Jaffa on the Mediterranean Sea. Jaffa Road was also the first street built outside the Old City walls in what is today called the New City.

Until 1860, almost no one in Jerusalem lived outside the Old City, an area encircled by a 2-1/2-mile wall rebuilt in the 1530s. Gradually, in the late 1860s and 1870s, a small portion of the Jewish community moved outside the wall.

One of the early areas settled off Jaffa Road between 1875 and 1900 was Machane Yehuda. Jews who had come primarily from Muslim Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa set up shops and stalls to serve this area where they lived. Although neighbourhoods have extended in all directions and people moved away, throughout the years, many have continued to come here to do their weekly shopping because it's a Jewish market.

The shuk (market), located between downtown and the central bus station, can be identified by its many bus stops, congested traffic and abundance of all kinds of people.

All of one's senses are expanded when one walks through Machane Yehuda because there are a multitude of things to hear, see and smell. Shopping in the large market for many, like Barry and me, is a weekly (or multi-times-a-week) ritual. People with all levels of education and income shop here because of its unique atmosphere. One can see the warm, earthy roughness of people as basic, free human beings. People who shop here also do so because the prices are lower, the quality is better, the variety is greater.

The sellers are mostly Sephardim from Middle Eastern backgrounds. They are clever, tough, abrupt and direct. They appear poor, but this is a deception: they are mostly well to do. They are also rich in emotions. It is not uncommon to walk through Etz Chayim Street, the original covered walkway and find vendors singing their wares.

All of the paths between Etz Chayim and Machane Yehuda Street, the uncovered walkway, are named. Going from Agrippas Street, the boundary on one side to Jaffa Road, the boundary on the other side, they include: Ha'tut (the berry), Ha'egoz (the nut), Ha'shaked (the almond), Banai (perhaps named after an Israeli performer, actor, singer who grew up in Machane Yehuda), Ha'tapuach (the apple). Off of Machaneh Yehudah Street are two other paths, Ha'eskhol (the cluster) and Pri ha'etz (fruit of the tree).

We buy a lot of our fruit and vegetables from 24-year-old Ron, who got married in August. He is the youngest of three brothers who run the Yaniv Aminiv booth, along with two others who he feels are like brothers. The booth is located on the corner of Iraqi Market Street, next to the Azura restaurant.

When I first started shopping at his booth, I was struck by his friendly, sweet personality. He has worked for 15 years in the booth his Israeli-born father started 30 years ago. Why here? Because his grandfather came from Iraq.

The high-quality fruits and vegetables, grown in hothouses, come from the farm his father manages on Moshav Sharsheret, near Netivot in the northern Negev. What they don't grow, they buy in a market in Givat Shaul.

In addition to selling to the regular customers, Aminiv sells to the Azura restaurant and to several other restaurants.

Standing in the booth for just a few minutes, you can easily see how busy it is and how many people pay a little more for higher quality.

A few months ago, I was doing a story on 33-year-old Tali Friedman, house chef for Teamim, the Machane Yehuda Shuk Canyon Cooking School at Agrippas 88, and afterward, she took me on her tour of the shuk.

Now she does culinary tours where they collect food and go back to class and cook together.

Continued on page 43

Scenes from the market at Machane Yehuda. ***[Barry A. Kaplan photos]***

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Dress comfortably for trip to market

Continued from page 42

Friedman also built a special course for Young Judaeans on the year course of the Zionist youth movement sponsored by Hadassah Women's Zionist Organization of America.

In the fall, she opened a studio on Machane Yehuda Street, where she does her culinary tours with people who buy in the market and cook in her big studio kitchen where she gives lessons.

On the little side paths around Etz Chayim Street, Friedman took me to meet Mr. Beladi, who sells me vegetables, and Nissim, who works at Atleez Mizrach with his father, Yaacov, carving beautiful meat and poultry. Nissim speaks great English, and I contributed to his store a picture of a cow with the cuts of meat in English.

On another path is Shlomo Dagim (Shlomo Fish), where I buy fresh and frozen fish. A sign hangs there with the names of the fish in Hebrew and English.

On Etz Chayim Street, we buy our cheeses, olives, preserved fish and a few other things from Abu Daoud v'Banav, a store established in 1936 and owned by 11 brothers. Shmuel, a smiling friendly man in his 50s or 60s, helps us and teaches me about the different cheeses.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Shimon and Orah, the lovely older couple who own Shimon Eliyahu, also on Etz Chayim Street, who sell nuts, dry fruit, candies, condiments, oils, extracts, spices, canned goods and more. When I had a persistent cough and nothing the doctors gave me would help, he sold me menthol cough drops and the cough left immediately.

On Machane Yehuda Street is Makolet Naaman, run by friendly young fellows who sell me all kinds of dairy products as well as some groceries.

At the corner of Machane Yehuda and Haeshkol Street is a large bakery, Ugat Chen (beautiful cakes). Menachem has been in the shuk for 53 years, and his dark and white rolls, as well as his freshly made pita bread, have turned us into frequent buyers.

The biggest changes in the market are the myriad of boutiques selling clothes, giftware and Judaica, and restaurants tucked among the booths and stores. Azura is strictly Iraqi and Middle Eastern and the food is cooked on *p'tilioht*, portable, single-burner kerosene cookers. Emil offers dairy food, coffee, sandwiches and pastry. Ochim Bashuk specializes in Persian food. Mizrachi is also dairy, with salads, egg dishes, coffee, pastry and house specialties.

No matter how many things are on my list, I always find more to buy as Barry and I inspect the wares at the stands and load up our wheeled cart. We brought two fold-up carts and are now on the second one!

If you want to have an enriching experience with us, you need to wear comfortable shoes, carry a lot of small change in a coin purse and bring various shaped shopping bags. To act like a seasoned shopper, you have to keep your eyes on the stands, produce and prices – not on the direction you are walking in. Seasoned shoppers also ignore people who bump into them or fall over your bags when you lay them down. You have to absorb yourself totally in choosing, purchasing and paying. You can, of course, question the seller about the price in case he decides to lower it because he likes your looks, and this does happen to me.

Most important – you have to breathe in the atmosphere.

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Helping Grandma with the seder

By BEVERLY LEVITT
Special to The CJN

Everybody loves Passover. Partly, it's because every year we get to hear the same story told differently. Of course, that's because we all get to put in our two cents. And that's what the holiday is really about.

We fight over who will host the Passover seder, but whoever wins, everyone pitches in with the cooking, making sure the Passover plate is appropriately filled, the multi-course table properly set.

Although my father, Milton, 92, is still the official patriarch of the family he shares leading the service with my brother Dennis, with me egging both of them on. And the father and son patriarchs share responsibility for hiding the afikomen and rewarding the lucky child who finds it.

Last year, to all of our shock, after they had so cleverly hidden the cloth-covered matzah in the most remote place they could think of, it took about three seconds for my one-year-old granddaughter, Addie, who had just started walking, to shock us when she calmly walked into the dining room clutching the special prize.

As we retell the story of the first Passover, using our best Hollywood voices, we are often moved to tears at the horrors endured under Pharaoh. As with any good story, we are lightened by the happy ending and the unique way we obtained our freedom.

What we look forward to the most is making the charoset sandwich – mixing the sweet fruit and nuts with the bitter horseradish and piling it between two pieces of matzah to symbolize the bitterness of slavery and the sweetness of freedom. The trick is to put just the right amount of charoset on the horseradish or we are struck breathless and giant tears overwhelm us.

From the time my older granddaughter, Tiara, made her first "sandwich" – she wanted "as much as the big people," even though I cautioned her to look at the other end of the table at her cousin Joey, who was coughing and choking. He thinks he's impervious to Mama Celia's horseradish.

When we are finally finished taking the trip through the Red Sea and out of Egypt and singing about freedom and the joys of spring, all of us matriarchs hurry to the kitchen to serve up the best meal of the year.

Although my mother, Celia, is, hands down, the best Jewish cook in the family, at 92, the labour intensive meal is overwhelming. This year, I asked her, of all the recipes she used to make, which ones she would like me to do for her.

Without a blink she said, "Potato kugel – one dish I have yet to conquer."

Then my dad piped in, "What about your brisket 'n' tzimmes?"

So, I am elected to fulfil those parental commandments, and Dennis' two sons, Joseph and Daniel, will be making their grandma's horseradish. Under her supervision. I can hardly wait!

CELIA LEVITT'S BRISKET AND CARROT TZIMMES

According to Jewish cookbook author Joan Nathan, tzimmes is not only a beloved Ashkenazi dish, in Yiddish it means a "mix-up," an "affair blown out of proportion." So, enjoy this dish, but don't make such a tzimmes out of it.

This is actually a side dish. Roasted brisket and chicken are the main events.

1 lb. brisket, with a small amount of fat left on
2 onions, sliced
5 cloves garlic, chopped
2 sweet potatoes, peeled and grated
5 carrots, peeled and grated
2 white potatoes, peeled and grated
1 parsnip, peeled and grated
2 stalks celery, diced
1 cup pitted, softened prunes or dried apricots soaked in water
kosher salt and pepper to taste
1/2 tsp. paprika
lemon juice
1 tsp. brown sugar

In a large Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat, add brisket, turning to brown. Add onions and garlic; cook a few minutes until golden. Add enough water to cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer 2 hours. Transfer brisket to cutting board and slice into 1/2-inch pieces. Return to pot. Add remaining vegetables, dried prunes or apricots (including the water they're soaked in), salt, pepper, paprika and lemon juice. Sprinkle brown sugar on top. Bake in preheated oven at 375 an hour longer. Meat should be so tender it can be cut with a fork. Serves 6.

CELIA'S HORSERADISH

My mother's purism has been passed on to my dad. While others add sugar, salt, even mayonnaise or whipped cream, our *chrain* is plain, so we get the true taste of the root. They even disclaim beets, which can be added for colour, preferring the root's natural whiteness. They love to remind me that white signifies the purity of the holiday.

1/2 lb. horseradish root, peeled
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
cold water

Soak horseradish root for an hour in cold water. Grate by hand or in food processor, adding just enough water so that it grates smoothly. It should have the consistency of fine applesauce. Add vinegar and mix until very smooth. Place in a tightly covered glass jar.

CELIA'S POTATO KUGEL

Schmaltz is rendered chicken fat. If you don't want to make it yourself, most kosher butchers carry it during the holidays.

Mama Celia checks her brisket.
[Photo by Julie Siegel]

3 new potatoes, peeled and grated
3 russet potatoes, peeled and grated
lemon juice as needed
2 cups brown onions, grated
1 parsnip, peeled and grated
2 stalks celery, minced
2 cloves garlic, pressed
3 eggs, beaten
1/3 cup matzah meal
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/4 cup vegetable oil or schmaltz
pinch of cayenne

Mix the potatoes with parsnip, celery, garlic, eggs, matzah meal, salt, paprika and cayenne. Sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent discolouration. Transfer mixture to clean bowl. Fold in oil. Place mixture in oiled, 9-in. square glass baking dish. Bake at 375 for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown and crisp at edges. Serves 4 to 6.

Passover Food Ideas

A new collection of recipes

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Pam Reiss, a wonderful Winnipeg caterer, certainly knows how stressful Passover cooking can be. It's difficult enough to deal with shopping, cleaning and preparing your kitchen for Pesach without adding the preparation for larger than usual crowds for the seders. Choosing the menu is always a challenge, considering fussy eaters, health issues, vegetarians, family members who are anticipating the traditional Passover dishes that have been passed down for generations. Or maybe try something new this year?

Pamela Reiss' excellent new cookbook, *Passover: A Kosher Collection*, offers a wide selection of creative, delicious dishes that are sure to impress family and friends. Her recipes will create some special food memories for those sitting at your Passover table this year and in the years to come.

Passover: A Kosher Collection contains beautiful colour photos and a wide variety of recipes with simple, yet explicit, instructions. There are sample menus to get you started and ideas for entertaining, including hors d'oeuvres, dips and nibbles, main dishes, sides and a large selection of desserts and baking. This book can help you become your own caterer this Pesach!

When planning a holiday meal, Reiss admits that it's often a toss-up between the dishes she grew up with and more contemporary meals. She writes, "There are wonderful memories linked to all of the traditional recipes that my grandmothers and parents have passed down to me. I like to make the same brisket that my father makes, which is the same one that his mother made. My mother taught me how to make chicken soup, and each spoonful reminds me of hers. Each time I prepare or am served these recipes, it connects me to my family and our history."

She continues, "Most of us have a handful of recipes that we pull out every Passover, year after year. It's fun to try new things, as long as your guests are up for it. A good compromise is to stick with traditional foods for the seders and try new recipes during chol hamoed. Brisket, although wonderful, can become tiresome by Day 5. And no matter how many different ways we find to dress up matzah, it tends to be heavy and it doesn't have to be the star of every meal. But a bowl of potato gnocchi with some tomato sauce or a simple grilled lamb chop with lemon potatoes are great alternatives."

Several members of Reiss' family, along with friends, were involved in this huge undertaking, wearing the hats of editor, taster, cheerleader, technical support, food stylist and photography team.

Passover: A Kosher Collection is available at booksellers, or check out www.pamelareiss.com. Reiss has shared the following recipes that you can mix and match alongside some of your traditional family favourites. Enjoy!

PINEAPPLE TURKEY MEATBALLS

To make a lighter version, I'll often use ground turkey or chicken as a substitute for beef in meatballs. But this recipe was created with turkey in mind – I think the sauce works well with turkey, but don't let that stop you if you want to try it with chicken or beef!

Sauce

28 oz.canned whole tomatoes
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
2 tsp. fresh ginger, minced
20 oz. canned pineapple chunks, with the juice
1/4 cup brown sugar
3 tbsp. tomato paste

Meatballs

1 1/2 lb. ground turkey
1 large egg
5 oz. yellow onion, peeled and finely minced (1 small)
1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/2 cup matzah meal
2 tbsp. cold water

Preheat the oven to 350. Put the whole tomatoes with the juice into a mixing bowl and use an immersion blender to puree. Add the rest of the sauce ingredients and stir together.

Continued on page 46

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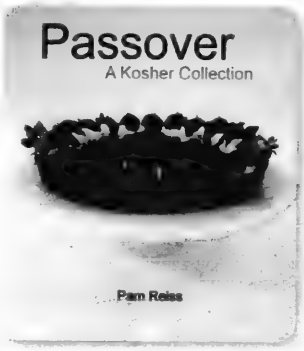
A simple but elegant dish

Continued from page 45

In another mixing bowl, combine the meatball ingredients and mix well. Ladle some sauce into the bottom of an oven-safe baking dish. Form the turkey mixture into balls the size of large walnuts – you should get about 24.

Lay as many meatballs as you can on top of the sauce in a single layer and pour some sauce over them. Add the remaining meatballs in a second layer and add the remaining sauce, spooning it on and making sure that all the meatballs are covered.

Cover the dish with a lid or aluminum foil and bake for 1-1/2 hours. Remove from the oven and serve or chill and reheat for serving later. Serves 6.



HERB ROASTED CORNISH HENS

This is a really simple poultry recipe that will make your guests think you spent hours on the prep. There's no need to marinate the hens, but you can certainly prep them a few hours in advance, refrigerate, then put them in to roast about one hour before you're ready to eat.

2 1.5-lb. Cornish hens, cut in half
2 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tbsp. olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp. finely chopped fresh rosemary
2 tsp.finely chopped fresh oregano
1 tbsp. finely chopped fresh Italian parsley
1/2 tsp. black pepper
3/4 tsp. salt

Preheat the oven to 375. Clean and rinse the hens and pat them dry with paper towel. Place the hens in a roasting pan, skin side up.

Mix the remaining ingredients together in a small bowl and pour the mixture over the hens. Rub the mixture into each half, making sure you use your fingers to push some under the skin.

Arrange the hens in a single layer in the pan, then roast for half an hour. Spoon some of the juices over the hens and roast another half hour, until the skin is golden brown and the juices run clear when you stick the point of a knife into the leg joint. Serves 4.

VEGETABLE KUGEL

I tend to think of kugels as starches, rather than vegetables. This kugel is so full of different vegetables that it's fighting to be counted as a vegetable. Either way, it's delicious.

3 tbsp. olive oil
6 oz. yellow onion, peeled and diced small (1 small)
1 small orange or yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced small
2 ribs celery, diced small
2 tsp. salt, divided
1/2 tsp. black pepper, divided
3 medium carrots, peeled and shredded
1 medium zucchini, trimmed and shredded
4 cups spinach, roughly chopped
1 lb. red potatoes, peeled and shredded
1 1/2 cups matzah meal
5 large eggs
1 tsp.paprika
2 tbsp. chopped fresh flat leaf parsley
1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves

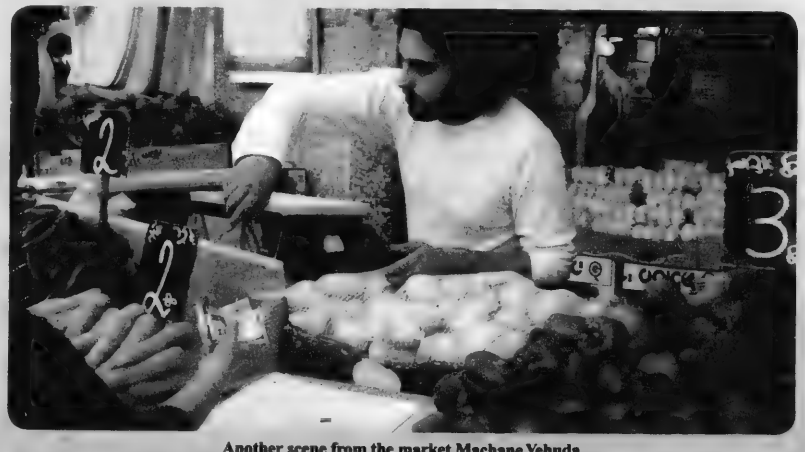
Preheat the oven to 375. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, bell pepper, celery, 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. pepper and cook, stirring for 5-6 minutes, until the vegetables start to soften.

Add the carrots and zucchini and cook another 3-4 minutes, until soft. Add the spinach, in batches, and cook until wilted. It will take 2-3 minutes to wilt all of the spinach.

Pour the vegetables into a colander and set it over a bowl to drain as it cools. There's no need to squeeze any moisture out, but this will remove some excess liquid.

Once the vegetables are cool, transfer them to a large mixing bowl and add the potatoes, 1 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/4 tsp. pepper, matzah meal, eggs, paprika and herbs. Mix everything together.

Transfer the mixture to an 8 x 11-in. baking dish that's been sprayed or brushed with oil. Place in the oven and bake for 60 minutes, or until golden brown. Serves 8-10.



Another scene from the market Machane Yehuda

Coast to Coast

Israel not apartheid state: Arab scholar

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Israel is not an apartheid state, according to Mohammed Wattad, an Israeli Arab who is a senior lecturer at Zefat College's school of law in Safed and editor of the journal *Medicine and Law*.

Wattad spoke at the University of Manitoba during Israel Apartheid Week (IAW) earlier this month, although virtually no IAW organizers or supporters came to hear his lecture.

Wattad said that as "an Israeli citizen… I have no other home than the State of Israel. I am a proud Israeli citizen, but that doesn't mean I can't criticize it… At the same time I am a proud Arab national. I like Arab culture, people, etc.… These are not contradictory things."

He added, "Don't tell me Israel can't define itself as Jewish and democratic… This doesn't mean that Israel is innocent in [Mideast conflict], but there are others here that also aren't innocent."

Wattad, a Muslim, was the 2007 recipient of the award for best oralist for legal arguments given by the International Institute of Higher Studies in Criminal Science. The articulate Wattad spoke about the difference between discrimination and apartheid.

"Is there discrimination in Israel? Yes, there is discrimination against women, elderly, Arabs, Russian Jews, Christians… But the same goes for Canada. Is it good? No. But it means we have to deal with the problem from within… The existence of discrimination in a state does not mean it is an apartheid state… There is a big difference between apartheid and discrimination," he said.

"In an apartheid regime, there is no possibility of judicial review, because the judges are appointed by the regime and all serve one ideology. This is not the case in Israel… There is a very strong, independent supreme court in Israel. In an apartheid regime [unlike in Israel], there is no place to go to argue against the government," Wattad added.

He noted for example that in the case of Israel's security fence, there were "'more than 163 judgments of the Supreme Court where they decided that the fence had to be rerouted or rebuilt."

Regarding Israel's national anthem, Wattad, who was a Bretzfelder Constitutional Law Fellow at Columbia University and special fellow of the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, believes that the words "*nefesh yehudi*" (the Jewish soul/spirit) ought to be changed to be inclusive of Arabs, Christians and non-Jewish citizens. He proposes that the words be changed to refer to "an Israeli spirit" rather than a "Jewish spirit."

Wattad said that the "big problem is the [Palestinian] right of return. Is it a right of return to West Bank and Gaza or a right of return to Jaffa and Haifa? One possible solution is for Palestinians to receive an apology in addition to compensation. After World War II, the Jewish people got an apology from the Germans as well as money [reparations]. It was very important that they got an apology, which was an acknowledgement of collective responsibility."

When asked whether he thought an economic boycott of Israel would be effective, Wattad answered that it would be "useless" because, he said, "Who of the Arab states will boycott Israel economically?… They will help Israel out."

Despite the official position of Arab states, they "are doing business with Israel," he added, giving the Dubai as an example.

"The biggest gas pipeline in Israel is jointly owned by Israel and Iran, and has been that way since it was established… at the time of prime minister Golda Meir."

He further noted that in the case of war with Iran, "Saudi Arabia will allow Israel to use its air space."

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Pictured from left (back row) Brett Masters, Leslie Schwartz, Lainie Yallen and teacher Jack Lipinsky. Front: Harry Perlstein and Brady Gales.

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גידי קורן וחברים

עבריית קשה שפה

השפה העברית בצרות גדולות-דור שלם גדל כשבפיו שפה עילגת למדית שהתחנטנו בארץ. אתה הולך ברחוב ושומע בני נוער וחיילים אומרים " שלש בחורים" ו"שלושה מכדניות". פה מצבנו לא טוב בהרבה, כי בגלל הריחוק היומיומי מהעברית והשימוש החלקי בה- אנשים רבים הולכים ושוכחים. ועל כן החלטתי לפתוח תת- מדור חדש שיוקדש לנושא.

ב"שלום עורכנו" הסכיר הרב לנדא את פרשת השבוע וסיפר שהכיור שעמד בפתח אוהל המועד שימש לרחיצת ידי הכהנים ורגליהם, ומשני צידי הכיור היו קבועים ברזים "שבאמצעותם הוריקו את המים". "הוריקו" את המים זה "לצבע אותם בירוק" ("עלי העץ הוריקו"). הפועל הנכון הוא "רוקנו את המים" מלשון "לרוקן".

באיתו עיתון סיקר משה מינקובסקי "שתי אומניות ישראליות". "אומן" הוא אדם שמבצע מלאכות יד , כמו סריגה, קדרות (קרמיקה) ותכשיטים. "אמן" לעומת זאת הוא אדם שעוסק באמנות, כמו ציור, מוסיקה, ריקוד. מינקובסקי התכוון בכתבתו ל "שתי אמניות ישראליות" בלי האות ו. מעניין שבאותו עיתון תיאר יונתן דחוה הלוי "500 אמנים קנדים קוראים לחרם על ישראל" תוך שימוש נכון במושג "אמנים", אבל שישאר בינינו.

אנטישמים מחוץ לארון- יהודים פרוגרסיבים

במועדון הבריאות על שם Y.M.C.A, מקום בו אני נלחם שעות ארוכות מלחמה אבידה נגד דיקנה ושומן, התפתח באחד הימים ויכוח בין החברים על עתיד הכור הגרעיני באירן, בבת עיניו של אחמד הקנזן. מאחר שבמועדוניו יש מגיעים מכל העמים, הגזעים, הדתות והצבעים, התנהל הויכוח בין אירנים, ישראלים וקנדים-יהודים, על עתיד הכור: האם צריך למנוע את המתקן בעודתם האדיבה של מפציצי קרב אמריקאים ומטוסים חמושים במגן-דוד מתחת לכנף? ואז, כאשר הויכוח התנהל באנגלית ובדציבלים ישראליים, קם הוגה דעות מקומי, ערל ממוצא קנדי, עם זנב-סוס, כתובות קעקע ושדיידים עתירי נפח. ובלי להתבלבל הביא ליהודים ולפרסים פתרון פשוט, שאת הפטנט עליו רשם היטלר כבר לפני שמונים שנה. האיש הציע שהדוד סם יטיל פצצת אטום אחת על ישראל והיהודים, ופצצה אחת על הערבים והמוסלמים באשר הם שם. וכך שני הצדדים ימחקו מעל כדור הארץ וחזון אחרית הימים יבוא לעולם. שאלתי את האינטלקטואל מדוע היהודים? והתשובה באה באנגלית שהיתה מביישת את ליזה דוליטל לפני שפגשה את הפרופסור המפורסם. הגאון טען, מבלי להניד עפעף, שהיהודים מנהלים את העולם, מעורבים את הנשיא (אובמה), משפיעים על ראשי ממשלות, שולטים בבנקים, בתעשית המכוניות, תברות נפט, טלויזיה, בידור וכל שטח שמריח כסף. מאחר ואנטישמיות מחלה מאמירה חשוכת מרפא, ונסיון להסביר למטומטם שאין כל דמיון בין שכל לשוריים, אמרתי לבחור שהצדק עמו, ואכן צאצאי אברהם יצחק ויעקב מחזיקים את העולם בכף היד כמו שקיבנ קנג החזק בכפו את הבלונדינית היפה. והוספתי באוזנה נשימה, שכאשר אנחנו, היהודים, הלכנו לאוניברסיטאות, דגרנו על סיפרי לימוד ובילינו בספריות ומעבדות, הוא והבריו לבידה שיחקו הוקי, עישנו עשבי מרפא והשתכרו בקונצרטים של רוק. לכן מה הפלא שאנחנו מהלים את העולם. הבחור, למרות העצבים והשריריים, התלבט, נעל, ועזב את החדר עם פרצוף תשעה באב. מה שמוכיח שלא תמיד צריך להיות צודקים וצדיקים, ולהסביר לגויים שאנחנו קורבנות. חבל על הזמן, כי דעות לא משנים במילים. אנטישמיים לא מתעניינים בעובדות, האמת לא תזדרת דרך קליפה שהתקשתה כבר דורות רבים

Jewish groups decry Ontario NDP leader's remark

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

A comment by Ontario New Democratic Party leader Andrea Horwath on Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) has aroused indignation among Jewish community groups.

Horwath recently described a Feb. 25 provincial motion condemning IAW, tabled by Thornhill Progressive Conservative MPP Peter Shurman, as being "divisive by nature."

All 30 members who were present in the 107-seat legislature, including members of the NDP, voted for the resolution to condemn IAW, which has spread to 40 cities around the world since its launch in 2005 at the University of Toronto.

Attempts to reach Horwath were unsuccessful.

Expressing disappointment over Horwath's position, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice-president Frank Dimant said, "The fact that [she] is denouncing the anti-IAW motion, while at the same time members of her caucus voted in favour of it is hypocritical."

He added, "The unanimous support for the resolution to condemn the hate-fest known as Israeli Apartheid Week, which often leads to anti-Semitic outbursts, was a very important non-partisan stand against anti-Semitism in Canada."

Describing Horwath's comment as "unhelpful double-speak," Dimant said she should have taken "a more principled position."

Howard English, UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's vice-president of strategic communications, issued a sharply worded statement.

"The false Israel apartheid label is divisive, not the condemnation of Israeli Apartheid Week. IAW, based on distortions of history, is designed to stifle dialogue," English said.

"Its objective is singling out Israel among all nations on earth, bringing Israel to its knees, and setting the stage for its demise. Nothing could be more divisive than that."

Shimon Fogel, chief executive officer of the Canada-Israel Committee, said: "What is truly divisive on campus and elsewhere is the canard of characterizing Israel as an apartheid state.

"It is the apartheid campaign that stifles dialogue. Its divisiveness blocks progress toward peace."

Fogel said that IAW's "hateful language" polarizes Canadian campuses in "a toxic and destructive way, isolating and delegitimizing students who are supportive of our sister democracy in the Middle East."

Quebec motion praises rights group

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The National Assembly has weighed in on the controversy that continues to dog the federally funded International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, which is based in Montreal.

On March 11, the legislature unanimously adopted a motion recognizing the "exemplary work" of the organization, commonly known as Rights and Democracy. It states that the assembly "wishes to see the independence of this institution preserved in order to protect its credibility and continuity."

The motion was initiated by Amir Khadir, the sole MNA for Québec Solidaire, a sovereigntist, left-wing party sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. He tabled it jointly with Robert Dutil, the minister responsible for Canadian intergovernmental affairs.

Last November, the Québec Solidaire officially endorsed the boycott campaign against Israel.

Khadir charged that in the past year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper nominated three board members to Rights and Democracy specifically because they're opposed to funding groups that are critical of Israel's alleged human rights violations.

The motion describes Rights and Democracy as continuing to go through a "grave crisis," even though the federal government has confirmed the appointment of a new president, 1980s-era Quebec Liberal cabinet minister Gérard Latulippe. His nomination to Rights and Democracy was rejected by the opposition.

Rights and Democracy, established in 1988 by the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney, was set up as a non-partisan entity operating at arm's length from the government.

A bitter rift among members of the board, which is chaired by University of Toronto professor Aurel Braun, and between a majority on the board and the majority of the staff came to light with the sudden death of former president Rémy Beauregard in early January.

Braun has said that one of the most contentious issues was Rights and Democracy's granting of $30,000 to three Middle East non-governmental organizations last year, two Palestinian and one Israeli, to investigate possible human rights violations in the wake of conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Khadir personally saluted the Rights and Democracy staff for the "ordeal" they're going through and the "climate of terror" that they continue to endure.

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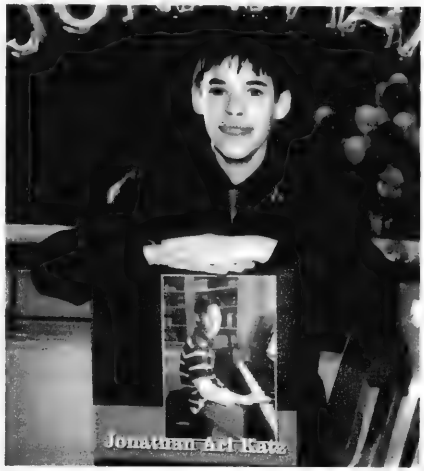
Student raises funds for childhood cancer research

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Jonathan Ari Katz has raised more than any other individual for the Childhood Cancer Foundation – Candlelighters Canada, and he would like to raise more.

His goal, in honour of his recent bar mitzvah, is $18,000. According to his page on the foundation's Small Hands website dedicated to small-scale projects, as of last week, Jonathan had raised $13,780, or 76 per cent of his goal, mostly through donations that he requested in lieu of bar mitzvah gifts.



Jonathan Katz sports a gold cancer awareness pin at his recent bar mitzvah.

In fact, he has raised almost $14,500, but a smaller amount is listed on another of the foundation's websites, affiliated with an annual fundraiser that was started by a family friend. His page was moved to Small Hands, which is active year-round, because he would like his fundraising to be ongoing.

The Grade 8 student at Associated Hebrew Schools knows of another youngster who climbed a mountain to raise funds for the organization, and one who rode across Canada on his bicycle, but he believes that "you don't need to do astonishing things to raise a lot of money.

"I wanted to do something special for my bar mitzvah, and I decided to help children all across Canada to find a treatment for cancer [so that] they don't need to go through a lot of pain and suffering," he said in an interview at the school, where his mother Eynat is a vice-principal at the Kamin branch in Thornhill. She and her husband, Arny, a dermatologist, also have a nine-year-old daughter.

The foundation, which was started about seven years ago, funds cancer research in the 17 children's hospitals in Canada. As well, scholarships are given to childhood cancer survivors as they enter post-secondary institutions. Jonathan is funding one scholarship, but the bulk of the money he has raised is designated for research.

Jonathan noted that his grandfather died of cancer, and his grandmother is in remission.

"It's a very common disease. If we can somehow get a cure for it, or at least a treatment that doesn't let children suffer, it will be a big help."

Three hundred and fifty guests celebrated Jonathan's bar mitzvah at Associated's Kamin branch on a Monday morning last month.

An inquisitive 13-year-old who likes math, science, art and music, Jonathan started life as a premature twin, born at 24 weeks, 16 weeks before his due date. It took two months before he reached a weight of one kilogram.

His twin brother, Ari, lived only a few days, and Eynat – who has been a fundraising spokesperson for Women's College Hospital, where Jonathan spent his first four months – said that doctors predicted Jonathan would never walk on his own and would be severely handicapped.

"Which I'm not," he interjected, stating the obvious.

Determined to prove the doctors wrong, Eynat worked with an occupational therapist and a physiotherapist she knew from the Hospital for Sick Children, where she was on staff at the time of Jonathan's birth, doing psychoeducational assessments. They developed a six-hour-a-day therapeutic program, four hours of which Eynat administered herself.

Mary Lye – the foundation's director of marketing and communications and the mother of a childhood cancer survivor – said Jonathan is "an extraordinary role model and leader… not just for children but for adults."

He has always had an interest in research, and wrote in a school project a few years ago about wanting to find a cure for cancer, his mother said.

To continue his fundraising, Jonathan plans to sell gold cancer awareness ribbon pins at his school, as he did at his bar mitzvah.

As well, he would like to start a club for Jewish children at both Jewish and public schools to raise money and socialize together.

"I look at my life as a gift," Jonathan said in his bar mitzvah speech. "I am ready to give something back for all of the help that everyone has given me over my lifetime."

For more information, go to http://childhoodcancer.ca

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PACKING FOR PESACH: Joshua Granovsky, left, and Brian Jadd were among Grade 6 and 7 students at the Toronto Heschel School who helped the community provide basic holiday necessities by packaging boxes for the National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section's Passover Food Drive.

A CHARITABLE CUT: Jessica Kline, 11, saved her hair for six years and donated it to Zichron Menachem, a non-profit organization that operates in 12 hospitals throughout Israel assisting children being treated for cancer and providing such things as camps and outings free of charge. Jessica donated her hair in honour of her grandfather, Yacov Springer, who is both a cancer and Holocaust survivor. ***This picture appeared in last week's CJN with incorrect information about the health of Yacov Springer. The CJN apologizes for the error.***

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U.S. ties at lowest ebb in 35 years, Israel envoy says

By BARAK RAVID
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JERUSALEM — Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, has told the country's diplomats there that U.S.-Israeli relations face their worst crisis in 35 years, despite attempts by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office to project a sense of "business as usual."

Michael Oren

Oren was speaking to Israeli consuls general in a conference call on Saturday night.

On Sunday, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) condemned recent statements by the U.S. government regarding its ties with Israel, amid tensions over Israel's recent announcement of its plan to build 1,600 new housing units in eastern Jerusalem.

"The Obama administration's recent statements regarding the U.S. relationship with Israel are a matter of serious concern," AIPAC said in a statement issued on Sunday. "AIPAC calls on the administration to take immediate steps to defuse the tension with the Jewish State," the statement said.

"The administration should make a conscious effort to move away from public demands and unilateral deadlines directed at Israel, with whom the United States shares basic, fundamental and strategic interests," the AIPAC statement said.

Earlier Sunday, Netanyahu continued to consult with a forum of seven senior cabinet ministers over a list of demands that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made in a telephone conversation Friday.

Clinton harshly criticized last week's announcement of plans to expand the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood in eastern Jerusalem while U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden was visiting Israel.

Ha'aretz has learned that Clinton's list includes at least four steps the United States expects Netanyahu to take to restore confidence in bilateral relations and permit the resumption of peace talks with the Palestinians.

• Investigate the process that led to the announcement of the Ramat Shlomo construction plans in the middle of Biden's visit. The Americans seek an official response from Israel as to whether this was a bureaucratic mistake or a deliberate act carried out for political reasons. Already on Saturday night, Netanyahu announced the convening of a committee to look into the issue.

• Reverse the decision by the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee to approve construction of 1,600 new housing units in Ramat Shlomo.

• Make a substantial gesture toward the Palestinians to allow for the renewal of peace talks. The Americans suggested that hundreds of Palestinian prisoners be released, that the Israel Defence Forces withdraw from additional areas of the West Bank and transfer them to Palestinian control, that the siege of the Gaza Strip be eased and further roadblocks in the West Bank be removed.

• Issue an official declaration that talks with the Palestinians, even indirect talks, will deal with all the conflict's core issues – borders, refugees, Jerusalem, security arrangements, water and settlements.

Two of the prime minister's advisers, Yitzhak Molcho and Ron Dermer, held marathon talks Sunday with senior White House officials in Washington and U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell and his staff to try to calm the situation. Mitchell was to return to Israel Tuesday to hear whether Netanyahu intends to take the proposed steps.

At the beginning of Sunday's cabinet meeting, Netanyahu tried to convey a message that there was no crisis in relations with the United States. But he sent precisely the opposite message to Oren in Washington.

Continued on page 52

Canada

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Embattled Jewish Agency to promote identity over aliyah

By GAL BECKERMAN
JTA

NEW YORK — Natan Sharansky knows he's disturbing the status quo.

Days before the most recent meeting of the board of governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Sharansky, the board's relatively new chairman, declared that the Agency's traditional mission had outlived its usefulness.

"It's not enough to speak about aliyah," Sharansky told a delegation of American Jewish leaders. "It's almost prohibited for the head of the Jewish Agency to say so, but it can't be our goal [just] to bring more Jewish people [to Israel]."

With these words – and the recent appointment to key positions of people who share his views – Sharansky has signalled his intent to bring about radical change to the financially strapped Jewish Agency, shifting its focus away from Israel and toward strengthening the secular identity of Diaspora Jews.

Misha Galperin

At the centre of Sharansky's plan is the notion of peoplehood. He and a tight group of ideological allies – mostly other Russian Jews – believe that the Jewish Agency must now become a global promoter of Jewish identity, particularly among the young.

Peoplehood, according to its proponents, is defined as a sense of connectivity among Jews who share a common history and fate. It is still an amorphous concept for some critics. Others wonder if it is too weak a foundation on which to base educational programs – especially since this vision of peoplehood is not predicated on having any kind of religious or spiritual identity.

Nonetheless, this new role for the Jewish Agency is one that Sharansky, by all accounts, seems to be pursuing with great passion. It also comes out of necessity.

Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Jewish Agency has been financed through a combination of Israeli government funds and money from the Diaspora. By now, however, it is clear that money from the Diaspora is drying up.

In 1989, the Jewish Agency received $275 million from the North American federations, but last year it received only $130 million, and the projected intake for 2010 is $110 million.

Given that Diaspora money makes up one-third of the Jewish Agency's budget, the drop has been catastrophic for the large bureaucracy.

In response to the decline comes Sharansky's new vision. Though immigration is still a large budget category, this year it will account for barely more than the education department – $100.59 million, as opposed to $94.29 million for education, out of a budget of $321.71 million.

Two recent appointments to high posts in the Jewish Agency are further indication of a change in direction.

A new senior position has been created for Misha Galperin, the current executive vice-president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington. He will be based in New York and provisionally will be in charge of what the Jewish Agency is calling "Global Public Affairs and Financial Resource Development."

Galperin, the most prominent Russian Jew filling a leadership position in the American Jewish organizational world, is one of the main conceptual architects of peoplehood and recently authored a book on the subject.

The Jewish Agency also recently announced that Alan Hoffmann, currently the director general of the Agency's education department, will become the director general of the entire Agency, elevating someone whose orientation is promoting Jewish education.

Of Hoffmann's appointment, Galperin said that he knows "I have a partner in Israel who is exactly the kind of person that I was hoping would be my partner on that side."

With the new positions filled, all that remains is to define exactly what peoplehood is and how a sprawling institution promotes it.

Galperin's definition of peoplehood is "an extended family with a mission," and to promote it, we must engender a feeling of belonging, of community. Advocates say that young Jews must be given experiences – such as Jewish summer camp or the Taglit-Birthright Israel program – that allow them to see their connection to other Jews and identify with the Jewish story.

Galperin says that contrary to what most people think about the Jewish Agency, it already is engaged in many projects that could fall under this rubric, including supporting Israel travel programs and maintaining a network of 400 emissaries in the United States involved in some form of Jewish education.

North American leaders praise Sharansky's plan

By JACOB BERKMAN
JTA

NEW YORK — The leaders of several of the largest North American Jewish federations are praising Natan Sharansky's plans for shifting the focus of the Jewish Agency for Israel from immigration to education and identity building. But reversing the drop in Diaspora dollars will take more than words, some added.

Linda Kislowicz, CEO of UIA Canada, told *The CJN* that the Canadian federations have been discussing the Jewish Agency's new orientation. The Jewish Agency is the main recipients of funds from Jewish federations channelled through UIA Canada.

"I think there's a very positive response… Strong Jewish identity makes for strong Jewish communities and a strong Israel.

"As to whether it leads to some form of life in Israel, we believe they're connected. It's a shift of resources and focus, but I don't think it's necessarily a dilution of the aliyah message."

As well, she added, the change "makes room for a new and interesting partnership with regard to Israeli and Diaspora Jewry, in which the common denominator is Jewish identity… Programs and resources can be devoted to strengthening Jewish identity among Jewish youth in the Diaspora and Jewish youth in Israel. We have work to do together."

She said the change gives the Jewish Agency "a very current and contemporary platform in which to engage communities and in particular the next generation."

Ted Sokolsky, president of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said that the change in focus has been in the works for many years, and that Birthright Israel is "probably the most visible program in this line."

Sokolsky was involved in talks leading up to the recently announced changes, particularly as head of the organization of large city directors of Jewish federations in 2007-08.

"There's an understanding that we have to invest more and more in people's – young people's in particular – sense of Jewish peoplehood and their Jewish identity," Sokolsky said.

However, he noted, "it's not a case of the Jewish Agency choosing Jewish identity over aliyah. Aliyah will definitely be enhanced down the road."

Sokolsky said that the change "doesn't seem like such a stretch" for the Jewish community in Canada. "We're already investing significant dollars in Jewish education" – an amount he put at a combined total of almost $25 million between the Jewish communities in Toronto and Montreal.

As well, he added, "you'll see a greater emphasis on what we used to call informal Jewish education," referring to Jewish camping and programs such as March of the Living.

Some major American federations in recent years have complained increasingly about sending overseas large proportions of funds collected locally.

In a prepared statement, Jerry Silverman, the CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, which serves as the pass-through for federation money to the Jewish Agency, praised the Agency's new direction.

John Ruskay, the CEO of the system's largest federation, the UJA-Federation of New York also praised the shift, but said it was "overstated."

"Let me emphasize I have no doubt the Jewish Agency will continue its commitment to promote and facilitate aliyah," Ruskay said. "Jewish education may be the most effective way to promote aliyah. Even so, we are in a time when pitting aliyah against identity against education against welfare may be anachronistic."

This article was adapted from JTA's philanthropy blog, TheFundermentalist.com. With files from Frances Kraft

'The crisis was very serious'

Continued from page 51

In his conference call with the Israeli consuls general, Oren said the current crisis is the most serious with the Americans since a confrontation between Henry Kissinger and Yitzhak Rabin in 1975 over an American demand for a partial withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula.

At Sunday's cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said the matter had been blown out of proportion by the media. He added: "There was an unfortunate incident here that was innocently committed and was hurtful, and certainly should not have occurred."

He said steps would be taken to prevent such cases in the future. "It is extremely important to understand that the State of Israel and the United States have common interests," he said.

Netanyahu appointed a committee to study the chain of events leading up to last week's housing announcement. The committee will also establish guidelines for ministries and municipalities to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Four consuls discussed the conference call with *Ha'aretz*. Some noted that in previous conference calls with Oren, the ambassador took pains to make clear that relations with the United States were excellent. This time, however, Oren sounded extremely tense and pessimistic. Oren was quoted as saying that "the crisis was very serious, and we are facing a very difficult period in relations [between the two countries]."

Oren told participants in the conference call of a meeting he was summoned to on Friday with Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg for a reprimand. Oren spoke of his surprise at being summoned after believing that the crisis had ended on Thursday.

"Steinberg read to me from the [American] letter of protest, whose content was extremely harsh," Oren reportedly said.

Netanyahu apologized to Biden at the time of the incident last week and the vice-president accepted the apology.

The Palestinian Authority reportedly has said that it will not resume any kind of talks with Israel, including the agreed-upon proximity talks, unless Mitchell brings a promise that Israel will cancel the housing plan for eastern Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is not part of the 10-month West Bank building freeze set by Netanyahu at the end of November.

Rebuilt Hurva synagogue dedicated amid threats

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Monday's dedication of the restored Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City could spark riots, police warned Sunday.

Pamphlets distributed in east Jerusalem claimed the opening of the synagogue was the first step toward the reconstruction of the Temple, while senior Fatah official Mohammed Dahlan and Hatem Abdel Kader, who holds the Jerusalem affairs portfolio in the Palestinian Authority, called on Israeli Arabs to go to the Temple Mount and protect it from Israel.

Israeli security sources speculated the PA is trying to leverage the unrest in east Jerusalem to promote its political agenda and tighten the connection between Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Security officials were to decide on Monday whether to extend the closure on the West Bank announced by Defence Minister Ehud Barak on Saturday. A move usually reserved in recent years for Jewish holidays, the closure was intended to block the spread and escalation of violent demonstrations.

The Hurva synagogue in 1856

On Sunday, thousands of Jewish revellers, guarded by hundreds of police officers, celebrated the entry of the first Torah scroll into the synagogue, then held a festive evening service. No violence took place near the Old City during the event.

The Hurva, considered the most important synagogue in the country for many years, was destroyed at the end of the War of Independence and totally restored during the last five years. Renovated with the help of old photographs, plans and drawings, the synagogue was rebuilt to match the original model identically.

On Monday, the synagogue was formally dedicated by Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not attend the ceremony, but delivered a prerecorded video greeting.

"The police will act forcefully to prevent both Muslim and Jewish extremists from disturbing public order and security in the Temple Mount and east Jerusalem," a statement from the police said.

Police and Border Police forces continued their special deployment on Monday, with 2,500 officers spread across the Old City, east Jerusalem and adjacent villages. Entry of Palestinians to the Temple Mount was limited for the fourth day in a row, with only Israeli Muslim men older than 50 and women allowed to enter the compound to pray. No visitors or tourists will be allowed.

The Jerusalem police also withdrew permission for the monthly march around the Old City gates by yeshiva students for fear it would escalate tensions even further.

Police Commissioner David Cohen tried to calm nerves Monday by appealing to all parties.

"The extremist, inciting statements being heard don't correlate to the facts on the ground," Cohen said. "I expect all parties involved to show responsibility, and to moderate any statements that could lead to an unnecessary escalation of violence in the city."

Israeli intelligence services do not believe, however, that the PA is interested in unleashing a full intifadah, or in ratcheting up violence in the West Bank, since this would hamper efforts being made by Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to build Palestinian institutions and improve the economy.

More funds for needy survivors

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Eight Canadian Jewish organizations providing social services and home care to needy Holocaust survivors will receive increased allocations thanks to an agreement signed by the German government and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany.

Last week, following a new round of talks, the New York-based Claims Conference announced that Germany would provide a further $125 million (US) to meet the needs of survivors.

Canadian organizations in line for additional funding are the Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors and the group Child Survivors, Hidden Children in Montreal; Jewish Family Services in Ottawa; Baycrest, Circle of Care and Jewish Family and Child in Toronto, and the Jewish Family Service Agency and the Holocaust Education Centre in Vancouver.

Claims Conference spokesperson Hillary Kessler-Godin said the money will be used for home care, food programs, medical aid and emergency assistance.

In a statement, Claims Conference negotiator Stuart Eizenstat said, "The agreement is a major step forward in addressing vital social welfare needs for the poorest of Jewish Holocaust victims living around the world. Much still remains to be done, including a multi-year agreement and continuing to enhance other benefits for the survivors."

Julius Berman, chair of the Claims Conference, said that part of the funds will be channelled into pensions for the elderly. He added, "The Claims Conference's top priority is to continue obtaining funding to assist needy, vulnerable Jewish Holocaust victims in their final years."

Founded in 1951, the Claims Conference allocates funds from Germany to agencies helping needy Holocaust survivors. It also administers compensation funds and recovers unclaimed Jewish property.

Israel Briefs

Soldiers charged

Two soldiers were charged with inappropriate conduct during the Gaza war. The Israel Defence Forces prosecution office filed an indictment alleging the two combat soldiers used a nine-year-old Palestinian boy as a human shield by forcing him to open bags suspected of containing explosives. It was the second indictment against the soldiers for actions in Gaza last winter. In last week's indictment, the soldiers were charged with overstepping authority and conduct unbecoming. They will stand trial in military court and face up to one year in jail. Military police began their investigation into the charges before the Goldstone report was released.

Qassam fired from Gaza

A Qassam rocket fired from Gaza landed in the western Negev last Thursday, causing damage to a building on a kibbutz located near residential buildings. No one was injured. A group affiliated with Al Qaeda claimed responsibility. The attack came just after U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden condemned such attacks on Israel's south and reiterated the U.S. commitment to Israel's security. It was the first rocket fired from Gaza since Feb. 11.

Falash Mora resolution vowed

The plight of Falash Mora will be resolved within a year, Israel's interior minister promised last week. Eli Yishai said the aliyah of the Falash Mora, Ethiopians who claim to be descendants of Jews who were forced to convert to Christianity generations ago, will happen over the next year. He made the remarks in an address to the Knesset state comptroller's committee and the committee for aliyah, absorption and Diaspora affairs. Some 8,700 Falash Mora are waiting for the Jewish Agency to complete eligibility checks. Many already have relatives in Israel. Israeli lawmaker Shlomo Molla, the first Ethiopian MK, visited the Ethiopian city of Gondar in December and reported that those waiting for permission to make aliyah are living in poor conditions.

Turkey rejects quake aid

Turkey turned down Israel's offer of aid following an earthquake in the eastern part of the country. The earthquake registering 6.0 on the Richter scale that struck early on March 8 killed 41 villagers in eastern Turkey and injured 50. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak instructed his staff to find ways Israel could help in the aftermath, but Turkey reportedly refused the aid, saying it has the experience to handle the disaster. In August 1999, Israel sent a 250-member rescue and recovery team and a field hospital to Turkey following an earthquake measuring 7.4 that killed 18,000.

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1. Dr. Hirsh and Dora Rosenfeld Prize for
   Yiddish and $1,000
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   The author of the Yiddish work may reside anywhere in the world.
   The author of the Hebrew work must reside in North America.
2. Prize in English Fiction and Poetry on a Jewish Theme $500
3. Prize in English Non-Fiction on a Jewish Theme $500
   (Sponsored by Sara and Irwin Tauben)
4. Prize in French Literature on a Jewish Theme $500
5. Prize in Translation of a Book with a Jewish Theme $500
   (Sponsored by Barbara and Ron Kay)
6. Prize in Canadian Jewish Studies $500
   (Sponsored by The Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies)
   Authors must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident.
   Books must have been published between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2009.
7. Yaacov Zipper Prize in Education $500
   Presented to a Montreal educator who has made an outstanding contribution to Jewish formal or informal education.
   Nominations in this category must be submitted in accordance with guidelines available at the Jewish Public Library.
8. Michael Moskovitz Prize in Film on a Jewish Theme $500
   Film must be submitted on DVD/NTSC, English version. Must have been produced after January 1, 2008 in Canada.

Self-published books are not eligible (except for Yiddish books). Nominees need not to be Jewish.
Submissions for the literary awards MUST include three (3) copies of materials.
Submissions for the Film/Video Award MUST include two (2) copies of materials.
All submissions remain the property of the Jewish Public Library.

Submissions for all eight categories must be received by April 30, 2010.
The Awards Gala takes place on Wednesday, November 10, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Illustrator helps kids learn while they colour

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Yehuda Lang may be 30, but he can appreciate a good colouring book.

Lang, a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD), is the creator of the Super Dooper Most Amazingest colouring book series. The books teach kids about Jewish holidays while they colour, read and play games.

"I always wanted to make a book… I wanted to make the holidays accessible to kids in a fun way," said Lang, who made the series through his graphic design company, 8th Avenue Creative.

"I thought I could do a good job with it and really make the story come alive with vibrant illustrations."

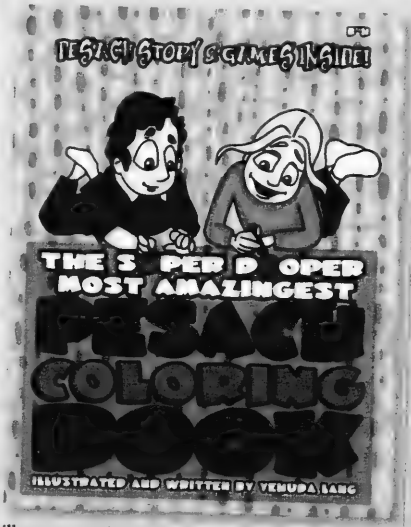
Lang's colouring books have taken children through holidays such as Purim, Chanukah and Pesach, as well as through the Hebrew alphabet.

Lang illustrates and writes the series. While he perfected his writing in college, Lang always had a knack for illustration.

"I was always an artist. That was always my thing," he said. "When I was very little, I was just drawing a lot. All the time."

Eventually, Lang went to OCAD, where he majored in advertising and graduated three years ago.

"I knew I had to go to OCAD… I knew I had to do something with art. I'm also a graphic designer,


PESACH STORY & GAMES INSIDE!
THE SUPER DOOPER MOST AMAZINGEST
PESACH COLORING BOOK
ILLUSTRATED AND WRITTEN BY YEHUDA LANG

illustrator and web designer," he said, adding that learning about advertising helped him improve his writing and to communicate effectively.

"I was always doing jobs as an illustrator. I wanted to do my own projects," he said.

About a year ago, he started working on the colouring book series with his wife, Ester, who helped with marketing and sales.

"I always talked about it, I always wanted to do it. To actually get it going, it was both of us. [I said] 'We'll give it a shot, hit or miss, we'll see what happens,'" he said.

So far, the series just may be a hit. The colouring books are being used by various schools, including the Chabad Romano Hebrew School in Maple, Ont., and are now on sale at two Indigo locations in Toronto, at Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue and at Yorkdale shopping centre, as well as in select Judaica and grocery stores in Canada and the United States.

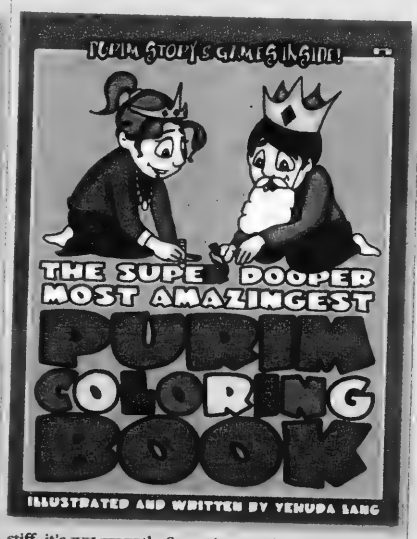
When he's working on a colouring book, Lang starts by researching the holiday.

"You know the story, but you want to know it perfectly," he said, adding that he then makes a storyboard for each page.

"There's obviously a lot of rewriting and re-drawing… It's a tricky thing, it's not like math homework," he said, adding that every detail, from word choice to the shape of a character's nose or eyes, is crucial. "There are a lot of decisions… The look of the characters, the language you use. It has to be accessible."

The Super Dooper Most Amazingest colouring books have more dialogue than most, which means that it's important to hit the right tone with the narrative, Lang said.

"Sometimes, when I'm first writing, it's kind of



stiff, it's not smooth. Sometimes, when you write it, it kind of flows," he said, explaining that it helps to talk out what he's about to write first.

"If I'm trying to think too hard, chances are it's not good."

While viewing one of Lang's storyboards, an author told him to draw characters according to "what you want the kid to see."

"[The author] was saying, 'Make your characters

Yehuda Lang, 30, uses his colouring book series to teach children about Jewish holidays.

look brave.' Kids relate through the characters… you always have to be portraying what you want the kid to see. If he sees the kid that's wimpy, he's going to relate that to himself," he said.

While Lang is careful to stay true to the history of each holiday, his goal is to make something that kids can relate to.

"[The books are] very friendly, very lively, very whimsical," he said.

Because his audience is young, Lang is sometimes forced to tinker with the details of each holiday. In the Chanukah book, he made one of the Maccabees a child in order to get his readers more involved.

"When the kid reads the books, [they] become the character. I try to bring the kids into it to internalize the character," he said.

Lang decided to make colouring books rather than storybooks because he wanted to engage his audience, he said.

"When you're actually colouring in the stories, it's more involvement. The kid takes part [in the story]," he said. "There's more games [in the books]. A lot of the times, kids go right to the games."

For Lang, his two-year-old son is his most important critic.

"He actually loves [it]. He reads [the series] more as a book. He colours, but that's what's special about these books. Most colouring books [have] one line per page. This really reads as a book," he said.

Lang was drawn to colouring books because of his connection with children, he said.

"I think I'm good with kids. I generally have that… attachment. I've always played with kids. I feel like I can get down to their level, it's a smooth transition," he said.

CHECK OUT OUR BLOG @ HEEBONICS.CA

Opera gives voice to anti-Nazi campaign

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

There were thousands of faces staring down at Judy Kopelow at the Holocaust museum in Washington, D.C., but she only saw two.

They were young but determined. Fresh-faced but defiant. They weren't Jewish but they had earned a place in the museum's exhibit about non-Jews who had fought against the Nazi regime.

They were casualties of The White Rose, but Kopelow didn't know that when she visited the exhibit several years ago. All she knew was their names – Hans and Sophie Scholl.

"There was a charm about them. They seemed young and they had a spirit," Kopelow said of their photo.

"It sounds so corny, but I just loved them. I wanted to know who they were – there was something about them."

And so she searched, unearthing every book about the Scholls that she could find. Soon she learned that they were students at the University of Munich who were involved in an anti-fascism group at their school between 1942 to 1943 called The White Rose. The movement was an intellectual protest that spread its message through leaflets. The Scholls were eventually caught for handing out the leaflets and were executed by the Nazis.

Hans and Sophie Scholl in a 1942 photo by George Wittenstein

Through her research, Kopelow also found out that an opera had been written about their story by Udo Zimmerman.

"I came back to Toronto and went to Sam the Record Man in the classical record department. By chance they had two copies of the opera," she said. "I listened to it and was just very, very moved by it... I just thought the story had to be told."

Kopelow set about telling it. She began producing the opera, *White Rose*, which follows the Scholls' life story, and she will bring it to the University of Toronto's Hart House on April 8.

"Besides the music being very, very beautiful, yet tragic, it's a testament to the strength of the human spirit," she said, adding that she first produced *White Rose* about six or seven years ago. "However dark the evil force might be, there always seem to be those that rise against it."

Kopelow brought the play to the University of Toronto about five years ago and thought it was time to bring it back. She approached Hillel of Greater Toronto and the Centre for Jewish Studies at U of T, and it didn't take Hindy Najman, the centre's director, long to agree.

"My response was, 'Let's do it,'" Najman said, adding that she taught students about The White Rose movement. "I visited Munich, I saw the homes of Hans and Sophie Scholl. [The opera] is a very powerful narrative, it's a very tragic narrative, but we're reminded about what we should be called upon to do in moments of loss and tragedy."

For Doris Bergen, the chancellor of the Rose and Ray Wolfe chair in Holocaust studies, the opera is about more than just Holocaust education.

"People think White Rose was an anti-Holocaust resistance. That's part of it," she said. "In general, they were protesting the crimes of Nazi Germany. They were protesting a barbaric way of waging warfare."

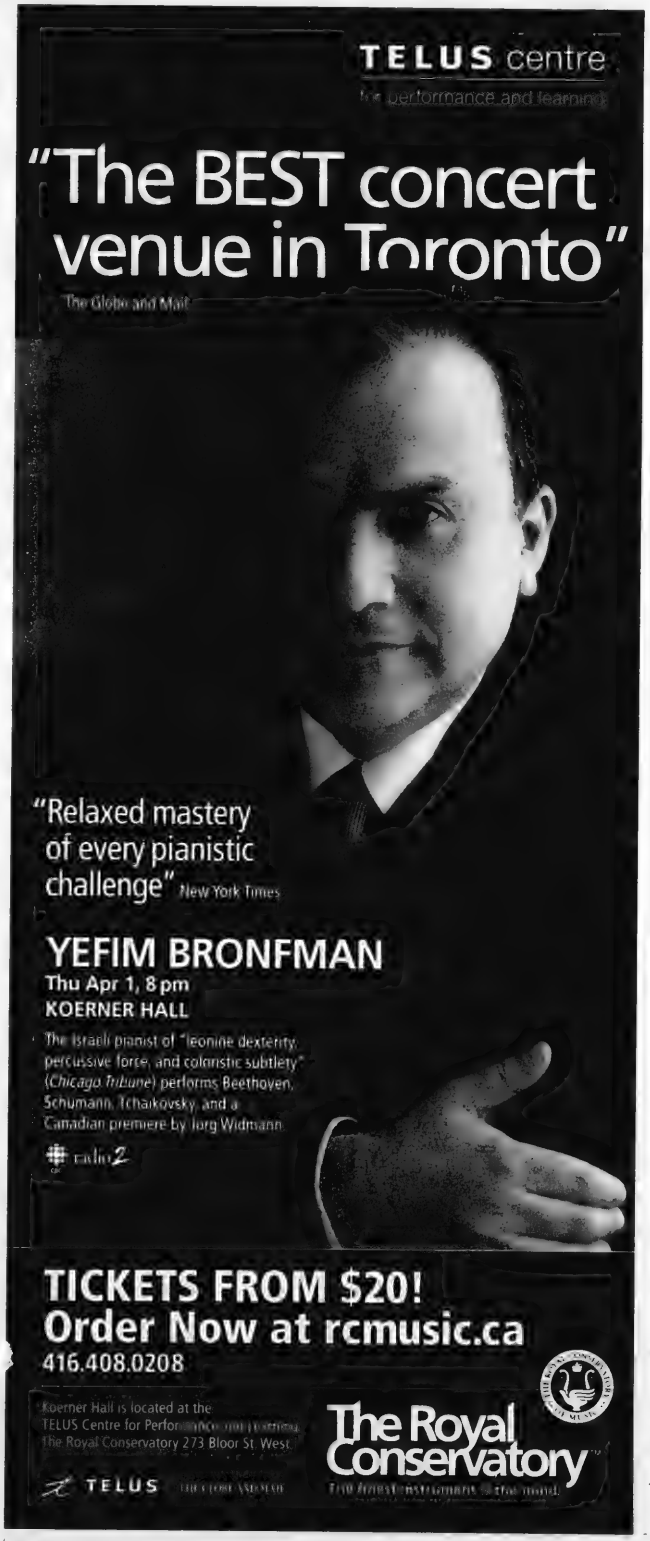
Bergen thinks it's appropriate that Kopelow took the opera to a university.

"It's important for students to think about the way that... a group of students... tried to organize an intellectual protest. I think it's really important to have that challenge to students," she said. "It's really a challenge to the university as a whole. When [Hans and Sophie] were executed, not a single representative of the university came to their defence. It's a story of heroism, but it's a heroism that really highlights the much broader sort of failure [of universities]."

For Kopelow, opera is a good way to tell this story.

"People talk to me about why [have an] opera. It's because... an operatic voice is so powerful. You can't get your head around where that strength could come from," she said.

White Rose will be performed April 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Hart House. For tickets or more information, call 416-913-2424.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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

RECHARGED MUSICAL VERSION OF *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN* OPENS AT PRINCESS OF WALES

Young Frankenstein, the musical by **Mel Brooks** and **Thomas Meehan**, runs March 17 to April 18 at the Princess of Wales Theatre, 300 King St. W. The Mirvish-presented production is based on the 1974 film of the same name written by Brooks and actor **Gene Wilder**, whose script received an Academy Award nomination. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

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Theatre Notes

• Steppin' Out Theatrical Productions presents *Rent*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway musical by **Jonathan Larson**, performed by a local cast. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St., Richmond Hill. $27, $22. March 18 to 21. 905-787-8811, www.steppinout.ca

• **Leah Cherniak** directs *Marat/Sade*, the bold and bloody French revolution-era drama by **Peter Weiss**, setting the play-within-a-play not in an asylum as originally intended but on the streets, thereby placing the characters within a "normal" milieu. The production, the last in Theatre@York's current season, is at York University, Joseph G. Green Studio Theatre, Centre for Film and Theatre, March 21 to 27. $17, $12; previews $5. 416-736-5888, www.yorku.ca/perform/boxoffice

• French playwright **Yasmina Reza**, the daughter of a Hungarian-Jewish mother and Iranian-Jewish father, is the author of *Art*, the hit razor-sharp comedy that previews March 15 to 17, opens March 18 and continues until April 10 at Canadian Stage's Bluma Appel Theatre. The play, directed by **Morris Panych**, explores the nature of friendship while examining the definition of art. Tickets from $20. 27 Front St. E. 416-368-3110, c-stage.ca

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Music Notes

• The Associates of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra presents Five Small Concerts, a varied program performed by the Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra. $18, $15, $10. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. Monday, March 29, 7:30 p.m. 416-485-2717.

• Grammy Award-winning pianist **Yefim Bronfman** performs a single Canadian recital date in the midst of a world tour, at the Royal Conservatory's Koerner Hall. The program includes works by **Widmann** and **Tchaikovsky**. $65 to $20. Thursday, April 1, 8 p.m. 416-408-0208, www.rcmusic.ca

• **Lina Eder**, a "vocalist who can be compared to **Streisand** and **Garland**" (*Chicago Tribune*) brings her touring show *All of Me* to the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, 10268 Yonge St. (north of Major Mackenzie Drive) April 28 and 29, 8 p.m. $88, $79.20. 905-787-8811, www.richmondhill.ca

• **The University of Toronto Klezmer** ensemble, a 12-member group directed by **Brian Katz**, performs an evening of klezmer classics and beyond. Walter Hall, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, 80 Queens Park (at Museum subway stop). March 18, 8 p.m. Free.

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Arts in Brief

• Lecturer **Dina Roginsky** presents "Folk Dance Israel – The Social History of a Movement." Sundays on Bloor, $9 drop in, students $5. Includes light refreshments. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre. Sunday, March 21, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 154.

• Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Crazy Love*, a documentary that affirms that maxim that fact is often more unbelievable than fiction. $15, $10; rush seats available 15 minutes before each screening. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre. Sunday, March 21, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Guest speaker is syndicated advice columnist **Ellie Tesher** at the first screening, psychotherapist **Rosa Bergman** at second screening. 416-924-6211, ext. 606. www.algreentheatre.ca

• The Winchevsky Centre presents a screening of *Home Safe Toronto*, a documentary dealing with how Canadian families deal with the threat and experience of homelessness. Filmmaker **Laura Sky** will facilitate a discussion afterwards. 585 Cranbrooke Ave., Thursday, March 25, 7:30 p.m. Free admission. 416-789-5502, www.winchevskycentre.org

Thriller portrays search for Iraq's WMDs

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Green Zone, Paul Greengrass' action thriller set in Baghdad during and shortly after the 2003 allied invasion of Iraq, resembles his two previous films, *The Bourne Ultimatum* and *United 93*, at least in terms of style.

Now playing in Toronto, *Green Zone* is a scintillating exercise in filmmaking, full of suspense, intrigue, controlled mayhem and, of course, non-stop violence. In essence, it's like a superior video game.

But Greengrass, a skilled director, has more than entertainment in mind. Beyond the subliminal level, this is a politically driven film about the futile search for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction, the United States' oft-stated rationale for embarking on what would be an unpopular war.

In short, Greengrass doesn't buy into the thesis that the Iraqi Baathist regime possessed biological, chemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction after United Nations inspectors scoured Iraq in the wake of the1991 Gulf War.

As may be recalled, these monitors destroyed tons of military equipment that Iraq had hoarded for years. Nonetheless, major intelligence agencies in the West were convinced that more such weapons could be found.

Brian Helgeland's crackling, though sometimes opaque, script is broadly based on Rajiv Chandrasekaran's 2006 book, *Imperial Life in the Emerald Zone*, a reference to the sedate Baghdad neighbourhood where Saddam and his closest cronies lived and worked and in which the Americans established their posh headquarters in the aftermath of the invasion.

The film turns on the real-life adventures of U.S. army chief warrant officer Richard Gonzales, whose "mobile exploitation team" was tasked with the mission of unearthing WMDs.

Gonzales, known in the movie as Roy Miller, is expertly portrayed by the no-nonsense actor Matt Damon. He arrives in Baghdad shortly after the Americans have captured the city in a shock-and-awe offensive that unseats Saddam's brutal regime but unleashes a wave of looting, chaos and confusion.

Gung-ho at first, Miller soon comes to the jarring realization that U.S. intelligence data on WMDs is dead wrong.

Matt Damon stars as a U.S. officer charged with finding weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

"The intel's no good," Miller says. But the Pentagon's insufferable man in Baghdad, Poundstone (Greg Kinnear), begs to differ with his downbeat assessment. "We'll find weapons," he says. "Don't worry about it."

Miller recruits Freddy (Khalid Abdalla), an anti-Saddam local Iraqi, to help him track down Saddam's supposed caches of WMDs. Freddy puts Miller on the trail of a menacing Iraqi general who may well know where they're hidden.

Miller, however, is on a fool's errand. Brown (Brendan Gleeson), the CIA's Baghdad bureau chief, claims that "the cupboard is bare." Iraq has been swept clean of WMDs. With this subversive suggestion, Greengrass leaves a viewer with the unmistakable impression that a turf war – a battle of wills – has broken out between the CIA and the Pentagon, and that the Pentagon's number 1 official in Baghdad may be concealing a terrible truth.

In trashing the official U.S. account of the war, Greengrass casts doubt on the integrity of a gullible American correspondent (Amy Ryan) who has covered the WMD story at length, and suggests that the Iraqi insurgency could have been nipped in the bud had the United States recruited senior Iraqi army officers and not disbanded key Iraqi ministries. As well, he seems to scoff at the notion that democracy can be grafted on Iraq's tribal society.

To hammer home his point that the United States stumbled in Iraq, Greengrass replays the now embarrassing May 2003 "Mission Accomplished" clip in which then-U.S. president George W. Bush prematurely declared victory.

In a final dig toward the close of *Green Zone*, Greengrass inserts a scene that encapsulates his perception of the invasion. Freddy, in a heated exchange with Miller, exclaims, "It's not for you to declare what happens here."

From a strictly moral point of view, Greengrass may be right, but in the world of Realpolitik, he is astonishingly naive.

A riveting documentary about uncontrollable passions

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Burt Pugach, a prosperous Jewish lawyer in New York City, was absolutely smitten when he first laid eyes on Linda Riss, an attractive, single Jewish woman. Never had he seen a more beautiful, beguiling sight.

After contacting her and sending her a bouquet of roses, she agreed to date Burt, who, as she discovered, was considerably older, weird and less than good looking. But since he was "a lot of fun" and owned a late-model Cadillac convertible, a private plane and a nightclub, she was impressed.

Linda Riss and Burt Pugach's strange relationship is the subject of *Crazy Love*.

Here was a man who might give her a ticket to a comfortable life.

There was only one minor, niggling glitch: he was married. Burt promised to divorce his wife as soon as possible, but his missus did not co-operate. As the plot thickened, Linda learned that he was deceptive, obsessive and sex-addled.

Burt's insatiable quest for Linda took on the trappings of a soap opera and became the grist for sensational tabloid stories.

Crazy Love, a riveting documentary by Dan Klores, is about one man's compulsive attraction for a seemingly unattainable and virginal woman.

It will be presented by the Toronto Jewish Film Society on March 21 at 4 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre (750 Spadina Ave.).

Crazy Love has all the elements of a classic melodrama: uncontrollable passions, unbridled jealousy and violence culminating in a crime of passion that shocked a supposedly shock-proof and cynical metropolis.

The 92-minute film unfolds through talking heads and banner headlines. Burt and Linda, as well as their friends and enemies, appear on screen. Jimmy Breslin, a famous New York newspaper columnist, also puts in an appearance.

Burt, a shady lawyer who was not above bilking the city for his services, is at the centre of *Crazy Love*. His attitude was that if he could not win Linda's heart, no one else would. "He got his wish," says Linda with a mixture of awe and annoyance.

Even after another suitor swept Linda off her feet, Burt was still madly in love with her. So much so that he took leave of his senses and hired a thug to disfigure her. Burt's rashness and stupidity landed him in jail, where he tried to commit suicide.

After he recovered, he dispatched a torrent of lovesick letters to Linda, who in the meantime had fallen into dire financial straits. "There was no getting away from Burt," she says with an air of resignation.

Incredibly enough, the pair resumed their strange relationship after Burt was paroled, prompting yet another round of breathless headlines and invitations from television talk-show hosts.

Klores is clearly fascinated by their most unusual romance, and in *Crazy Love*, he tells a crackling story about the follies and absurdities of human behaviour.

Israeli films keep missing Oscar mark

By TOM TUGEND
JTA

LOS ANGELES — Israeli films have been among Oscar finalists nine times but have never picked up the top prize. How come?

In the last few years, the quality of the 14 or so films annually produced in Israel have taken a quantum leap upward.

The main reasons are the rise of a group of talented young filmmakers, who often cut their teeth on television shows; a parallel increase in skilled producers; and the focus on more relevant stories, according to Katriel Schory, executive director of the Israel Film Fund, a publicly funded agency that subsidizes most Israel-made films at a total rate of $5 million to $6 million (US) per year.

One payoff has been that in each of the last three years, a critically acclaimed Israeli film has made the final five list in the foreign language film category.

In 2008, it was *Beaufort*, followed the next year by *Waltz with Bashir* – both powerful and innovative perspectives on Israel's wars with Lebanon.

This year, although another war movie, *Lebanon*, was under serious consideration, the Israel Academy chose the offbeat *Ajami*, an insider view of Jewish-Arab and Arab-Arab tensions in the mixed quarter of the same name in Jaffa.

Despite very strong competition from many countries, foremost France and Germany, *Ajami* made the first cut to nine semi-finalists, and then on to the five finalists.

To general surprise, the winner turned out to be the little-seen or publicized Argentine movie *The Secret in Their Eyes*, a thriller about an unsolved 25-year-old case involving the murder and rape of a young woman.

Critics have become used to odd choices by the foreign film selection committee, but this year's pick seemed to repeat the previous year's pattern too closely to be coincidental.

In both years, four of the five finalists were edgy, tough and innovative films, while the fifth tended to be softer, conventional and more in the Hollywood tradition.

Due to a convoluted selection process, the judges on the selection committee tend to be older academy members with more time on their hands and more attuned to traditional movies.

Schory has no doubt that these circumstances led to the selection of the conventional Argentine film over the edgier entries, such as the highly favoured *A Prophet* from France, *The White Ribbon* from Germany, and *Ajami*.

"What happens is that a large portion of judges favoured the one conventional film, while the rest split their votes among the more innovative films," said Schory, who left Los Angeles immediately after the Oscar ceremonies to return to Israel.

Schory noted Israeli filmmakers have no intention of changing the style or content of their films to please the academy judges and boost their chances for an Oscar win. "The 700 members of the Israel Academy pick the best film on its merits," he said, "not what might please an overseas audience or judges."

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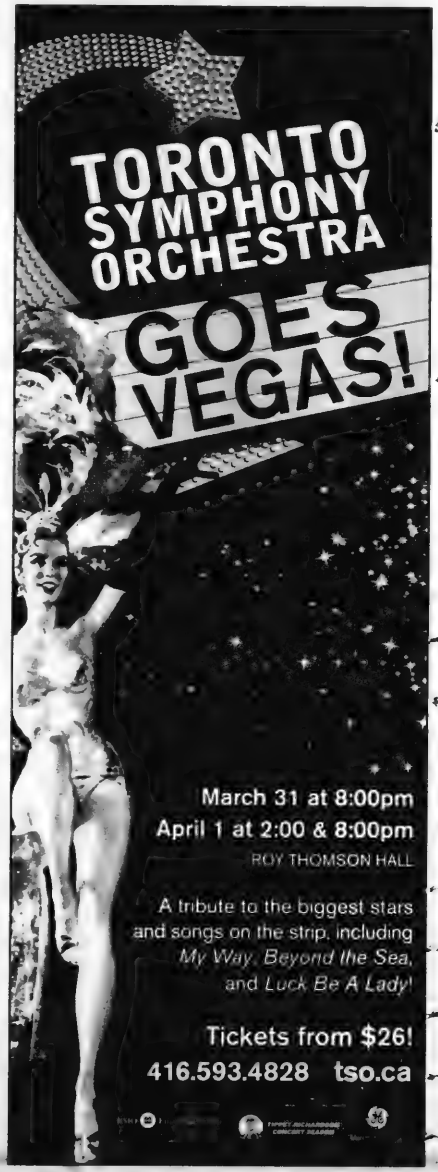
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Remembering J.D. Salinger

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

Not having published a thing in almost half a century apparently hasn't diminished the fame of America's most reclusive writer. J. D. Salinger died in January at the age of 91, prompting some hopeful observers to wonder whether he left a vault full of manuscripts to be published posthumously.

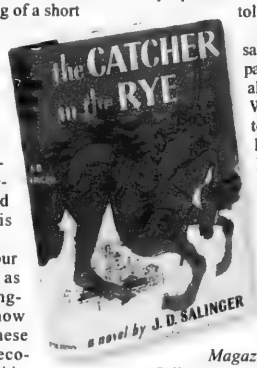
Jerome David Salinger

Born in New York in 1919 to a Jewish father and Scotch-Irish Catholic mother, Salinger began publishing stories in magazines in 1940. He produced about 30 pieces for "the slicks" – *Colliers*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Good Housekeeping*, et al – but refused to have these early works collected and republished, taking legal action when a pirated edition appeared in 1974. In 1946, he began a long and almost exclusive association with *The New Yorker* that would continue until his last story appeared there in 1965. These were the "quality" stories, many of which made it into his definitive collection, *Nine Stories* (1953).

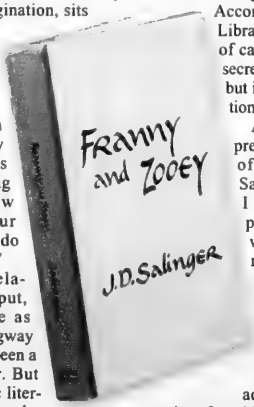
By then, Salinger was already a household name, his one and only novel – *Catcher in the Rye* – having catapulted to bestsellerdom immediately upon its publication in 1951. Even today, the name of its adolescent protagonist, Holden Caulfield, still represents the archetypal young anti-hero, full of teenage angst as he battles social pretension wherever he sees it.

Several of the pieces in *Nine Stories*, including *A Perfect Day for Bananafish*, *Uncle Wiggily in Connecticut* and *For Esme With Love and Squalor*, mirror the notion at the heart of *Catcher* that the adult world is a place of perfidious falseness that infects young people like a contagion. In the Salinger worldview, children are sweet and innocent but inevitably become corrupted once they grow up.

In some of the stories and in his two final books – *Franny and Zooey* (1961) and *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters*, and *Seymour: An Introduction* (1963), both consisting of a short story and a novella – Salinger became increasingly preoccupied with the Glass family. The tragic Seymour, Buddy, Boo-Boo, Franny, Zooey and other children of former vaudevillian parents, Les and Bess Glass, were his central characters.



Following Seymour into show business as principals in the long-running hit radio show *It's a Wise Child*, these children become precocious, witty, ultra-sensitive and spiritually enhanced adults who must still confront the conundrum of remaining pure in a patently false world. For Seymour, the solution is a self-inflicted bullet to the temple, administered without overt warning at the end of *Bananafish*. Although Seymour's ghostly shadow haunts the younger Glass siblings, he remains their eternal guide and mentor. It is he who introduces them to Zen Buddhism and to the anonymous "fat lady" who, in their imagination, sits on a porch on sweaty summer afternoons, swatting flies and listening to *It's a Wise Child* on the radio. Buddy always shined his shoes before going on the radio show because Seymour had told him to "do it for the fat lady."



Despite his relatively sparse output, Salinger became as popular as Hemingway or Fitzgerald had been a generation earlier. But unlike these iconic literary figures, he refused to play the role of a celebrated American writer, refused to live a fishbowl existence to satisfy the public's craving for information. Instead, he hid with his family in a rural house in the village of Cornish, N.H.

In Cornish, America's most famous literary recluse was anything but a hermit. Conducting himself like an ordinary citizen, he played bridge with neighbours, attended monthly church suppers, frequented the local diner and general store. Protective of his privacy, the local townsfolk sometimes sent inquisitive reporters and fans "on a little goose chase," Mike Ackerman, proprietor of the Cornish General Store, told the *Boston Globe*.

Despite these precautions, salacious stories and even paparazzi photographs occasionally appeared about Salinger. While he cleverly managed to elude reporters after his house caught fire in 1992, he was less successful with two friends, each coincidentally a Canadian or former Canadian, responsible for publicizing details about his private life.

In 1972, after Yale freshman Joyce Maynard wrote a cover story for *The New York Times Magazine* about life in the '60s, Salinger wrote to her and struck up a relationship with her that, 25 years later, she described in her book, *At Home in the World*. And E. Michael Mitchell, a Toronto-born artist who designed a cover for *Catcher* (one of the few instances in which Salinger allowed artwork of any sort to grace the covers of his books) maintained a long friendship and correspondence with the writer. Mitchell died last year but not before parting with some of the letters, 11 of which are now the property of Manhattan's Morgan Library and Museum. According to a news report, the Library – "out of an abundance of caution" – kept the letters a secret while Salinger was alive, but is now preparing an exhibition.

Are literary executors presently poring over a trove of first-rate, unpublished Salinger stories? Somehow I doubt it. Salinger's last published works seemed to veer dangerously close to modern deconstructionism. Most apparent in *Seymour: An Introduction* is the author's increasing intrusion as narrator, talking directly to the reader, distancing us from plot, action and character with a series of rambling asides and sometimes-cloying devices. The tendency is even more pronounced in Salinger's last published New Yorker piece, *Hapworth 16, 1924*, an overly long, ruminative story about the Glass family. It may be that Salinger stopped publishing because he wisely decided to keep his legacy sparse so it would always shine as brilliantly as glass.

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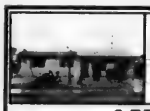

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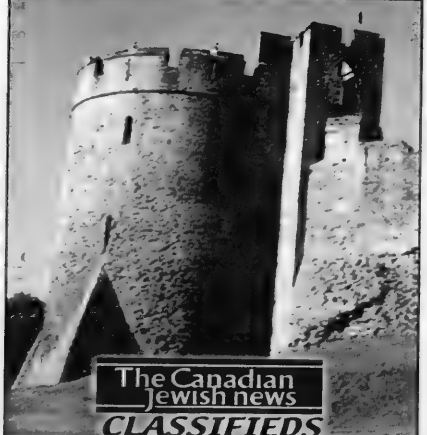

The Canadian Jewish news
CLASSIFIEDS

Coast to Coast

Camp Massad founding 'eemah' honoured

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Leona Billinkoff said she was "overwhelmed."

"I didn't expect so many Camp Massad alumni," she said.

The occasion, on Feb. 28, was a celebration of Billinkoff's 90th birthday, organized by the board of directors of Camp Massad, the Hebrew-language summer camp that Billinkoff headed for 26 years.

And a typical Massad celebration it was. The event, which was held at the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, began with camp songs sung by the Massad alumni choir, with many of the other 70 or so guests joining in.

That was followed by a skit based on awards shows such as the Oscars and Emmys. This version was called the "Eemahs," the title by which the Camp Massad administrators are traditionally known. One of the highlights was a song by Toronto-based entertainer David Gale, a Massad alumnus. He sang a parody of *I Am Reviewing the Situation* from the musical *Oliver!* describing his memories of Massad.

At the end, Billinkoff was presented with a lifetime Eemah Award.

"Without Mrs. B, there wouldn't have been a Camp Massad," says alumnus Elliott Leven, who has remained a close friend of Billinkoff over the years.

Leven first got to know the renowned camp eemah when he signed on as a camper in 1973. He later worked with her as a counsellor. "We became friends when I served as president of the board," he said. "I looked to Leona for advice on numerous occasions. We are still friends and she still gives good advice."

Massad is a Jewish camp unlike any other. Not only is it a Hebrew immersion experience for the campers, but also there has always been an emphasis on art, dance and culture, as well as traditional camping activities. In part, that is a reflection of the leadership of Billinkoff, who is an artist and craftsperson.

The camp is located just north of Winnipeg Beach, which is a 45-minute drive northwest of Winnipeg and has long been a popular summer resort for Jewish Winnipeggers. Camp Massad grew out a Labour Zionist-oriented summer camp.

According to historian Allan Levine in his *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*, in 1952, most of the young Habonim counsellors were planning on making aliyah. One of the group, Soody Kleiman, thought it fitting if the camp site was used for a Hebrew-speaking camp. He and some friends lobbied leaders of Keren Hatarbut and Winnipeg's Labour Zionist movement and convinced them to support a kosher, Hebrew-speaking camp on the site.

Kleiman became the first senior counsellor responsible for programming.

Billinkoff, at that time, was a young mother of three children and a volunteer with the Talmud Torah school. Rabbi Avraham Kravetz, the school's principal, promoted the new camp among the school's students. Ed Yuditsky, a former Talmud Torah teacher, was hired as the camp director. Billinkoff was persuaded to become the first administrator, or eemah.

"My time as eemah at Camp Massad was a wonderful experience," she said. "It changed my life.

"My brother has just died. I had been working hard. It was suggested that Camp Massad was a place where I could get some rest. As soon as I got there and saw how much there was to do, I got right down to work."

Leona Billinkoff at her 90th birthday party.

She added she had always enjoyed working with children. Camp Massad, she told Levine, was a place where little boys could learn to dance and little girls to hammer nails. It was a place where everyone would sing and appear on stage. The emphasis was on menschlichkeit.

The camp site was relatively primitive at the beginning. Billinkoff's husband, Alex, who was a partner in the family lumber business, contributed largely to the physical development of the camp over the years.

Billinkoff says that she never had a particular plan or philosophy for the camp. "I learned from Soody Kleiman [who attended Billinkoff's 90th birthday celebration] and the other camp directors," she says.

"It was Soody, for example, who taught me a love for Israel. He and the other Habonim people had a special attitude. They were so creative. Camp Massad was just what I needed at that time in my life."

Billinkoff said that her goal during her time at Massad was to keep the camp going in the teeth of opposition from the Jewish community leadership, who favoured the longer-running B'nai Brith camp.

"No one in the first few years was prepared to help us, not even the Zionist organizations," she recalled. "I was stubborn. I spent a lot of time fighting for the camp."

She says she decided to retire once a core of Massad alumni were prepared to take over the running of the camp.

Camp Massad has a brand new eemah for this year. Regina Teplitsky, a recent arrival from Israel, took charge of the camp at the beginning of this year. She reported that so far more than 100 children are registered for camp this summer.

While most of the campers are from Winnipeg, the camp also attracts children from other parts of Canada and the United States, she said.

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Jewish players caught up in MLB swap market

By HARVEY ROSEN
Special to The CJN

WINNIPEG — A fair number of Jewish ballplayers were caught up in baseball's swap market prior to the launch of the 2010 Major League season.

The most notable of the wandering Jews is 31-year-old Jason Marquis, a right-handed hurler who this past winter was inked to a two-year pact by the National League's lowly Washington Nationals. Last season he had a respectable campaign with the Colorado Rockies, compiling a 15-13 record and, by today's standards, a decent ERA of 4.04.

He'll be handsomely reimbursed for his travails at $15 million (US) guaranteed, but in his 10th year in the bigs, he's already played for the Braves, Cardinals and Cubs.

Known as one of the top innings-eaters in the majors, Marquis, with his solid two-seam fastball, made the All-Star team in 2009 while pitching 216 innings in 33 games as a starter, thus bringing relief to a team's sometimes overworked bullpen.

At the July 31 deadline last season, pitcher John Grabow was acquired by the Cubs from Pittsburgh, where he had spent most of his big-league career. The 31-year-old left-handed reliever, who has a career total of 324 saves, appeared in 75 games with the two aforementioned teams and had a 3.36 ERA in 72 innings, plus a 3-0 record.

Every team could use a Grabow, who works especially well out of the bullpen with runners on base. The intimidating six-foot-two, 250-pound veteran can still bring heat in the 90s and has a strong change-up and curve. After so many seasons on the mound, the underpaid pitcher is finally being rewarded with the salary he deserves in the Windy City, where keeping the ball in the park is an adventure. He signed a two-year deal for $7.5 million (US).

Craig Breslow, who also earns his money in relief, is a well-travelled 29-year-old who has taken his act to San Diego, Boston, Cleveland, twice to Minnesota and finally last June was dealt to Oakland.

With the Twins and A's last season, the Yale grad boasted a combined ERA of 3.36 in 77 appearances where he worked 70 innings and had a won-lost record of 8-6. Being a left-hander, he's always in demand, since southpaws are always in short supply.

Another lefty, Aaron Poreda, was brought up briefly last year by the White Sox, then traded to the Padres. The 23-year-old reliever is considered a top prospect, and between Chicago and San Diego, he made 14 trips to the mound. In 13 innings, he had an ERA of 2.70.

Texas Rangers' right-hander Scott Feldman thrust himself into the limelight last season by improving on a 2008 mark of 6-8 and an ERA of 5.29 to 17-8 and 4.08 in 2009. Voted team pitcher of the year, the Hawaii-born six-foot-seven giant, who weighs 230 pounds, was a road killer, winning a league-leading 12 games away from home.

The Rangers' Ian Kinsler hit only .253 in 2009, but still managed 31 home runs and drove in 86, which is more than decent production for a second baseman. His most memorable highlight last season occurred on April 16, when Texas upended Baltimore 19-6. Kinsler recorded a feat not accomplished since 1900 when he hit for the cycle (single, double, triple and home run) plus registering an additional two hits to go six for six. He made history on Jackie Robinson Day, named for a fellow second baseman who broke the colour barrier in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Ryan Braun, 26, the first-ever Jewish rookie of the year (2007), had another banner season for the Brewers in 2009. He was the top vote-getter among outfielders for the all-star team, hitting .320 along with 32 homers and 114 RBI. Players of his ilk rarely run the base paths with abandon, but the Hebrew Hammer, as he's been called, pilfered 20 while banging out 203 hits.

Red Sox star Kevin Youkilis, 31, voted the best Jewish player of the last decade (2000-2009), has become one of the most versatile corner infielders in the game. He usually hangs out at first base, but can play third equally well. In 136 games last year, he batted .305 with 27 taters and 94 RBI. A very difficult out for opposing pitchers, he had 77 walks, which helped inflate his total of runs scored to 99.

Also watch for the Dodgers' Brad Ausmus, 40, who is both a backup catcher and mentor. A fine handler of pitchers and strong on defence, he's had more than 6,000 at-bats in his career. Last season, in 39 games, he hit .295.

The Cubs have a speedster in centrefielder Sam Fuld, 28, who may see some action in 2010. In 97 at-bats last year, he hit .299. The Stanford grad played mostly in AAA last season, hitting .284 with Iowa while managing to steal 23 bases and bang out 10 triples.

Also watch for Josh Whitesell, a first baseman in the Washington system, and pitcher Ryan Sadowski with San Francisco. Veteran reliever Mike Koplove is presently in spring training with Seattle, and starting pitcher Jason Hirsh is with the Yankees.

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COUGARS REPEAT: The boys hockey team from the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy's Kimel Family Education Centre in Vaughan have repeated as York Regional Athletic Association (YRAA) senior Tier 2 hockey champs. The Cougars defeated St. Robert in two games in a best-of-three final. CHAT won the first game, on March 2, 5 to 1 on goals from Aaron Hummel, Harry Lewis, Adam Litwin, and David Garbuz, who scored two. Goaltender Jordan Rostowsky was outstanding. He was strong again in game two on March 4, and the Cougars rallied around him with a four-goal effort to defeat St. Robert 4-1. Goals were scored by Andrew Shore, David Garbuz, again with two, and Adam Litwin.

New Hamilton cantor has 'natural and authentic sound'

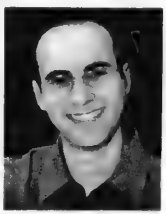
By ABIGAIL CUKIER
Special to the CJN

HAMILTON — Eyal Bitton remembers sitting at the seder table as a child with all of his cousins itching to get away and watch television.

"I didn't understand. I would never want it to end. I kept singing until I was hoarse. I want others to share that feeling."

That's why the Montreal-born Bitton became a cantor.

A composer and lyricist who has penned several musicals and oratorios, Bitton was musical director of Beth Tikvah Synagogue's choir in Toronto for six years when he decided to become a cantor.


Eyal Bitton

"I was sculpting the services behind the scenes, but it was being expressed by the cantor's voice. I felt I could have more of an impact if I could do it myself," he said.

Bitton took cantorial lessons, and two months later, he applied to an opening at Hamilton's Beth Jacob Synagogue. He started there last September.

Talk about a big debut: Bitton began during the High Holidays.

But because he loves the music of the High Holidays so much, he said his nervousness just fell away.

"They say as a new cantor, you shouldn't change the melodies. I changed dozens, but I felt it worked. The congregation was able to sing along immediately."

Never formally taught music, Bitton, now 40, joined his synagogue choir as a boy. As he got older, he loved pop metal and the rock band Kiss and learned to play the guitar. He started writing songs as a teenager.

"I love pop music because of its energy and simplicity. You hear a new song and you can sing along right away," he said.

This is what Bitton tries to do in his services. He performs a mix of traditional Ashkenazi and Moroccan melodies, along with his own pieces. Once a month, he does a theme service, such as using tunes from Beatles songs or last month's Hollywood theme, which featured songs from television and movies.

"I don't see the cantor as a performer, but as a song and prayer leader. I want to make sure the congregation is participating in the prayers."

Bitton is married to actress-singer Michele Tredger. The two met when she auditioned for him in 1997. They became friends, and five years later, began dating.

Bitton has written the music and lyrics to musicals performed in Toronto, Montreal and Hong Kong. His choral compositions and arrangements have been performed in Ottawa, New York, California and Israel.

In Montreal, he has conducted choirs for the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Adath Israel Poale Zedek, Jewish People's and Peretz Schools and La Chorale Kinor of the Communauté Sépharade Unifiée du Québec.

Bitton is also education director at Beth Jacob. In addition to the Hebrew program, Glee and Theatrix are new ways of reaching students. Through the Glee club, children learn and perform the music of the Sabbath service. Once a month, in Theatrix, they learn a Bible story and perform a scene.

"It's about instilling passion when they are young, so as an adult, they will thirst for more and seek it out," he said.

Beth Jacob Rabbi Dan Selsberg said Bitton brings a clear sense of energy, focus and drive to his roles as cantor and educator. "His ability to engage the congregation in song is unique among cantors working within a halachic framework," Rabbi Selsberg said.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

I'm not Jewish, but I'm trying very hard to fit in with Josh's family. Josh and I have been dating for about eight months, and we're very close. This year, I'm invited to his family's seder, and I'm both excited and nervous. I realize the Passover seder has many rules and restrictions, and I don't want to do anything wrong. Josh's family is somewhat observant, but I don't know to what degree exactly. I'd like to bring a gift with me, and I'd like to know what would be appropriate. I don't know how much to spend, but I would be comfortable in the $25 to $50 range.

I would rather not involve Josh in my decision, as I really want this to be from me for Josh and his family. Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Proper Passover Present

Dear Proper Passover Present

You are very thoughtful and smart to be asking this question, as there are many rules, or halachot, on Jewish holidays, and especially on Passover.

For starters, steer clear of any food items. Most homes are kosher for Passover and bringing anything into the home that would compromise that would be a major faux pas. Stay away from cut flowers as well, unless you have them delivered to the home before the onset of the holiday. Some people will not put cut flowers in water after the onset of the holiday. However, a flower arrangement already in a vase with water or already prearranged would be fine. A bottle of kosher for Passover wine is a nice gift. There are many wines available that are not 21 on the sweet scale. You can ask for help at the liquor store, or go to www.kosherwinereport.com. Make sure the wine says "Kosher for Passover" and "Mevushal".

You may also bring something for the house, such as linens, a serving platter, a bowl or a set of tea towels. Watch the wrapping, though, as many people won't tear paper after the holiday begins, so use a gift bag instead.

A charitable donation in their honour would also be appropriate. Some organizations have fundraisers geared to Passover. Mazon Canada sells Passover placemats, Ve'ahavta has an annual seder for the homeless.

It's clear this is very meaningful to you. Your heart is in the right place. Relax and enjoy.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN. *e-mail: eh@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

The power of 'gracious language'

"Only a life of goodness and honesty leaves us feeling spiritually healthy and human."– Rabbi Harold Kushner

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

Being good is the single most important key to finding your bliss. Goodness and kindness always make you happy.

We are all given choices every day to act with kindness and goodness. I think it's easier to choose being good, not only because it feels good, but in fact, as Hal Urban says in *Life's Greatest Lessons*, "There's a relationship between old-fashioned goodness and our health and well-being. Sadly, too many people never see it.

"What do I mean by old-fashioned goodness? I mean living by the great moral values that have been with us since God created the world... And being good is the most essential ingredient of emotional and spiritual health."

The language that we use and what we put out there is so important. As Urban writes, "The wise Solomon wrote thousands of years ago that only gracious words come from the mouths of wise people and that fools are consumed by their own lips. We'd all be wise to examine more closely what our words are uncovering about us."

There are positive ways that we can communicate with others that make us feel good and make others feel good. Urban says they are "praise, sincere compliments, encouragement, thanks, truth, belief and trust, sympathy, humour and laughing with someone not at them, advice, sharing of good news, greetings and support."

The negative ways we communicate are "put-downs, swearing, biting sarcasm, name-calling, laughing at, complaining, gossip and rumour, yelling, insincere flattery, insults, lying and manipulating and blaming others."

In studies that Urban did with college students, he determined that more negatives come out of some people's mouths than positives.

So he talks about "gracious language" and how important it is.

"I began to notice the people I most admired consistently used words that were positive and pleasant to hear. Good people are sensitive enough to choose their words carefully. What comes out of our mouths does indeed reveal what's stored in our hearts."

Affirming others feels good, too, There is a lovely exercise that Urban taught in a psychology course where he put a chair in the middle of the room and they called it the hot seat. Each student got to sit in that seat and had to tell everyone "what's good about me." Urban wanted his students to be able to acknowledge their positive characteristics and habits.

The second part of the exercise was that the students in the semicircle had to tell the person in the hot seat what he or she left out. So the person in the hot seat listened to compliments and praise for several minutes.

This exercise had a positive effect on everyone in the room, not only the recipients of the praise.

As Urban says, "there's a lot more good in people than there is bad. We need to get into the habit of looking for what's good in others. Building people up is much more effective than tearing them down. It feels good to make someone else feel good. Affirmation brings out the best in people. Everybody wins!"

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net.

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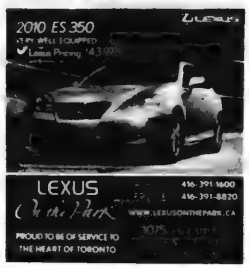

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[*Flash90 photos*]

Life, hope, freedom

Editorial

The infant babies in the above photo are identical twins. The names their mother gave them are Vladimir and Daniel, presumably after the two doctors who helped her bring them safely into the world.

Her world at the time was one of rubble, chaos and massive death in Haiti. The doctors were from Israel, part of the Israel Defence Forces' medical and rescue team that rushed to the stricken Caribbean island last January to help find, heal and restore life amid the horrific devastation that killed nearly 200,000 people.

Vladimir and Daniel are two months old today. The IDF medical team literally helped give them life.

The little boy in the inset photo, wearing pyjamas and a hospital patient's hairnet, is six years old. His name is Woodley Elysee.

Doctors at the pediatric department of the Wolfson Medical Center in Holon, Israel, last month repaired a congenital defect in the young boy's heart that would likely have taken his life before he turned 12.

Woodley was brought to Israel by the IDF's medical team in Haiti, in co-operation with Israel's Save A Child's Heart program, which provides lifesaving surgeries for children from developing countries.

Woodley is well on his way now to a full recovery.

Dr. Sion Houri, director of pediatric intensive care at the hospital told the *Jerusalem Post* last month that Woodley "will not have much when he returns to Haiti, but he will be able to breathe, grow and play soccer."

In fact, however, Woodley will have far more than Houri suggested.

He will have life itself – and with that life, the hope of a better future, the hope of possibilities beyond the devastation that he has already witnessed and the poverty that he has already experienced.

And so, too, will many of Woodley's fellow Haitians.

During their nearly two-week stay in Haiti, the Israeli medical teams treated nearly 1,000 patients, conducted some 300 successful surgeries and delivered 16 babies. In addition, the IDF rescue teams saved scores of individuals by retrieving them alive from the devastation.

On the eve of Passover, it is timely and important to recall the simple, plain truths of what the IDF accomplished for the people of Haiti, for Passover is the celebration of freedom. And what freedom can there be without life? What life can there be without hope?

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Chag Samayach! Happy Passover to everyone!

The News in Brief

CANADA

Actor Laid To Rest

TORONTO — Actor Corey Haim was buried March 16 in a private Jewish ceremony in Toronto attended by some 200 relatives and friends. The ex-teen heart-throb, who gained fame in the 1980s in films such as *The Lost Boys* and *Lucas*, died March 10 at the Los Angeles home he shared with his Israeli-born mother. The Toronto-born Haim, 38, had an enlarged heart, pulmonary congestion and water in his lungs. An autopsy has yet to confirm cause of death, but police in Los Angeles speculated about a drug overdose. Haim, who was open about his struggle with drugs and alcohol, started acting as a child after his mother enrolled him in drama classes to help him overcome shyness.

WORLD

Shul Opening Nixed

CAIRO — Egypt cancelled the official opening of a restored Cairo synagogue over what it called Jewish "provocative" actions. The formal opening of the 19th-century Maimonides Synagogue, which was renovated by the Egyptian government, had been scheduled for March 14. But the event was cancelled at the last minute after reports that during a Jewish community ceremony this month to mark the reopening, there was "dancing and drinking alcohol in the synagogue," antiquities chief Zahi Hawass was quoted as saying. The decision was also made at "a time when Muslim holy sites in occupied Palestine face assaults from Israeli occupation forces and settlers," Hawass said, French news agency AFP reported.

Shul Opening Marked

BERLIN — More than 70 years after its synagogue was destroyed by Nazi rioters in 1938, the German town of Herford dedicated a new Jewish house of worship. In a March 14 ceremony Sunday, local and national Jewish leaders and clergy joined to unveil the new structure, which will serve the 106-member community – 90 per cent of whom are immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Four rabbis carried a Torah scroll into the sanctuary as Cantor Jacow Zelewitsch chanted *Ma Tovu* and Rabbi Shimon Grossberg of Osnabruck lit the eternal light. The community does not yet have a rabbi. The new synagogue cost about $2.7 million, one-third of which was borne by the German government.

Arms Deal Secured

SYDNEY, Australia — An Israeli defence company won a $300-million contract to develop a cutting-edge command and communications system for the Australian Defense Force. The Haifa-based Elbit Systems, one of the world's largest defence electronics makers, won the international tender, Australian Defence Personnel Minister Greg Combet said March 16. The new equipment, to be deployed fully by 2012, will "automate combat messaging" and "significantly reduce" deaths from friendly fire, he said. Elbit's CEO predicted the project would lead to more contracts from other foreign armies.

Former Mayor Leads Dutch Polls For PM

AMSTERDAM — Opinion polls in the Netherlands show that a majority of voters favour the Jewish former mayor of Amsterdam for prime minister.

Marius Job Cohen

Some 52 per cent of those polled earlier this month said they'd vote for Marius Job Cohen as prime minister in national elections scheduled for June, the European Jewish Press reported.

Cohen, 62, was selected from a list that included current Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende and extreme-right, anti-Islam campaigner Geert Wilders.

Cohen, a former law professor and mayor of Amsterdam for nine years, from 2001 to 2010, was chosen the new leader of the Dutch Labour Party on March 12.

Palin Scolds Obama

WASHINGTON — Sarah Palin called on the Obama administration to mend relations with Israel. Referring to this month's gaffe in which new construction in east Jerusalem was announced during U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit, the former U.S. Republican vice-presidential candidate and Alaska governor said in a statement that the Obama administration chose "to escalate a minor incident into a major diplomatic confrontation." Palin criticized President Barack Obama for making demands of Israel while not requiring Arab leaders to make equally demanding concessions.

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MPPs get hate mail for IAW resolution

Conservative, Bloc motions in Ottawa fail to receive all-party support

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Peter Shurman won't reveal the most offensive hate messages he received as a result of sponsoring a resolution in the Ontario legislature opposing Israel Apartheid Week (IAW). One, however, was addressed to the "Minister of Kikes" while in another, the writer spat on the graves of him and his family.

If those were far from the worst message he received, what were the really atrocious ones like?

"I've been called every expletive in the book," the Progressive Conservative MPP for Thornhill, stated.

None have been explicitly threatening, but he's notified the security force at the legislature about the messages.

NDP representative Cheri DiNovo, however, did receive threats, Shurman said. DiNovo was out of the country and unavailable for comment last week.

"My intent was always to cause a ripple," Shurman said of the resolution adopted unanimously in the legislature, "but I didn't intend this kind of response."

Shurman said in using his annual allocation of 12 minutes of private member's time to propose the resolution, he was challenging proponents of IAW to open up discussions of the Middle East conflict.

As things stand now, "they start with the premise that Israel is an apartheid state and that leaves no room for debate."

"If they want a reasonable debate, they should style it Middle East peace week," he suggested. "That's not the case for IAW."

"I said enough was enough. I have a constituency, Thornhill, a good portion of which is Jewish, who say we find this intimidating and not promoting respect," he said.

Peter Shurman

Shurman's resolution states "that in the opinion of this house, the term 'Israel Apartheid Week' is condemned as it serves to incite hatred against Israel, a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights, and the use of the word 'apartheid' in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime in South Africa."

Shurman speculated that DiNovo attracted real threats because in supporting the resolution, "she broke ranks" with the left. The NDP, he suggested, gets support from the left "which has been behind an awful lot of the negativity to Israel and uses the term apartheid."

In Ottawa, meanwhile, Conservative MP Tim Uppal introduced a motion that also condemned IAW. It stated: "That this House considers itself to be a friend of the State of Israel; that this House is concerned about expressions of anti-Semitism under the guise of Israeli Apartheid Week; and that this House explicitly condemns any action in Canada as well as internationally that would equate the State of Israel with the rejected and racist policy of apartheid."

Continued on page 18

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Getting ready for Passover

It has been the tradition of this column each year on the eve of the celebration of Pesach to write about newly published Haggadot.

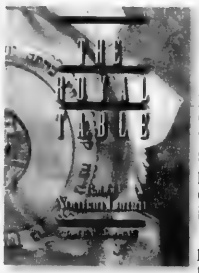
It is a privilege to maintain that tradition.

The Royal Table (OU Press) brings the insights, observations and considerable wisdom of Rabbi Norman Lamm to our Passover table and, of course, beyond.

From the editor's desk...

Rabbi Lamm is the chancellor of Yeshiva University and rosh yeshiva of its affiliated Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. He served for many years as rabbi of the Jewish Center, in Manhattan and as president and rosh yeshiva (head of the yeshiva – one could say, headmaster) of Yeshiva University.

His renown as a scholar, educator, writer and pulpit rabbi extend throughout the world.



A rare thinker of his times for his generation, Rabbi Lamm's Torah is a wide field encompassing all aspects of life that affect and deal with the many inevitably piercing or pleasant aspects of the human condition. His writing is founded upon the classic scholars of our traditions. Secure in his place within the thousand years of foundational scholarship, Rabbi Lamm adds to, expands upon, extends and augments our understanding of the meanings of the words that we recite each year with and for our family and friends around the seder table.

Ever the educator, Rabbi Lamm ensures that the table is as much for teaching and learning as it is for eating and reciting the story of the Exodus.

Rabbi Lamm explains the reason for the name of this particular Haggadah. It is the key that opens the door to his teacher's room. He seizes upon the multiple meanings for the phrase in classic Jewish sources.

"The table is prominently mentioned in the Talmud as that on which the seder narrative is played out. And it is royal because the participants conduct themselves as victors in the ancient battle not only with the Egyptians but with others over the generations.

"It is also a term for food of the finest quality and... Conversely, it was used to express contempt for crude class consciousness.

"If indeed *The Royal Table* implies two opposites, then it fits right in with *the dialectical experience* [my emphasis] of Passover and especially its major symbol, the matzah."

It is therefore the inescapable dialectic imperative of the teacher constantly trying to refine the point, investigating, reconciling opposites, pointing out or squaring contradictions that we read in *The Royal Table*.

As Pesach is – by its purpose and by its nature – the quintessential teaching moment, Rabbi Lamm's observations are a perfect accompaniment to that, now, millennial moment.

The Royal Table was edited and compiled by Joel B. Wolowelsky using material from Rabbi Lamm's sermons, divrei Torah and relevant selections from the rabbi's written works.

Wolowelsky is himself a significant scholar and educator in the modern Jewish world. Dean of the faculty at the Yeshiva of Flatbush, he is also associate editor of *Tradition* and the series *MeOtzar HoRav: Selected Writings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik*. He is a member of various professional advisory boards, including the Bar Ilan University Lookstein Center for Jewish Education in the Diaspora, the Boston Initiative for Excellence in Jewish Day Schools, the Pardes Educators Program in Jerusalem, and Atid: the Academy for Torah Initiatives and Directions.

The Royal Table is a welcome new arrival for the seder table this year.

* * *

For younger participants at the seder table, there is also the enthusiastic, cheery, playful and thoughtful new CD from the extremely talented Israeli-American music therapist Dafna Israel-Kotok called *Halilah Hazeh!*.

Israel-Kotok is the originator of *Shir Fun*, an excitingly innovative approach to early childhood education and development. Its very name bespeaks its clever, fresh, novelty.

"*Shir*," in Hebrew, means song. And, of course, in English, it has a very clear homonymic meaning, too. Thus we have "Song Fun" or "Sheer Fun." Either way, for the listener, it is both a promise and a fulfilment.

Israel-Kotok has a deeply pleasing voice, distinctive and original, and at times, at least to this listener, also evocative of stylistic and substantive echoes of the "huskier" singer Carol King and remarkably, too, of the laser clarity of Joan Baez.

The CD will delight listeners of all ages. It contains original and traditional tunes of and for the seder. It will bring many smiles to the faces and to the hearts of those who listen to it and who, inevitably, will also sing happily along.

– MBD

SeeJN

BAN REMINDED OF SCHALIT

Israelis urged United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to seek Gilad Schalit's freedom from the Hamas leadership in Gaza. As Ban traveled last week into the Gaza Strip, he was met by Israelis protesting the continued imprisonment of the young Israeli soldier. Schalit's father, Noam, met Sunday in Jerusalem with Ban, who expressed sympathy for his plight.

[Israel Sun photo]

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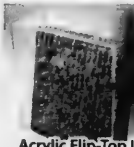

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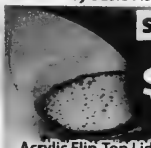

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UJA Federation initiative helps Jews worldwide

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

While shopping for groceries, Karen Levy began to worry – not for herself, but for her community.

"When I saw the price of Pesach food this year… I thought, 'How do people in large families with low incomes shop for Pesach?,'" Levy, 40, said. "I don't know how people do it – how they put their kids in day school and how they're able to make a seder for their family."

That's why when she learned about the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Global Seder initiative, she didn't hesitate to give.

The program, called the Global Seder to Fight Hunger, collects money for Jewish communities in Toronto, Cuba, Israel and the former Soviet Union in order to buy Passover food for those in need.

Contributors can choose where their money goes, something Levy appreciated.

"What grabbed me about it the most is the fact that it was an opportunity to put your support in a specific place. It was a global thing, but you could pick where your donation went to," she said, adding that she chose to donate to Toronto's Jewish community.

UJA Federation initiative helps Jews in need.
[UJC stock photo]

"I think oftentimes, our own get forgotten. At a time like this, we need to remember our own struggles within our community. It's a local problem as well as a global problem."

Steven Shulman, federation's campaign director and counsel, agrees.

"We do have people in communities all around the world – our community, in Cuba, Jews in the former Soviet Union and Israel– that are in need, particularly around Passover," he said.

The federation chose to support areas where there's a means of distributing funds. The organization has already been involved in helping Jewish communities internationally with initiatives such as delivering Pesach food to the Cuban Jews.

"There's no holiday where food is more central than at Passover," Shulman said. "The thing we want people to think about is how much would it cost to bring one person around your seder table. How much would it cost for a family?"

According to the federation's website, $30 will pay for one person's Passover meal, and $100 will pay for a family's meal.

For Shulman, the Global Seder helps Torontonians connect to Jews worldwide.

"Right away, there's a connection to the fate of Jews who may be thousands of miles away, or, in some cases, only metres away. It could be a neighbour," he said. "There's the feeling of one Jewish people. It creates Jewish unity."

Len Rudner, Ontario regional director of Canadian Jewish Congress, noted that in Canada, "we're blessed.

"We have so much. The challenge that many of us face in Canada isn't a question of where are we going to get our kosher food," he said.

Congress will be involved in the Global Seder initiative by helping Cuban Jews, who have trouble finding kosher food.

"We're all responsible for one another. I think we sometimes forget that," he said. "It's good sometimes to have someone… ask you to consider the view on the wider horizon… [This] makes us better Jews, better people."

For more information or to donate to the Global Seder, visit www.globalseder.com. Donations will be accepted until Passover.

Thank You To All Of Our UJA Telethon Volunteers:

To the more than 750 telethon volunteers who gave their time – and their index fingers - to help raise over $4.9 million for UJA Campaign 2010, we say thank you! From our UJA family to yours, we thank you for your ongoing commitment to tikkun olam, repairing the world, and wish you a happy and healthy Passover!

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We celebrate freedom

Continued from page 1

Freedom barren of hope is also barren of purpose and meaning.

The philosopher proves his existence with the syllogism: "I think, therefore I am."

The Jew more aptly says: "I hope, therefore I am."

Hope has been the guiding beacon throughout all the days of our history, starting of course with the epic event that we relive at the seder and that was the beginning of the history of our peoplehood: the Exodus from Egypt.

Retelling the story of our freedom is thus also an appropriate occasion for reflecting upon the importance of hope in fashioning our collective character and in constantly steering forward the unchanging millennial imperative to build a better world.

Over the years, not surprisingly, many peoples have appropriated the story of the Exodus as a paradigm and an inspiration for the idea of liberation. But we must never forget that the Exodus from Egypt is more than a paradigm. It is, first and foremost, the story of the liberation of an actual people: the Jewish People.

Passover celebrates that story.

The ancient Romans tried to obliterate our story – Jewish history – even to the point, after destroying the Second Temple, of obliterating the very name of the land, Judea, from which the term "Jew" derives, and replacing it with the name Palestina.

But they failed.

Jews and the Jewish People are very much alive and active in history. The ancient Romans and their empire, it should be pointed out, are not.

But there are others today who try to obliterate Jewish history.

For example, two weeks ago, Khaled Meshal, the political leader of Hamas in Damascus, described the reopening of the Hurva synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem as "a declaration of war, part of a project to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque and replace it with Israel's so-called Solomon's Temple. Israel is playing with fire and touching off the first spark to make the region explode," he said. Meshal's diatribe was repeated in kind and in tone by the more "moderate" Fatah official, Khatem Abd el-Kadr.

What Meshal and el-Kadr said, of course, was absolutely and totally false.

The Hurva synagogue was completed in 1864 by Jews and destroyed in 1948 by the Jordanian army. Indeed, between 1948 and 1967, Jordanian forces destroyed some 58 synagogues in the Jewish Quarter and some 38,000 Jewish tombstones on the Mount of Olives.

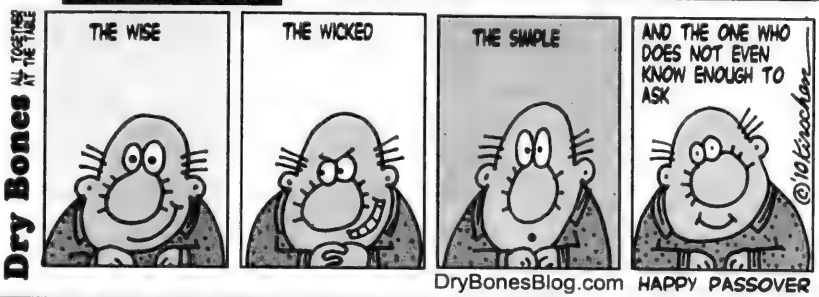
Like the ancient Romans before them, these Palestinians, too, will fail in their efforts to obliterate Jewish history.

We conclude the ritual portion of the Passover seder with the words that have stirred the hopes of the Jewish people for more than 2,000 years: *"L'shanah haba'ah b'Yerushalayim (hab'nuyah)."* "Next year in (rebuilt) Jerusalem."

Od lo avdah tikvateinu. We have not lost our hope. Nor will we ever. For that is the beating heart of our freedom. On Passover, we celebrate that freedom.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Convicted Holocaust denier Ernst Zundel was sentenced in Toronto to 15 months in jail, followed by three years probation, for publishing the pamphlet *Did Six Million Really Die?* As part of his probation, he was banned from publishing or speaking about the Holocaust, or any subject directly or indirectly related to it.


Dry Bones ALL TOGETHER AT THE TABLE
THE WISE
THE WICKED
THE SIMPLE
AND THE ONE WHO DOES NOT EVEN KNOW ENOUGH TO ASK
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DryBonesBlog.com HAPPY PASSOVER

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Students, parents not consulted

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto spokesperson Howard English claims that "a wide variety of stakeholders" are being consulted before it finalizes its report on Jewish education ("Draft report released on Jewish education," March 18). It is not surprising, however, that federation, in preparing the first draft, has failed once again to consult with the very constituency that is most impacted by any decisions that may be made as a result of this report, namely, the students and the parents of the thousands of children currently in our Jewish educational system.

Several of the parent leaders who have tirelessly volunteered their time, energy and money to advance the cause of Jewish education were similarly not consulted in the preparation of the first, and arguably the most critical, draft. This despite federation's stated desire to be more accountable and transparent to the community that it serves and the fact that we parents collectively spend millions each year to educate our children. I have no doubt that perpetuating this approach to communal affairs will ultimately fail if federation continues to exclude parent leaders while our tuitions continue to significantly rise on an annual basis, and parents increasingly seek alternatives to the prohibitively high cost of Jewish education.

Joseph Y. Adler
Toronto

* * *

Yeshiva for learning disabled needed

Toronto, with its large Orthodox community, doesn't have a yeshiva at high school level staffed by special education rabbis or an integrated high school-level program in another yeshiva where our children can learn Torah. The Jewish high school that does offer special education has a mixture of boys and girls, and for many parents, this is not an option

Students with learning disabilities are of average intelligence or higher but have an impairment in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. Many of them aren't able to cope with the intensity and pace of a regular yeshiva, and in the end, they can easily throw their Yiddishkeit away as a result of their failure. Some parents send their children to small yeshivot in the United States that take students who don't fit into other yeshivot.

The financial burden placed on the parents and the risk they take by sending these vulnerable teenagers away from their families is great. Could we imagine if Moses were here today and he would not be accepted in our yeshivot because of his speech impediment? This is not far from what is happening today, because nobody can really judge which Jewish soul is better than another.

A yeshiva staffed by special education rabbis and teachers may be opening in Toronto next year.The curriculum will include Gemarah, halachot and accredited English subjects, and have a vocational element. For more information, contact me at 416-836-4421 or e-mail da300@rogers.com.

Daniel Greenwood
Toronto

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* * *

Campus anti-Semitism

Avrum Jacobson is making the mistake of thinking that current attempts in our universities to delegitimize the State of Israel have a rational basis and can be alleviated by changes in Israel's behaviour ("IAW would wither away if…" March 11, letters). He just doesn't get it! These attacks are clearly nothing more than old-fashioned, irrational anti-Semitism, now disguising itself as legitimate political action. The ultimate goal of Israeli Apartheid Week is not a separate Palestinian state. It is the eradication of the Jewish one.

William Raymond
Dollard des Ormeaux, Que.

* * *

Political change and language

I was pleased to see that *The CJN* spells the "east" of "east Jerusalem" with a small "e." Virtually all other media spell it incorrectly as "East Jerusalem," as if it were already a separate entity. Political change begins with language, and the media pave the way.

To prove the point, consider that nowhere today does anyone in the media refer to "disputed territory." It's always "occupied territory," and hence the Jewish claim is lost.

Paul Socken
Waterloo, Ont.

LET THEM GO…

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

What about Palestinian incitement?

By AMI EDEN
JTA

In response to the Obama administration's stepped-up criticism of Israeli building plans in Jerusalem, Jewish groups criticized the White House for failing to speak out more against Palestinian incitement.

Particularly galling, several Jewish organizational leaders said, is that the administration has ratcheted up its criticism of Israel while failing to utter a word about the decision of the Palestinian Authority to go through with plans to name a public square in Ramallah after Dalal Mughrabi, a terrorist who led a 1978 bus hijacking in which 37 Israelis, including 12 children, were killed.

Earlier this month, pro-Israel organizations, including the watchdog group Palestinian Media Watch, pointed out that the official naming ceremony – timed to coincide with the anniversary of the terrorist attack – was set to take place March 11, during U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories.

It was quickly announced that the ceremony would be cancelled, but a scaled-down version of the event did end up taking place that day, with the youth division of Fatah, the faction of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, playing a lead role.

The White House and left-wing Jewish groups say they're as concerned with Palestinian actions that undermine the peace process, especially the issue of anti-Israel incitement, as they are with Israeli settlement policies. But several centrist and right-wing pro-Israel groups have pointed out that U.S. criticism in recent days has been focused exclusively on Israel.

"This monstrous spectacle" – the ceremony for Mughrabi – "took place while Vice-President Biden was visiting the region," said the executive director of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris, in a statement, echoing the sentiments of several Jewish organizations, including the Zionist Organization of America, the Orthodox Union and the National Council of Young Israel. "Unfortunately, we have not heard a single word of condemnation from the U.S. administration.

"While the administration has focused its ire on Israel for clearly misguided steps taken by the Ministry of the Interior, and later apologized for by Prime Minister [Benjamin] Netanyahu, the glorification of this terrorist sends a clear signal that Fatah, conventionally regarded as a moderate party, has no serious commitment to securing a peaceful resolution of the conflict."

J Street, which supports the Obama administration's recent criticisms of Israel, also issued a statement condemning the decision to memorialize Mughrabi.

In addition to the flurry of statements from Jewish groups, the Israeli government also is promising to launch an official effort to monitor Palestinian incitement. Earlier this month, Netanyahu reportedly briefed the Knesset foreign affairs and defence committee about his plans, promising regular reports on the issue.

"We will set parameters by which to measure the level of incitement," Netanyahu told the committee, according to *Ha'aretz*. "People must know exactly what is happening on this issue, because for a peace agreement, education toward peace and acceptance of Israel are needed."

The issue has taken on added urgency in recent days, and not just because of the unrelenting U.S. criticism of Israeli building plans in Jerusalem.

On March 16, Palestinians rioted in Jerusalem as part of a "day of rage" declared by Hamas, in part to protest the rededication the previous night of the ancient Hurva Synagogue in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. But the Israeli decision to rededicate the synagogue also was seized on by PA officials with ties to Fatah, who attempted to portray it as part of a plot against Muslim holy sites on the Temple Mount.

Palestinians protest the opening of the Hurva synagogue with a "day of rage." ***[Flash90 photo]***

Khatem Abd el-Kader, the Fatah official responsible for Jerusalem, encouraged Palestinians to "converge on Al Aqsa to save it" from "Israeli attempts to destroy the mosque and replace it with the [Jewish] temple." He called the synagogue rededication a "provocation," cautioning that Israel is "playing with fire."

The unfinished Hurva Synagogue, whose name means ruins, was destroyed in an Arab riot in 1721. It was rebuilt in the 1860s, but destroyed again after Jordan took control of the area in the 1948 war.

"At this very moment, 3,000 Israeli security officials are protecting Jerusalem, because extremist Arabs are using the rededication of the Hurva Synagogue as an excuse to incite violence," Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, president of the Israel Project, said in a statement. "Not once did we hear Biden 'condemn' the fact that Palestinians were planning – during his trip there – to honour a terrorist by dedicating a town square in her name."

On March 15, U.S. State Department spokesperson P.J. Crowley did use part of his daily media briefing to criticize Palestinian leaders over their comments regarding the Hurva Synagogue.

"We're deeply disturbed by statements made by several Palestinian officials mischaracterizing the event in question, which can only serve to heighten the tensions that we see. And we call upon Palestinian officials to put an end to such incitement," Crowley said, without prompting.

In answer to a subsequent question, he said the concerns had been conveyed to Palestinian officials but declined to offer more details.

The briefing appeared to validate at least one administration lament – that its efforts to focus attention on perceived Palestinian misdeeds are often ignored by the media. Reporters appeared to have trouble comprehending that the U.S. State Department's concerns related to the Palestinian reactions, not the Israeli decision to rededicate the synagogue.

When it finally became clear that this is what Crowley was saying, reporters went back to asking about U.S. upset with Israel, but only after one accused Crowley of trying to head off criticism of the Obama administration by balancing out things with a complaint about the Palestinians.

You can't make artificial peace, Lieberman says

By BARAK RAVID
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman responded last Friday to the Quartet of Middle East peace mediators' call to relaunch Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, saying that peace isn't something that can be created artificially and with unrealistic timetables.

"Peace will be established through actions and not by force," Lieberman told Belgium's Jewish community ahead of his scheduled talks with the ministers of several European nations.

"The Quartet [Russia, the United States, the United Nations and the European Union] is ignoring the last 16 years of Israeli attempts, and is giving the Palestinians the impression that they can achieve their demands by continuing to refuse direct negotiations under false pretexts," Lieberman said.

"The Israeli government has made many significant gestures. Now it's the Palestinian's turn to prove that they are really interested in negotiations," Lieberman added.

The Quartet called on Israel and the Palestinians to renew peace talks in order to achieve a two-state solution within 24 months. Quartet representatives met in Moscow last Friday in an effort to defuse the latest crisis in peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The Quartet believes these negotiations should lead to a settlement, negotiated between the parties within 24 months, that ends the occupation that began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours," said a joint statement read by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

"The Quartet reiterates that Arab-Israeli peace and the establishment of a peaceful state of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza is in the fundamental interest of the parties, of all states in the region, and of the international community," the statement said. "In this regard the Quartet calls on all states to support dialogues between the parties."

The mediators also called on Israel following their meeting to freeze all settlement activities and denounced its recent decision to approve construction of 1,600 new homes in east Jerusalem.

Opinions

Recall the MIAs

Passover celebrates the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. They were slaves. God promised liberation. Moses led them to freedom. That combination of acts and facts has been celebrated by Jewish families and communities through the ages.

Sarona Baumel Josephi in Montreal

But what does it mean to us today? We organize our households, buy tons of special foods, eat matzah, and spend some quality time with family. In what way do these activities speak to the themes of that story, of liberation from slavery?

Don't get me wrong. I engage in and endorse all of these activities. I love Passover. I love the food, the family and the fun. To me, it's the best holiday of the year, despite the hard work. We tell the story, we ask questions and we encourage the children. Great! But where is the theme of liberation? How do we pledge redemption?

Many of us believe in making our holidays relevant. We bring in discussions of important issues and interpretations that help elucidate and illustrate. Some of us add passages about the Shoah to help teach about persecution and freedom. Others add sections about the Refuseniks and the Jewish effort to liberate our people from Soviet constraints and confinements. Many celebrate women's suffering and leadership with Miriam's cup.

Freedom is a fragile thing. It requires constant protection and vigilance. Living in our society, we take it for granted. We can't imagine life without it. But we must try to. The Haggadah itself tells us that we should tell the story as if we ourselves were there in Egypt.

So we try. But it's hard. This year, we have an added charge. We have children, sons imprisoned – young people in need of our redemptive prayers and acts. They're called MIAs, soldiers missing in action. Boys who were willing to give their lives for their country, but their country abandoned them.

If Passover teaches us anything, it's the obligation to follow God's lead, to practise and participate in redemptive acts. Gilad Schalit must be on our and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's priority lists. Shas should not be sneaking in new settlements. Instead, they all should be first and foremost arguing everywhere for Gilad, for the MIAs. Everywhere and always. Redemption. Liberation. Those are our obligations.

This Passover, talk and teach about our heritage and history. Insert the issue of our kidnapped and missing soldiers. Feel their bondage. Inculcate the commitment to freedom. Motivate your children to fight for liberation. Feel the link to the parents of the MIAs. They are our people. Don't abandon them. In this our season of liberation, keep them in your hearts.

Let's scrub away outmoded ideas this Pesach

It's time once again to clean our closets, get out the Passover dishes, order food, kasher the stove and sink and check for chametz.

Most importantly, it's time to look into our Haggadot and retell the foundation story of our people: liberation from slavery in Egypt.

Jenna M. Gerber in Vancouver

In my cleaning process, I discovered the following quote (alas, without ascription):

"The dominant or collective memory of a society is not always (perhaps not even often) based on historical fact, but on a set of assumptions about what the past was like."

Let's examine those assumptions by returning to those thrilling days of yesteryear after the first seder and imagine what it was like at the edge of the Reed Sea.

Moses:"OK, men-folk, line up here. Don't crowd. Everybody will get through. Show your tribal ID card – Reuven, don't be so pushy. You and Shimon there, make room for Benjamin. No sneaking in front. Levi, can't you control your sons?"

"Whoa there, little lady, where do you think you are going?"

Small girl: "Well, I'm a bat Levi. Why can't I go with my father? And why is Ima so far back in line?"

Moses: "Listen it's like this. The menfolk do all the heavy lifting. Um, well, they do the davening, you see, and so, well, you and your Ima just have to wait your turn – in fact wait over there behind those bushes. Just keep out of sight."

Ima arrives. "Just a minute, Moses, may I remind you that we are the ones who made sure there was a next generation when the men were ready to separate themselves and stop having children. And just in case you think we're going to stand at the back of the line, you have another think coming. We prepared the seder. We're worthy of that great miracle just like…"

Moses cuts her off: "Sorry, Ma'am, but women just are not ready/safe/smart enough/ holy and pure/ equal to men. So just go back to the women's section behind that wall and don't make any more trouble. Now, men…"

Stop for a moment! Of course no one told the women they had to stand aside. Everyone ate the Passover meal, crossed the Sea of Reeds, stood at Sinai, and all Israel – men, women and children – were worthy of receiving the Torah, all bound by its command to become a "kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

Louis Ginsberg, in *Legends of the Jews*, wrote: "The dividing of the sea was but the first of 10 miracles connected with the passage of the Israelites through it… 12 paths opened up, one for each of the tribes; the water became as transparent as glass, and each tribe could see the others."

So, those who came to the sea were able to cross it without hindrance, all equal and in plain sight, men and women alike.

Fast forward to 2009-2010. Women are arrested in Israel for davening in tallitot at the Kotel. This place, which belongs to all the Jewish people, has become a battleground. Women are abused and stoned – required to wrap themselves not in a garment of prayer, but a rag of shame – and hauled off to prison.

Is this the message that Pesach teaches us? That some are more equal than others? That only half of the Israelite nation was worthy of redemption?

Ginsberg continued: " The great wonder of Israel's passage through the sea took place in the presence of the three fathers and the six mothers, for God had fetched them… to be witnesses of the marvellous deeds wrought on behalf of their children."

That's two mothers to each father, folks.

This year at our seder, we will remember the miracles that God did for all of us, as well as those women who kept hope alive in the darkness of oppression, saved baby Moses from death, and crossed the sea to freedom beside the men. Maybe even in Israel, the same will some day be true.

Our history should be acknowledged in its entirety. We must avoid assumptions that reflect a narrow interpretation and suit a particular ideology.

The message of Passover

As we gather with relatives, friends and perhaps even strangers at our household and community seders, we are reminded of the historical significance of Passover and our ancestors' quest for freedom in the face of oppression, bondage and slavery.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

This central message of Pesach spans the generations and rings acutely in the modern world. To borrow the language of the Supreme Court of Canada in a number of freedom of expression cases under our Charter of Rights, one of the hallmarks of freedom is the notion of opportunities for individual self-fulfilment and human flourishing. Human flourishing is suppressed when we are victims of bigotry, discrimination and repression. All peoples strive for freedom, emancipation and choice in order to live happier, more satisfying and productive lives.

The Exodus Decoded, a 2006 documentary by Canadian Simcha Jacobovici and American director James Cameron, dissects the events in the book of Exodus. Through historic, scientific and computerized reconstruction, the film attempts to prove the veracity of the events set out in the book of Exodus.

Does the film, the subject of much analysis and debate, accomplish its objective to explain logically the 10 plagues, the opening of the Sea of Reeds and the surreal happenings we read about each year?

Although the filmmakers, biblical scholars and scientists studied the story of Pesach and put forward their theories in a thought-provoking and entertaining way, it is not particularly important to prove the truth of the events. What we should care about is the message of Pesach and how it has resonated through so many generations and how it remains of significance today.

Every year, Jews remember the Holocaust, marking Yom Hashoah, Kristallnacht and Holocaust Remembrance Week. Recently, the Jewish communities across Canada marked a Darfur Shabbat. As a national community sensitive to and caring about genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, we took action to exert influence in order to stop the horrendous slaughter of innocents in the Sudan. Even in times of natural disasters, such as the recent earthquake in Haiti, our community generously raised money to assist in the disaster relief and reconstruction efforts in that tiny impoverished nation.

All of these activities share the common purpose of advancing the cause of freedom: be it our own freedom after the Holocaust in Europe, the freedom of others who face similar inhumane suffering in other parts of the world or the freedom from challenges beyond our control such as earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters.

The quest for freedom, the central message of Passover, was immortalized in an African-American spiritual inspiring those who were struggling to free themselves from the yoke of slavery. The lyrics include this verse: "When Israel was in Egypt's land/Let my people go/ Oppress'd so hard they could not stand,/ Let my people go./ Go down, Moses,/ Way down in Egypt land/ Tell old Pharaoh,/ Let my people go."

These words and the words in our Haggadah are relevant today. It is not necessary to decode the book of Exodus – the message is loud and clear. Human suffering, oppression, bigotry, discrimination and violence are antithetical to freedom.

In Canada, we enjoy many freedoms, including the freedom to live, practise and conduct our lives in accordance with the values and principles treasured in our religious tradition. At Pesach, as we relive our journey from slavery to freedom, we should consider and confront present-day affronts to freedom while we celebrate and appreciate the many freedoms that we enjoy.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, the voice of Canada's organized Jewish community, has always acted as a vehicle for Jewish advocacy, serving the interests of Canadian Jewry in the ongoing fight against, for example, anti-Semitism and other assaults on our community. But Congress is also well known as an effective human rights organization. That is why it leads our campaign to end the genocide in Darfur. Congress, as a representative organization of our community, and we, as individuals, stand on guard in seeking freedom for all who are oppressed.

That is the message of Pesach. That is the Exodus decoded.

The Kirshner File

Israel and the U.S. were on a collision course

About a month before Israel's pivotal relationship with the United States suddenly deteriorated, Danny Ayalon, Israel's former ambassador to Washington and currently its deputy foreign minister, complacently observed that relations had "never been better." In light of recent events, Ayalon's comment now seems curiously out of touch with reality.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

But even before Washington upbraided Israel for announcing plans to build 1,600 housing units in Ramat Shlomo in eastern Jerusalem – a decision that embarrassed visiting U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden and "undermined" the prospect of renewing talks with the Palestinians, according to President Barack Obama's senior policy adviser, David Axelrod – an alarming degree of tension had crept into Israeli-American relations, though there was never any question that Israel's strategic ties with the United States were threatened.

Since his election victory, Obama has been consistently clear, describing America's bond with Israel as "unbreakable," but insisting that Israel has to acknowledge the "legitimate grievances and interests of the Palestinians" within a two-state solution. And in a reference to Israel's policy of establishing "facts on the ground," he has argued that settlements do not make Israel safer, embitter the Palestinians and make it harder to defuse the Arab-Israeli conflict. In accordance with the 2002 Arab League peace proposal and the 2003 "road map" peace plan, both of which have yet to be implemented, Obama urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to impose a total settlement freeze on construction in the West Bank.

Hillary Clinton, the U.S. secretary of state, put it more bluntly, declaring that the Obama administration "does not accept the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlements." In the clearest enunciation of U.S. policy, she said she wanted to see "a stop to settlements" without exception. "Not some settlements, not outposts, not 'natural growth.'"

Caving in to U.S. pressure, Netanyahu announced a partial 10-month freeze last November. But in line with his own hawkish views, and in an attempt to hold his right-of-centre coalition together, he excluded eastern Jerusalem from the plan, noting that 3,000 residential units already in various stages of planning and construction would be completed and saying that the construction of public buildings in existing settlements would not be affected by the slowdown.

The Obama administration welcomed Israel's moratorium as a step in the right direction, but Clinton said, "This offer falls far short of what our preference would be, but if it is acted upon, it would be an unprecedented restriction on settlements and would have a significant and meaningful effect on restraining their growth."

Taking his cue from Clinton, George Mitchell, the special U.S. envoy to the Middle East, said that Israel's announcement could help relaunch peace talks, which the Palestinian Authority broke off after Israel's reprisal attack on the Gaza Strip in December 2008.

Washington's abiding interest in renewing the negotiations is a function of its strong belief that if the Arab-Israeli dispute is peacefully resolved, Israel will be more secure, the Arabs will establish relations with Israel, and the Arab world will be more supportive of thwarting Iran's military nuclear program and stabilizing Iraq, prime U.S. objectives in the region. The priorities of Israel's present government, however, are at odds with Obama's plan. Netanyahu believes that once Iran is defanged, the atmosphere for peace talks will improve immeasurably, while rejectionist Palestinian groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad will be weakened.

Despite Washington's divergence of opinion with Israel, the Obama administration proceeded with its plans, with Mitchell telling his Israeli and Arab interlocutors that his goal was to create conditions for a "prompt resumption and early conclusion" of Israeli-Palestinian talks. Speaking hypothetically, but warning that U.S. patience was running out, Mitchell suggested that the United States could withhold loan guarantees to Israel if it did not co-operate.

It soon became clear that Israel and the United States, notwithstanding Clinton's comment that the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority could not be "forced" into reaching an agreement, were on a collision course.

Last July, Netanyahu rejected a U.S. call to postpone a planned housing development in the Sheik Jarrah neighbourhood in east Jerusalem, saying that Israel's sovereignty in the city could not be challenged. The U.S. State Department countered that unilateral moves by either Israel or the Palestinians could prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations.

During this period, the United States warned Israel not to build in the area known as E-1, which lies between Jerusalem and the West Bank. Washington said that any change in E-1's status would be "extremely damaging." Clinton also criticized Israel over the eviction of two Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah. Shortly afterward, the White House expressed "regret" over reports that Israel planned to approve the construction of hundreds of new homes in West Bank settlements, saying that "continued settlement activity is inconsistent with Israel's commitment under the road map."

Meanwhile, White House press secretary Robert Gibbs voiced "dismay" over Israel's announcement that a further 900 housing units in Gilo, a neighbourhood in eastern Jerusalem, would be built. Toward the end of December, Gibbs deplored plans by Israel to build nearly 700 apartments in Neveh Ya'akov, Pisgat Ze-ev and Har Homa, all in eastern Jerusalem, where the Palestinians want to establish their capital.

U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet in Jerusalem. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Last month, after Obama's chief of staff, Rahm Emanuel, reportedly said that the United States was fed up with Israel and the Palestinians, Washington criticized Israel for designating two shrines in the West Bank – the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and the Tomb of Rachel in Bethlehem – as national heritage sites. The State Department called the move "provocative."

On the eve of Biden's visit to Israel, Clinton said that "the 1967 borders, with swaps, should be the focus of the negotiations over borders." This was music to Palestinian ears, but the United States had some tough words for the Palestinians as well. Washington advised the Palestinian Authority to resume talks with Israel "without preconditions" – a Netanyahu mantra – amid Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' insistence that he would not reopen talks unless Israel agreed to a full building freeze.

Biden, an old friend of Israel, arrived in Jerusalem to strengthen bilateral relations, launch "proximity," or indirect talks, with the Palestinians and reiterate Washington's vigorous opposition to Iran's nuclear ambitions. But within hours of proclaiming the United States' deep friendship with Israel, Biden was shocked to learn that the ministry of interior, controlled by the hardline Shas party in Netanyahu's coalition, intended to approve the construction of 1,600 housing units in eastern Jerusalem. Biden condemned the politically motivated decision.

Clinton excoriated it as insulting and deeply negative. Netanyahu, while apolgizing for the "timing" of the explosive announcement, said that building in eastern Jerusalem would continue apace. But under U.S. prodding, Netanyahu agreed to discuss core issues with the Palestinians in indirect talks, ease the siege of the Gaza Strip and release some Palestinian prisoners.

Last week's discord was the worst rift in Israeli-U.S. relations in two decades, though Obama and Clinton claimed it did not reach "crisis" proportions.

Considering the gravity of the situation, the boastful comment by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman last year that "America accepts all our decisions" sounds all the more surreal today.

Correction

In my previous column, "Israel targeted by boycott campaign," I neglected to say that the *Ontario chapter* of the Canadian Union of Public Employees passed a divestment resolution and called for a boycott of academic cooperation with Israel universities. I regret the omission.

For our investors, it's a happy Passover

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Jewish Life

In defence of Jewish heritage

By DANNY DANON
JTA

Guest Voice

A new wave of Palestinian rage was unleashed recently following the inclusion of Judaism's second holiest shrine, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and the tomb of our matriarch Rachel in Bethlehem on the new list of national heritage sites.

It is important to note that the list will serve as a budgetary directive to governmental agencies to ensure that these religious and historical sites receive the appropriate funding for their proper upkeep, not as any sort of political statement.

The decision led to Arab riots across the Palestinian territories and included incendiary statements from their leaders. Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas went so far as to declare the beginning of a third intifadah. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas called the move "a very dangerous provocation that could lead to a war of religions."

It's ironic how sensitive the Palestinians can be when their sovereignty over our holy sites is questioned. There was no condemnation from their leaders when Arab mobs ransacked the Tomb of Joseph minutes after Israel handed over responsibility of the site to the Palestinian Authority in October 2000. In fact, I recently visited the Tomb of Joseph – accompanied by a heavily armed military escort – and I was shocked to see the sad state of disrepair at one of Judaism's holiest sites.

It would seem that in the Holy Land, religious tolerance and freedom of expression is a one-way street. The State of Israel has worked tirelessly to ensure the preservation of religious freedom – for all faiths – since its inception.

The holy city of Jerusalem, which has been under Israeli jurisdiction since 1967, is truly open to worship by all of the world's religions for the first time in thousands of years. If only our Arab neighbours shared our concerns, then maybe there would be a chance for coexistence.

At Judaism's holiest site, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the Waqf – the Muslim religious authority granted autonomous control by Israel – bans non-Muslims from any religious expression. In direct contradiction to Israeli law, Jews who attempt to express any form of religious practice are forcibly removed from the area by Israeli security forces for the sake of placating the Muslim religious authorities.

Thus Mount Moriah, which according to Jewish tradition should be a place of peace for all nations, has turned into a volatile powder keg that no politician is ready to approach lest it be met with violent backlashes. It is ironic that our most precious heritage site was not included on the list, because our Arab neighbours have succeeded in convincing the world that might is right.

The Palestinian backlash against Prime Minister Benjamin's Netanyahu's list of heritage sites must be understood in the context of our recent history.

Just as the second intifadah was branded wrongfully as a defence of the Temple Mount mosques after former prime minister Ariel Sharon's peaceful visit, the current aggression has nothing to do with religion.

Time and again, Palestinian leaders have tried to spread mistruths in an attempt to erase any Jewish claim to the Land of Israel. Abbas' doctoral thesis attempted to disprove the veracity of the Holocaust. His predecessor, Yasser Arafat, claimed that the Jewish Holy Temple never stood in Jerusalem.

It is time that we put an end to this blatant and egregious revision of history. I hope that with the help of the new heritage sites legislation, future generations of Israelis will grow closer to their roots and gain a deeper understanding of our irrefutable bond to this land.

Danny Danon is deputy speaker of the Knesset and chairman of World Likud.

How to get fired

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Corporate restructuring in the private sector usually entails job cuts and often increased demands on "unaffected" employees. However, for those lucky enough to work for the Ontario Ministry of Revenue, restructuring comes with up to $45,000 in severance fees. And that's for people who aren't even losing their jobs.

The upcoming harmonization of the federal and provincial sales taxes into the new HST means that more than 1,000 tax collectors who are currently employed by the provincial government will soon be employed by the federal government. They will doing the same duties they were previously doing, working from the same desks with little other than the letterhead and the signature on their cheques changing. Yet, since technically they're losing their provincial jobs, they'll be eligible to collect severance pay, despite the fact they're not actually losing their jobs.

The premier (who could find no money to pay for the education of religious minorities in this province) notes that spending millions for the affected employees is the law, even though apparently the law can be amended to avoid such a payout. While amending the law mid-term is generally unfair (the only time this government did so was to retroactively rescind the tax credit for private school tuition, after parents had already paid their fees), this is surely an exceptional case.

I am reminded of the rabbinic teaching that Jerusalem was destroyed because people insisted on the strict application of the law, unwilling to act according to the intent of the law. Unfortunately, with government deficits in the billions of dollars, very little attention is paid to the mere waste of millions. Such indifference and unaccountability when it comes to public money is another moral casualty of a bloated government. Our sages were especially harsh on those who misappropriate public funds, as rectifying such is next to impossible.

Allowing "fired" workers to claim severance and at the same time keep their jobs is akin to a school firing its teachers each June and rehiring them in September, allowing the teachers to collect employment insurance during the summer. We would rightfully be aghast at such a devious ploy, and if it wasn't technically illegal, we would demand the law be amended to prevent this form of trickery.

While we expect and demand that contracts be kept, whether they're signed or in the form of an oral agreement, Jewish law recognizes that contracts can be rendered null and void by unforeseen circumstances. While, for example, a contractor can be sued for not completing an agreed-upon task, if the contractor has to attend to a sick child, no penalty can be assessed for non-performance. Furthermore an employer who fires an employee can only be sued for lost wages (i.e., severance) if the employee can't find another job. If another job is available, even under slightly different conditions, the claim is dismissed. Similarly most western jurisdictions disallow the collection of unemployment benefits if another job is readily available.

While it would be unrealistic to expect employees to refuse the money, we shouldn't lose sight of the ideal and strive if possible to employ public servants who would return money they did not properly earn. In this vein, it was refreshing, and I must admit quite surprising, to hear of plans by Canadian Olympic hockey players to donate their $20,000 bonuses, which were paid to all Canadian gold-medal winners. While these multimillionaires have little need for this pocket change, they did rightfully earn it.

Money has the ability to bring out the best and the worst in people. It's sad to see public money wasted in such a fashion. It's even sadder that apparently few care enough to do something about it.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Jewish Life

A lively book of responsa

By MARTIN LOCKSHIN

Throughout the centuries, the primary function of a rabbi was not to give sermons, conduct marriages or bury the Jewish dead, but to rule on issues of Halachah (Jewish law). Ordination traditionally consisted of an established rabbi empowering a new rabbi to answer questions of Halachah, thus assuring questioners that they could comfortably consider the new rabbi's rulings to be authoritative.

Martin Lockshin

Most rabbis who followed or follow that traditional model of rabbinic work would give short answers to questions posed (generally "yes" or "no"), accompanied by a pep talk when appropriate, but almost always without footnotes. In general, the assumption was that lay questioners lacked the textual acumen to appreciate the intricacies of the halachic process.

Many great rabbis have published their "responsa," collections of questions they received (or, occasionally, pretended to receive) and answers that they gave, with learned discussion about how the halachic conclusion they arrived at was supported by the hallowed texts of the past. The target audience for responsa literature has always been other rabbis (and rabbis-in-training). Accordingly, responsa were almost always written in a difficult blend of rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic. Reading, appreciating and evaluating traditional responsa requires either knowing talmudic texts well or, at the very least, looking up and studying the texts that are cited.

An innovative development has emerged over the last half a century: some rabbis are now writing and disseminating their detailed answers to various legal, ritual and ethical questions in a way that is accessible to an audience less learned in halachic texts. The most fascinating work of this nature is being done in Israel, where a number of "Internet rabbis" are posting their rulings on the web, with an imagined target audience of any interested reader of modern Hebrew.

Here in North America, the innovation consists in part of writing up responsa in English, thus making the answers accessible to a wide audience. This new sub-genre of vernacular responsa for non-specialists is not confined to the Orthodox. For a few decades now, Reform and Conservative rabbis have been publishing articles and books that are spinoffs from the traditional responsa model.

Toronto's own Rabbi Wayne Allen has now written such a volume: *Perspectives on Jewish Law and Contemporary Issues*, published in Jerusalem in 2009 by the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies. The volume consists of 85 short chapters, each dealing with an issue (practical or theoretical) that arose at Beth Tikvah Synagogue, where Rabbi Allen has been spiritual leader for the last few decades. The volume is handsome, well-written and interesting.

While one may always quibble with someone's understanding of rabbinic texts (e.g., when Rabbi Allen renders the Hebrew word *zaken* in a talmudic passage as "elderly," when it seems to me that the Talmud is referring to a Torah scholar of any age), the level of erudition is impressive. It is also refreshing to see how Rabbi Allen brings texts from historical, medical and scientific works to his halachic discussions. Sadly, this is rare in halachic literature.

The range of issues discussed in the book is also remarkable. Of course, it includes the kind of questions that one might find in any responsa collection, for instance, should the *Yizkor* prayer be recited in the first year of mourning, or may a cantor repeat words when chanting prayers. But Rabbi Allen also addresses non-standard contemporary issues, such as may a Jew own a Mercedes, are genetically modified foods kosher, may a lesbian convert to Judaism or may a Jew pierce her or his ears, nose or other body parts.

> *'Indirectly teaches about the Toronto version of Conservative Judaism'*

Readers who are interested in following and/or understanding Jewish law will find the book of interest. But even those who are not committed to Halachah might find much of interest here. I learned a good deal about a number of issues with which I was unfamiliar, such as the history of clergy confidentiality or the changing attitudes to flowers at Jewish and gentile funerals over the years. (Considering the disparate nature of the topics discussed, an index, or even a few indices, would have been a welcome addition.)

While the book explicitly teaches about Halachah and Jewish history, it also indirectly teaches about another area: the Toronto version of Conservative Judaism, which is very different from most other versions of Conservative Judaism. While the vast majority of Conservative congregations in the world are now egalitarian, Rabbi Allen promotes an old-fashioned approach, arguing, for example, that a woman may not even lead the Pesukei Dezimrah section of the prayers, nor may she be the one who lifts up the Torah at the end of the Torah service, nor the one who dresses the Torah. In fact, one Internet reviewer of Rabbi Allen's book – a well-known Orthodox rabbi – has already noted that "he is sometimes stricter than I would be!" (See http://hirhurim.blogspot.com/2010/01/post-orthodox-responsa.html).

While most of those in the know will not be surprised to see just how traditional Rabbi Allen's halachic approaches are, I did find one aspect of the book surprising: Rabbi Allen's view of the interplay of law and custom in legal analysis.

Issues in Jewish law are adjudicated on the basis of a mixture of careful textual analysis and consideration of minhag, of the custom of the Jewish people. One of the conundrums that any halachic decision-maker has is determining the relative weight of text and of custom. How do I rule when the text seems to suggest one approach but the common custom of the Jewish people differs?

Generally, it is said that one of the key characteristics of the Conservative movement, when compared to Orthodox Judaism, is that minhag plays a relatively larger role for Conservative rabbis in determining Halachah. Rabbi Solomon Schechter famously argued that the actions of "Catholic Israel" (or Klal Yisrael) are a crucial factor in determining Jewish law.

And yet, Rabbi Allen shows himself frequently to be loyal to the texts and loath to cede ground to community behaviour. One telling example is the chapter entitled "Clapping, Snapping and Tapping on Shabbat." Rabbi Allen does an excellent literature review that shows, as serious students of Jewish law know, that the classical texts have a very wide definition of forbidden "musical" and quasi-musical activities on Shabbat. But as anyone who attends a wide range of synagogues knows, such behaviour is common on the Sabbath and is often seen (correctly or not) as a sign of religious fervour. Rabbi Allen himself notes that Rabbi Moses Isserles (perhaps the leading Ashkenazi early modern legal scholar), "allowed clapping, tapping and dancing on Shabbat because the practice was already so well ensconced that it would be impossible to eradicate it." And yet Rabbi Allen urges us to return to text-centred Judaism and get away from common practice. He concludes the chapter: "Since clapping, tapping and snapping are considered musical sounds, they are prohibited on Shabbat."

Rabbi Allen has produced an interesting and occasionally gripping book. Readers interested in Jewish law or in Canadian Conservative Judaism will find much of interest here.

Martin Lockshin is professor of Jewish studies at York University and rabbi of the Toronto Partnership Minyan.

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Love, hate and criticism

By MIKE HAMEL

Guest Voice

The State of Israel is somewhat of a paradox. It is a young state with an old history.

It was established after the world came together to give the Jews a home out of the ashes of the Holocaust but was founded by an ancient love for a biblical land. The State of Israel represents the successful repatriation of the Jewish people to its ancestral home.

My parents came to Israel to re-establish that ancient bond and to build a life out of the ashes of the inferno of the Holocaust. My mother escaped the Vilna ghetto to join the Jewish partisan brigade in the forest. My father saw his little sister taken by the Gestapo at the Przemysl ghetto, and her last words rang forever in his ears, "Itzhak, does it hurt to die?"

It's Saturday night, Aug. 1, 2009. Thirty young men and women are spending the evening at the Bar-Noar, the youth program at the Aguda's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community centre in Tel Aviv. At 10:30 p.m., a man, dressed in black, with a black mask over his face, walks in. He's holding a black handgun. He opens fire and shoots until two teenagers lie dead on the floor and 10 more are injured. I see 15-year-old Liz. Liz, did it hurt to die?

Israelis commemorate the murders at Bar-Noar. The sign in the young woman's hand says: "Thou shalt not murder."

For more than 100 years, Jews have been returning to Israel, the only place where they can live and raise their families far away from the hatred that scarred their hearts and souls in Europe.

My parents dreamed of a country that would be better than the others. They believed that the social justice ideals envisioned by the biblical prophets could become a reality. But lately, we often hear voices within Israeli society fighting against criticism and social change, voices quick to condemn any dissent.

Israeli democracy can withstand any challenges and attacks as long as human rights organizations such as the Aguda, the country's largest LGBT group, are alive. The advancement and acceptance of the LGBT community in the last 35 years is a lighthouse of change and progress. Today, discrimination based on sexual orientation is a crime. There used to be restrictions on military service, but today the military is open to anyone, regardless of sexual orientation. Israel has an openly gay Knesset member, and gay and gay-friendly city council members are serving in various towns, promoting the needs of the LGBT community.

But the challenges are still enormous. The school climate is still homophobic, and workplace practices are not always friendly to the LGBT community. State and city social services are not always knowledgeable about specific issues and sensibilities. Formal recognition of the basic human right to establish a family, creating a legally recognized bond between two loving human beings, and their right to have children, is still far away.

Following the attack on the Aguda's Bar-Noar, Israeli society showed its strength when 75,000 people assembled in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square to commemorate this terrible crime. They came to demonstrate their support and express their disdain of hatred and violence. Such a show of support gives us the hope to keep going.

But this heartwarming support is not enough. We must use this tragedy, the deaths of this young man and woman, to effect change. We must turn this hatred into a catapult that will spring all of Israeli society to a better, stronger place: a place of acceptance, a place whereby respect is given to the wonderful human diversity of mankind, all born in God's image, all born equal.

Mike Hamel is the chairperson of the Aguda and is a leading expert on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender social reform and human rights in Israel. He is touring Canada under the auspices of the New Israel Fund of Canada.

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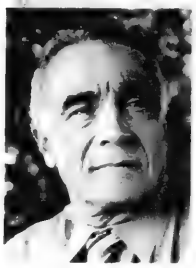
Iran seeks return to days of glory: Israeli analyst

Wants to resurrect Persian empire, Gissin tells audience

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Israel is threatened by Iran's theocratic and ideological regime rather than by its menacing nuclear program, an Israeli analyst told a Toronto audience last week.

The Islamic fundamentalist regime in Tehran dreams of resurrecting the glory that was the Persian empire, Raanan Gissin said.



Raanan Gissin

"Iran wants to fulfil an age-old dream of becoming a regional and world power," argued Gissin, who was senior adviser and press spokesperson for Ariel Sharon, the former Israeli prime minister. "The writing was always on the wall, but no one noticed because it was in Persian."

He added, "Iran wants a new map, a new world, not just the erasing of Israel."

The Iranian government regards Israel as a threat because it is the epitome of modernism, which the Iranian regime cannot abide, he noted.

"Israel is a major challenge to Iran and therefore must be removed," said Gissin, whose speech at the law offices of Blaney McMurtry LLP was sponsored by the Speakers Action Group, the Consulate General of Israel and the Canadian Jewish Civil Rights Association.

Calling the current situation "harsh and difficult," Gissin compared "the Iranian threat" to global warming. "Everyone is talking about it, but not much is being done. If you let it progress, it will become worse."

The solution is to threaten the Islamic regime rather than its nuclear arsenal, said Gissin, adding that Iran is not merely Israel's problem. As he put it, "Israel can't do it alone."

He called on the international community and Israel to co-operate and find ways to contain Iran.

Claiming that the Iranian government is internally vulnerable, he recommended covert and overt measures against it.

"There's a way to do it without sending planes. Intelligence, intelligence, intelligence. Send in the spies. Where there is a will, there is a way."

Implying that top-level Iranian leaders should be assassinated, Gissin observed, "They'll act differently if their personal safety is in danger."

Economic sanctions should be deployed, but he warned that Iran may be resistant to such pressure. "They're not susceptible to sanctions."

The Iranian regime sacrificed hundreds of thousands of soldiers in the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s and could be ready to make more sacrifices to preserve its legitimacy and power.

Gissin said that Iran should be "re-branded" so that its imperialist intentions are revealed.

Saying that the military option should remain on the table and used only as a last resort, Gissin said Israel knows how to defend itself. He praised its intelligence services as second to none.

Turning to another topic, Gissin suggested that the present diplomatic row between Israel and the United States over the approval of 1,600 housing units in eastern Jerusalem could have been avoided if Israel had played its cards right.

"The U.S. had to respond once Israel's plans in Jerusalem became public," he said. "Sometimes, you have to avoid bringing things into the public domain."

Gissin described the dispute as a prime example of domestic politics trumping foreign policy. Calling it a "virtual issue," he explained that Israel never had any intention of building new housing units anytime soon. "But once word got out, things changed."

In his view, the Israeli government should have waited and not made its announcement during U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Israel.

"There's always a way to handle these things," he said. Now, Gissin mused, "Israel has to deal with a crisis of public diplomacy."

The issue should be taken off the table by "quiet diplomacy," he advised. In future, Israel should "level" with the United States rather than "surprise" it before issuing announcements.

Despite current tensions, Israel's strategic relationship with the United States remains rock solid. "There is a great affinity in shared values and interests."

Gissin characterized Israel's spat with the United States as essentially a needless distraction.

"The real issue is the Iranian threat. We play into Iranian hands."

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Bialik teacher incorporates music into lessons

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Nili Berman has no formal background in music, but uses it often in the Grade 4 Jewish studies class she teaches at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

"I just love to sing," she said in an interview. "If kids play musical instruments, I encourage them to bring them to class. Kids love to learn through music and through games."

Especially when teaching a second language, she said, "you have to teach in different ways, and it has to be interesting." Her subjects include Bible, Hebrew language, prayer, and the study of Israel.

A native of Ramat Gan, who grew up in Givatayim, Berman says she knew she would be a teacher when she was a seven-year-old growing up in Israel. Her mother, also a teacher, used to bring the neighbourhood kids to her so that she could teach them to read.

"You cannot run away from this," she smiled.

A graduate of Tel Aviv University (TAU), where she studied education, Bible and Jewish history, Berman moved to Boston with her husband, Oded, in the mid-1970s. He studied for his PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology while she did a master's degree in education at Boston University.

She taught at the Calgary Hebrew Day School from 1978 to 1985, and for five years after that at the Cohen Hillel Academy in Marblehead, Mass., before she, her husband and their children moved to Toronto in 1991. She said she tries to "take the best" from each school to use in her classroom.

As well, she spent a sabbatical year in the mid-1980s in Israel, where she took courses in education at TAU. About 10 years ago, she embarked on a three-year program in "reflective teaching" – an approach to enhance the classroom experience – through the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, along with other educators from Toronto.

"This program really enriched me as a teacher. It gave me a chance to grow," she said. Berman has given workshops on the approach in Toronto and Vancouver.

Students' self-esteem is very important to her, she said. "If they are happy and feel good about themselves, we can achieve a lot. If they can write two sentences, then they will write three sentences, and slowly, slowly, it will grow and grow and grow."

Berman said she enjoys working at Bialik. "The quality of the program is so rich, and we work together as a team. We try to do the same things, and we give each other ideas if something is working well."

Nili Berman shows some of the scenes from Israel that she has on display in her classroom. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

A lesson from the teacher: *"The most important thing to me is that children feel good about themselves. I don't judge them by how many words they know in Hebrew, but by their hard work. I tell them that a positive attitude and trying your hardest are the most important things."*

To all our friends, family and the entire Jewish community, we extend our warmest wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful Passover!

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Greater Toronto Area

TDSB educator runs seder at group home

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Michael Morris, 39, a vice-principal with the Toronto District School Board, is gearing up to run his 14th annual seder at a group home run by Jewish Family and Child and Youthdale Treatment Centre.

Held this year on March 25 – he is expecting about 35 people – the seder is open to staff and group home residents who celebrate Passover.

"We try to do it a couple of days before Passover, because if at all possible, we like the kids to be with their families on seder night. If they don't have a family to visit, at least they've had a seder. We work hard to try and bring families together," said Morris, who also leads the seder.

> ***'It is a kosher, catered affair, and the guests have a great time'***

Most of the food is donated, he said, and his father makes the chicken soup and matzah balls. "It is a kosher, catered affair, and the guests have a great time. At the end of the seder, I've always been booked in for the next year."

He said that kids in treatment centres often have a lot of problems, "but when they come to the seder, they are dressed up and well behaved. Everyone participates in the service, and there is a good sense of belonging at the table."

Morris, who often takes youths to synagogue on a Saturday morning, also does volunteer ski patrol for the Canadian Ski Patrol System. "I know how organizations, especially Jewish organizations, need volunteers, and I try to do what I can to help out. It's good for me, and it's good for them."

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NDP MP censured for blocking motion

Continued from page 3

The resolution goes on to say that, "On university campuses, Israeli Apartheid Week promotes the one-sided, intolerant and unbalanced position that Israel is a racist state. This has helped create a public opinion environment where Jewish students who happen to also support Israel are subject to condemnation and opprobrium."

An alternative motion proposed by the Bloc Québécois also denounced use of the term apartheid in connection with the State of Israel.

The resolutions failed to receive all-party support and never came to a vote.

MP Libby Davies, the federal NDP House leader and a vocal critic of Israel, stated in a letter to supporters: "The Conservative motion was designed to be divisive and to censure legitimate debate on the issue of Israel's policies, as well as to specifically target activists who are engaged in debate and other activities on various campuses across the country.

"I didn't support either motion, and whatever one thinks about the term 'apartheid' in reference to Israel, I don't believe that members of Parliament should have any role or influence in stifling open discussion and education on this issue. As someone who has visited the West Bank and Gaza twice (most recently in August of 2009), I know first hand the impact and destruction caused by Israeli policies towards Palestinians."

The Canada-Israel Committee censured Davies for scuttling attempts at reaching an all-party consensus on the issue.

"Libby Davies' utter disregard for the plight of students who are bullied and intimidated on campus in Canada is staggering and unacceptable," said CIC national chair Moshe Ronen. "This is not an issue of free speech. In fact, the Israeli Apartheid Week stifles dialogue, does not constitute legitimate criticism and is simply hateful."

INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM: Representatives of the three Abrahamic religions gathered last week in Bradford, Ont., for an evening of interfaith dialogue on the subject of reconciling faith and loyalty to one's country. Pictured, from left, are Rev. Terry Weller, a Christian minister; Mark Freiman, national president of Canadian Jewish Congress, and Mubarak Nazir of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of York Region, the event's sponsor. Freiman told the 200 assembled that the Torah calls for respect for minorities and Judaism has a long tradition of respecting civil authority, which stops short when it demands that Jews stop being Jewish. Nazir called suicide bombers who commit atrocities in the name of their religion a "blot" on Islam. ***[Ron Csillag photo]***

St. Louis commemoration set for November

Monument to be unveiled, education program slated for Remembrance Day

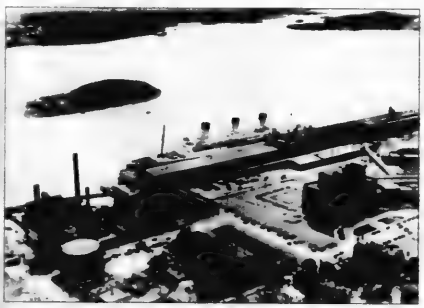
By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

On Remembrance Day, when Canadians pay tribute to the members of the armed forces who helped liberate Europe from the Nazis, a smaller group will gather at Halifax's Pier 21 to commemorate a less glorious chapter of our history.

On Nov. 11, a monument will be unveiled remembering the MS St. Louis, a German passenger ship that was turned away from Canada in 1939, ending the last, best chance for 937 passengers to avoid a fate at the hands of the Nazis. The ship returned to Europe, where more than 250 were killed.

Titled "None is Too Many: Memorializing and Commemorating the St. Louis," the program will include a monument, as well as an educational component aimed at Canadian middle school children.

Bigotry and anti-Semitism were at the heart of the attitude that closed the door to the St. Louis refugees, and that attitude didn't come out of the blue, said David Goldberg, Canadian Jewish Congress' project manager and educational consultant for the commemoration. Congress received $500,000 from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to mount the exhibit under the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP).



Pier 21 in Halifax

Goldberg said the exhibit that will serve as the centrepiece for the St. Louis commemoration will be unveiled in April or May, following the adjudication of a competition that attracted prominent artists, sculptors and architects. "They are people of considerable prominence in their fields," he said.

In addition, he is preparing a 16-page educational booklet to coincide with the event, which is geared to children in grades 6, 7 and 8. It will be distributed to schools across Canada, along with guides for teachers aiding them in presenting the material in class.

Goldberg said the monument at Pier 21 – Canada's Ellis Island – "acknowledges Canada as the last country denying safe haven to the 900 plus Jews on the St. Louis."

Cuba and the United States both turned the ship away before its captain attempted to disembark his passengers in Canada. However, Canada's immigration policy was being executed by Frederick Blair, a bigot and anti-Semite who had been appointed director of the immigration branch of the Department of Mines and Resources by then-prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King.

"Blair didn't make this decision out of the blue," Goldberg said. His views were shared by the "upper echelons of government and society," and the social, economic and political conditions in Canada at the time permitted the King government to adopt these policies.

Canada at the time was marked by "an underlying anti-Semitism, nativism, [high] unemployment, fear of the unknown, conservatism and racial and ethnic [bigotry]," Goldberg said.

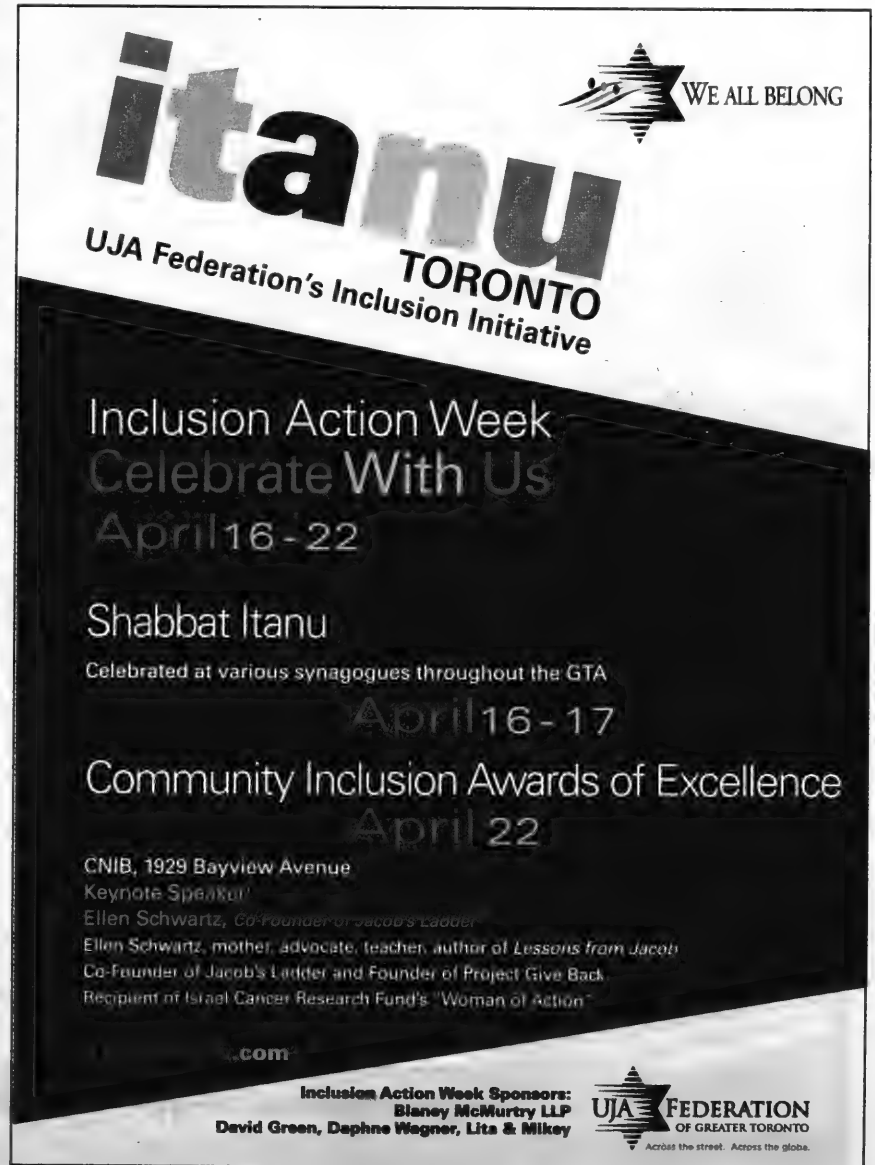
Jews had been singled out among other groups as undesirable for immigration since the 1890s, but restrictions weren't put in place until the 1930s, he added.

Goldberg said the educational booklet will address these issues, but it won't paint the historical record as being monolithically bleak.

The booklet concludes with "a very positive message," noting that starting in 1947, the country's immigration policy changed, with Canada becoming more welcoming to refugees. From 1933 to 1947, Canada admitted only 5,000 Jewish refugees, the lowest of any western nation, Goldberg noted.

"I think there is a causal relationship between the negative experiences the Canadian public took – the embarrassment and shame people took from the St. Louis experience – and after 1947 when the Canadian government changed policies on absorbing Holocaust refugees," he said.

The Remembrance Day program is expected to attract senior officials from all levels of government, people from various walks of life, Holocaust survivors and even former passengers from the St. Louis, he added.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'One agunah is too many'

Despite changes in law, 'the problem persists'

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Not long after giving a talk at Congregation Bnai Torah last summer, lawyer Sharon Shore began receiving phone calls from a number of women grateful to her for raising the issue of agunot, Jewish women who can't obtain a religious divorce.

"Thank you for giving us a voice," Shore recalled one of them telling her.

Shore, who practises family law, said many in the Jewish community had thought the problem of agunot was resolved after two important amendments to the civil law were enacted years ago.

In 1986, Ontario's Family Law Act and in 1991 the Federal Divorce Act were amended so that husbands who refused to grant their wives a religious divorce, a *get*, were prevented from seeking civil remedies connected to their marriage breakup. They couldn't obtain custody, financial support, property division or a civil divorce until they had removed all religious barriers to their spouse's remarriage.

Despite those changes, Shore handles four or five cases a year in which "a husband tries to use the *get* to extract concessions from his wife in areas of custody, support and division of property. I'm sure there are more out there," she said.

In a recent paper on the topic *When Jewish and Civil Law Collide*, which focused on whether a prenuptial agreement was a viable remedy, Shore said the issue of *gets* still comes up during negotiations "as a leverage point to extract concessions from the wife. The effect is to leave women vulnerable to extortion, despite the civil laws in place to protect them… Giving up monetary claims is regarded by many as a better alternative than living as an agunah."

She argued that prenups, which have been effectively employed in the United States, could address the problem in Canada, though our domestic law makes their effectiveness less certain.

While Shore acknowledges there has been improvement in the situation facing women and that some Jewish organizations have taken steps to address the issue – refusing synagogue honours to a recalcitrant husband, denying a role as a director or officer in Jewish organizations – she believes "we need a community-level effort" to tackle the problem. "This, too, should be a pressing issue and a concern," she said.

Yael Machtinger has studied the issue as part of her master's thesis at York University. Her 71-page work, titled the *Sounds of Silence*, included interviews with four agunot as well as religious authorities. Her first interview, she said, came after she gave a public lecture at the Beth Avraham Yoseph synagogue during Shavuot.

"People were surprised I was talking about it publicly," she said, "But after I finished, people applauded… That's how I got my first interview."

A woman approached her with the story that she had been an agunah for 10 years and that her husband "out of pure malice" withheld a *get*.

Although she eventually did get the divorce – only after her friends flew in a rabbi to convince him to provide it – "it took her seven years to then meet someone new and get married."

Quoting the woman, Machtinger writes: "He took the best years of my life and I took the blame."

Machtinger, who describes herself as Orthodox, said, "My goal is not to alienate myself from my community. I believe Jewish law and Canadian law can coexist," but the current situation "is a problem."

The number 1 issue in Toronto, as she sees it, is that "there's a misconception that it's no longer an issue, that we solved the problem."

What is required, she continued, is that "the larger community acknowledge that it's still going on."

As to the number of agunot in Toronto, Machtinger said "quantifying it is not the issue. One agunah is too many… You just have to scratch the surface and see that the problem persists.

"It's very difficult if not impossible to get a statistic on this," she continued. "There's a lot of shame for women, and I believe the men should feel shame."

John Syrtash

There are no specific programs or support groups in Toronto for agunot, she said, adding that Montreal, New York and Israel "have organizations that help agunot."

One activist group, Organization for the Resolution of Agunot (ORA), is a not-for-profit that helps couples resolve their differences and effectuate a Jewish divorce. ORA has been known to picket the husband's home or work to shame him, Machtinger, 23, said. The organization publishes the names of husbands who are withholding *gets* in the Jewish press as *seiruvim*, people who are in contempt of an order of a beit din.

Some beit dins will even pronounce a *cherem*, ostracizing the individual from the community if they repeatedly ignore the religious court's invitations to appear and resolve the issue, she said.

Of the four women she interviewed for her thesis, two eventually received *gets*, thanks to the intervention of American rabbis, while two haven't.

For those unfortunate two, "their personal lives are essentially debilitated because they can't move on. They can't remarry or have kids."

She would like to see more social pressure and "a public conversation about this. People should be aware it is going on."

John Syrtash, a family law lawyer whose practice includes Jewish divorces, agrees that there are women who, despite changes to the civil law, still find themselves without a *get*.

Nevertheless, "without deriding the suffering of those women, we have to work very hard for these women, but we have to celebrate how dramatically improved the system has become," he said.

Compared to the period prior to the changes to provincial and federal law, "it's like night and day. It's dramatically better.

"You are always going to find exceptions, intractable problems," he said.

Continued on page 21

Agunot problem still exists

Continued from page 20

The Supreme Court of Canada, in its 2007 decision in Bruker vs. Marcovitz, ruled a husband was in breach of contract when he ignored an agreement on the breakup of the marriage that required him to provide a *get*.

"This kind of conduct is no longer sanctioned in the community and among the general public," Syrtash said.

Prior to changes in the law and its educative elements, "people said, 'Why not use it as another tactic?'" Syrtash said.

Today, "in the overwhelming number of cases, it's not a problem, because the law and the social element have improved dramatically." Those good-news situations, where an Orthodox beit din resolves disputes between spouses, don't get reported, he said.

One under-appreciated aspect of the issue is the extent to which women are now using *gets* as a lever for some sort of benefit or out of malice, Syrtash said.

Although only a man can offer a *get*, the woman must willingly and without coercion accept it. If she refuses, her husband is also in marriage limbo, bound to his wife. "I've had a number of men pay a great deal in legal fees to extricate themselves from situations where women adamantly refuse to accept a *get*," he said.

In one case, a couple were married for only a short time before breaking up. The woman refused to accept the *get* and though a rabbinic court in New York approved the *get*, she refused to accept it. She moved to Israel, and her husband continues to pay spousal support for fear that if he visits Israel, he could be arrested under that country's laws for refusing spousal support.

Yael Machtinger

"It's not a women's issue," Syrtash said. "It's a Jewish issue."

He said some lawyers refuse to work with the beit din's Rabbi Mordechai Ochs. A co-operative approach is beneficial to comply with the halachic requirement that a *get* be granted voluntarily. If a lawyer goes through the civil system and presents the beit din with a court order requiring a *get*, that can be interpreted as coercive and scotch attempts to grant one, he added.

Syrtash said consulting ahead of time with Rabbi Ochs can help solve problems before they arise. The rabbi, he continued, "is very creative and successful in dealing with the legislation."

(Rabbi Ochs did not respond to *CJN* requests for a comment.)

By taking a co-operative approach and being sensitive to religious sensibilities, lawyers can succeed in providing clients with both Jewish and civil divorces.

Based on his practice, Syrtash estimates that "98 per cent of the people do not fight a *get*. That's a success."

Volunteer in Eilat this summer

Compiled by CJN Staff

Volunteer opportunities in Eilat, Israel, for people age 19 to the late 20s who have had at least one year of university or college are available in the areas of child education, environmental preservation and community involvement.

Participants in the Canada Israel Experience's Eilat volunteer program can choose to work with children in schools, daycare centres or camps. If they prefer, they can help preserve Eilat's coral beach reserve, explore its marine culture while assisting with research, or volunteer at the Hai-Bar animal reserve.

Canada Israel Experience (CIE) is currently accepting applications for the program, which begins June 1, and has three sessions of four, six or eight weeks.

The Eilat volunteer program is part of a larger UJA of Greater Toronto initiative, in partnership with CIE, to provide opportunities for young Jewish leaders to become immersed in a local Israeli community and facilitate growth in and strengthen the region.

Volunteers will reside in the new Eilat Ben-Gurion campus dormitories built with major support from the Toronto Jewish community.

The program's goal is also to help strengthen Toronto Jewry. "Participants can internalize their experience by gaining a greater insight where they fit within the community and where Judaism fits in their heart," said Mira Schwartzburg, the Eilat volunteer program co-ordinator.

Volunteers are responsible for flight and food expenses in addition to a $500 program fee. The remaining expenses are covered by UJA Federation.

For an application, contact Mira Schwartzburg at mschwartzburg@ujafed.org. Application deadline is April 15.

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Camp Northland-BB plans 100-year reunion

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Camp Northland-B'nai Brith will mark its 100th anniversary with a reunion and fundraiser on April 14.

Admission to the event – which will take place at 6 Degrees Club in Toronto and will feature kosher food and camp memorabilia displays – is $118 per person.

The proceeds will help send kids to the camp, located on Moose Lake in Haliburton. NBB has subsidized camp fees for families who need financial assistance for many years.

Sandy Keshen – now president and CEO of Reena, which serves people with developmental disabilities – attended the camp as a 10-year-old immigrant from Poland in 1948. "I spoke no English," she recalled. She had survived the war in Russia and arrived in Canada only two months before she started camp.

Keshen is still friends with two women she met that summer. "One was Canadian-born and taught me a great deal. She was my defender, making sure I was not ridiculed for my lack of English or appropriate attire."

Sherri Freedman – a camper at Camp B'nai Brith from 1969 until 1974 and a staff member from 1979 to 1984 – told *The CJN* that camp teaches many skills. Among those that she uses every day, she said, are "things like working with other people, respecting what other people bring to the table, doing public speaking… You learn how to motivate people, empathize with people, operate within a hierarchy… and you learn how to have fun, and you learn that if you make an idiot of yourself, it's not the end of the world."

Director John Bernstein with campers in the 1960s

"I only left because I got married," Freedman said.

The 49-year-old vice-president of development for the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation and a co-chair of the upcoming reunion/fundraiser, Freedman said organizers hope the evening will be fun, celebratory and infused with a camp spirit.

The camp's history dates back to 1909, when the Jewish Girls' Club was formed in downtown Toronto under the sponsorship of National Council of Jewish Women. The club, funded by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, offered programs like basketball, dramatics and shorthand, and also ran a summer camp called Camp Camperdown.

The Jewish Boys' Club, formed in 1921, ran a summer camp too, in co-operation with B'nai Brith.

In 1945, the Jewish Camp Council – the charitable organization that runs Camp Northland–B'nai Brith – was created by five groups running Jewish summer camps: B'nai Brith, National Council for Jewish Women, the Mothers' and Babes' Summer Rest Home Association, the United Jewish Welfare Fund of Toronto, and the YM-YWHA. The council was formed in part to administer Camp Northland (which opened in 1938 as Camp Frailoch in Torrance, Ont., and relocated to Haliburton four years later) and its sister camp for girls, Camp Bnai Brith.

Reunion co-chair Howard Hanick, 49, is a former Northland camper, counsellor-in-training and staff member. He met his wife Debra at camp when he was 20.

Hanick, an accountant who is on the board of directors of the Jewish Camp Council, recalls mostly the size and the beauty of the 750-acre camp property.

The upcoming reunion has elicited "an incredible response," Hanick said. "People are getting excited sharing photographs and sharing memories. The meetings we've been having have been like mini-reunions. It's been a lot of fun just within the committees. Hopefully we can capture that."

As of last week, about 800 people had joined the reunion's Facebook page.

The camp is "a community camp, and it really does feel like a community," said Nicole Markowitz, who became director of the camp last year. "Campers and staff are non-judgmental. It's a very comfortable environment, very welcoming, very accepting."

As well, she added, it is a Jewish camp both in terms of its population and its programming.

The camp experience can have an "amazing positive impact," Markowitz said. "One of the main things is the sense of independence and self-confidence that the camp experience fosters."

To purchase tickets or make a donation, go to www.campnbb.com, or call the Jewish Camp Council of Toronto at 905-881-0018.

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Philanthropy 'has to grab you,' authors advise donors

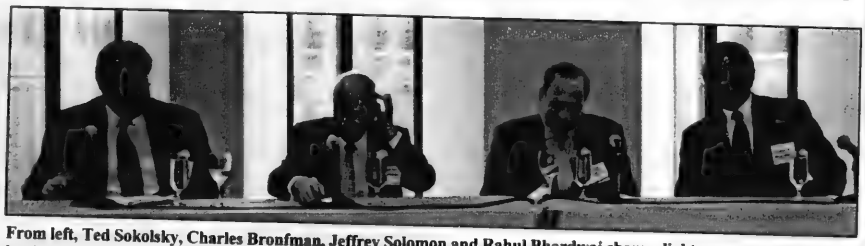
By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

For many people, philanthropy is like "a civic religion" because both are concerned with helping the world, according to Jeffrey Solomon, co-author with Charles Bronfman of the recently released book, *The Art of Giving: Where the Soul Meets a Business Plan.*

Speaking at a launch of the book last week at the Toronto Reference Library, Solomon said, "We are always in search of identity, meaning and community, which historically were found in religion."

On the panel with Solomon, who is president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies (an umbrella of charitable foundations), were his co-author, who chairs the group and was a co-founder of Birthright Israel, as well as Ted Sokolsky, president and CEO of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and Rahul Bhardwaj, president and CEO of the Toronto Community Foundation. The event was structured as a discussion with the two authors.

In reference to the relationship between philanthropists' souls and their business plans, Bronfman said, "You have to find out what makes you feel good... and every day, the only thing that matters is, did you derive satisfaction from what you're doing? It has to grab you. You have to say this is important. You have to translate it into a budget. If you want to make any kind of a difference, you have to decide what you can afford, and how you are going to spend it."



From left, Ted Sokolsky, Charles Bronfman, Jeffrey Solomon and Rahul Bhardwaj share a light moment at last week's book launch of Bronfman and Solomon's book, *The Art of Giving.*

Young adults take different approach, says Bronfman

Bronfman divides philanthropic giving into three groups: relationship-driven donations (by friends who ask you to give); "social taxes" including UJA Federation and other umbrella organizations, hospitals and the "less fortunate;" and "your own mission in life and the niche you see as possible for you to make the world a somewhat better place when you leave it than when you came into it."

The latter reflects today's world more than it did in the past, said Solomon, who has worked with Bronfman for the past dozen years. However, he said, he prefers to remain "value-neutral... the question becomes, whether you're [donating] for altruistic or egotistic reasons, how to make it better."

Bronfman noted, as well, the different approach taken by young adults in their 20s. "Generation Y... doesn't like organizations. They like to be themselves and do what they want, and they're tremendous experimenters. They're going to make a huge difference in this world, I'm convinced of that. So organizations are going to have to change. We all have to have to change. Private foundations have to change in order to reach out to those folks. If you can run a company in your 20s, why can't you start running an agency of the federation, or the Toronto community foundation, or anything else?"

Solomon offered some advice for new philanthropists to maximize their impact: in cases where their assets are "relatively low," he said it is "far more efficient to use community foundations" than to establish a private one, which is is expensive to run.

"We're not being paid by either of you to say that," he quipped to Sokolsky and Bhardwaj.

As well, he added, there has to be a business plan. He also advised re-evaluating philanthropic portfolios and rebalancing them like personal investment portfolios.

"We would urge those in philanthropy to take some risk," said Bronfman.

"It's your money, not community money. See what can happen. Sometimes you're going to fail. We failed in some of the things we tried to do, but then you hit a home run like Birthright. There are lots of things to be done in this world."

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NCJWC closes national office, local thrift store

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Facing budget constraints, the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada (NCJWC) has closed its national headquarters here, and its Winnipeg section will be shuttering a thrift that opened more than 60 years ago.

The national office, which was located on Main Street in the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre, a non-profit seniors centre established by council, was closed in early January after an organizational restructuring. The Just a Second Shop will cease operation on March 27.

"We had to close the national office… and cut a staff position for economic reasons… We just couldn't keep up the costs of running a national office," NCJWC's national president, Dianne Glass, told *The CJN*.

"At our national meeting in November 2009, it was decided that we would allocate different functions that the national office was carrying out to each Canadian section, and that the national office would close," she said. "So, for example, the Edmonton section office is now looking after donation cards, Toronto is looking after communications and website, Vancouver is in charge of advocacy and our membership roster… Everyone has part of the responsibilities that used to be run out of our national office."

Notwithstanding that the decision was made for economic reasons, Glass said, there may be some benefits to the new structure.

"This new system gives each section more ownership of the organization. From a personal perspective, I think it's good, because now each section in each city understands better what it takes to run a national organization… The presidents of each chapter are communicating more between each other than before," she said.

Just a Second Shop in Winnipeg *[Rhonda Spivak photo]*

She also noted that they "are going to evaluate how this new system is working out for each section and see if we need to make any more adjustments."

The hard economic times have also affected council's Winnipeg section, which ran the Just A Second shop on a for-profit basis.

"This has been very sad for us… Since 1949, we've had a thrift store," said Sharon Allentuck, the Winnipeg council member in charge of supervising the closing. "It's been sad for members of our organization and for customers in the neighbourhood."

Allentuck said the store, located at 725 Osborne St., has been losing money in the past year.

"Our overhead was too high and rent was too high. There's a lot of competition from other thrift stores, and we just couldn't keep up… We had to make a business decision… About 20 years ago, we were profiting at least $50,000 from the store. Over the years, we made a lot of money with the store… But in the last few years, we were struggling."

Winnipeg section president Rose Aziman said that without the store as a source of revenue, her organization will continue to sustain itself "by doing other fundraising and by applying for grants for specific projects, from different agencies, depending on the project."

Allentuck said, for example, that "when we had a genetic testing educational project last year for Jewish women, we successfully applied for a grant from the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba.

"We own the building where the Gwen Secter Creative Living Centre operates, although the living centre pays all the expenses associated with operating the building. Because of that, we have been able to keep the building and not had to consider selling it. That's good for everybody," Allentuck said.

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Suspect arrested for Calgary anti-Semitic incidents

Compiled by CJN Staff

CALGARY — An 18-year-old man has been arrested in Winnipeg in connection to several graffiti incidents that occurred in Calgary in November 2009.

Canada-wide warrants had been issued for the man believed to responsible for spray-painting anti-Semitic slogans and signs on the Calgary Jewish Community Centre and nearby Holocaust Memorial and the Chabad Lubavitch Centre.

"There was some swastikas and words such as 'kill Jews' and 'six-million more,'" said Staff Sgt. Don Coleman.

An investigation led officers to believe the suspect was in Winnipeg. Winnipeg police were contacted and they made the arrest late last week.

The suspect was wanted on Canada-wide warrants for one count of mischief to property, two counts of mischief to a place of religious worship motivated by hate and one count of inciting public hatred.

Under provisions of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the suspect cannot be identified, since the offences were committed when he was 17.

Canadian Jewish Congress praised Calgary police for investigating the case.

"The perseverance of Calgary Police Service [CPS] shows that even cowardly acts performed under cover of darkness can be traced to their source. We congratulate the CPS for their commitment on this file and for their recognition, demonstrated through the laying of appropriate charges, that criminal acts motivated by hate impact not only individuals but target entire communities," said Congress CEO Bernie Farber.

Baird takes close look at Israeli airport security

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Federal Transport Minister John Baird spent several days in Israel recently exploring that country's airport security methods and looking for ways to adapt its successful screening measures for use here in Canada.

John Baird, right, with the Western Wall Rabbi, Shmuel Rabinowitz, centre, and Nathan Jacobson.

"We had an amazing trip," said Baird, whose senior policy adviser, Adam Blinick, accompanied him. "We had a significant number of security briefings, met with representatives of Shin Bet, with people involved in aviation counter-terrorism, and learned a tremendous amount… we learned about security for cargo, people and airport security. Obviously, the threat in Israel is different, but there is much we can learn, particularly on behavioural analysis. That was worth the trip in and of itself."

Baird, who is also federal infrastructure minister, met with his counterparts, Israeli Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz and Uzi Landau, minister of national infrastructure.

They agreed to work together on a Canada-Israel Blue Skies Agreement to allow more links between the countries, providing more accessibility for Air Canada and El Al in each others' countries.

Baird said he told them, "You can't have a better friend of Israel than Canada – and especially me – so if we can't come to an agreement that helps both of us, we never will!"

Other items on Baird's agenda included briefings about Canada's involvement in the West Bank, where, he said, "we provide work, but don't provide money directly." He said the economy in the West Bank is showing some positive signs, which he feels will lead to an easing of tensions.

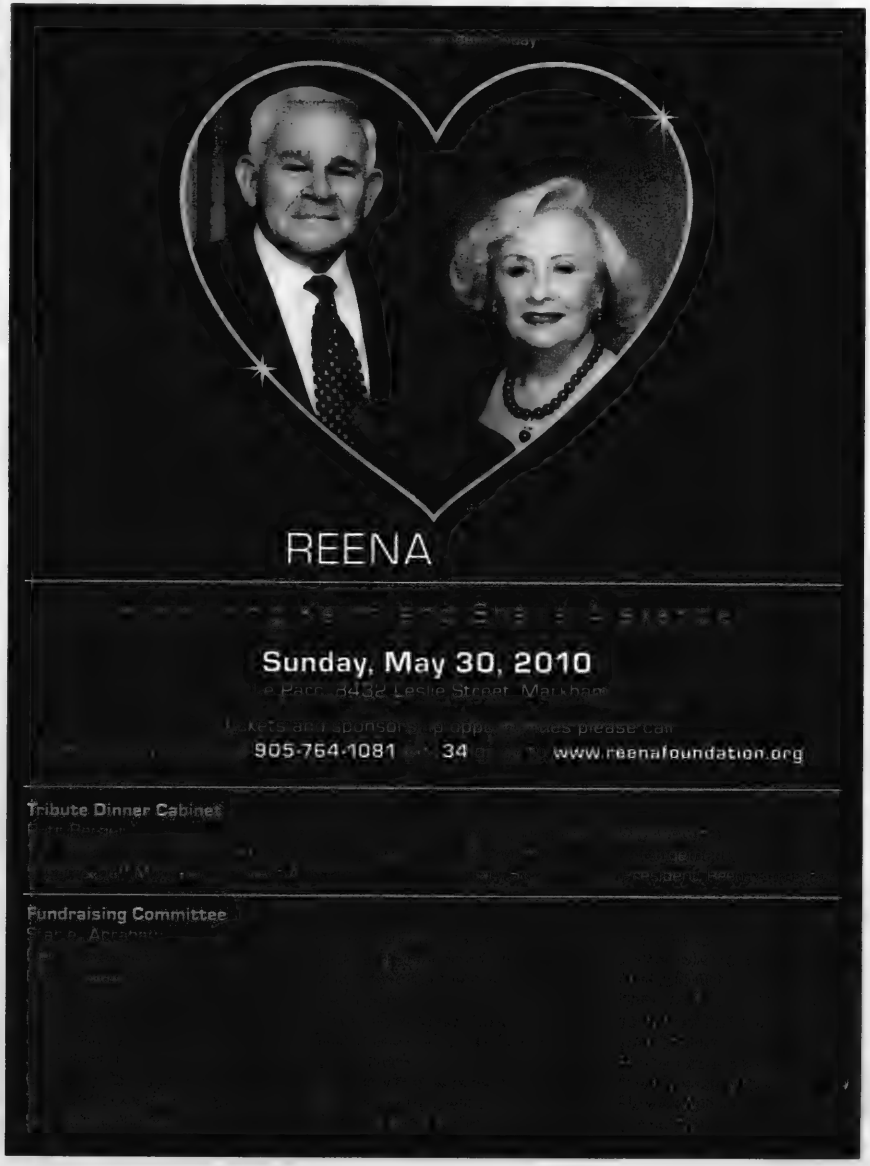
A visit to a company that's working on an electric car, which Baird said would be great for investment and reduce our reliance on the combustion engine, as well as a meeting with the private operator of the main north-west highway (built with Canadian assistance) and a meeting with Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat were also on Baird's itinerary.

During dinner with Canada's ambassador to Israel, Jon Allen, Baird said they celebrated the recent memorandum of understanding between the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. "This will be great news for both Canadian and Israeli companies," he said.

Canada will be investing in new airport security equipment and has awarded a contract to a U.S. firm with Israeli expertise.

"We are taking some significant moves on aviation security. There are a lot of lessons we can learn [from Israel]," said Baird.

Summing up, Baird said "there is a growing recognition that the Canada-Israel relationship has made a huge leap… over the last four years, which made me very proud."



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CLERGY ENCOUNTERS: United Synagogue Day School middle school students had the opportunity to meet Rabbi Adam Cutler of Beth Tzedec Congregation and cantor Ben Silverberg (an alumnus of USDS Bathurst) of Shaar Shalom Synagogue. Rabbi Cutler and Silverberg discussed why they became a rabbi and cantor, respectively, as well as about their training and what rabbis and cantors do from Sunday through Friday. Pictured, back row from left, are Noah Lewis, Rabbi Cutler, Silverberg and Hannah Betel, along with, bottom row from left, Orli Chapman, Aviva Levman and Daniel Weiman.

BONE MARROW DRIVE: The Kingston chapter of Alpha Epsilon Pi helped swab 410 people at a bone marrow drive last week at Queen's University. The Jewish fraternity worked with Queen's Hillel on the two-day initiative. The goal was to add hundreds of names to the Gift of Life Bone Marrow Donor Registry, a Florida-based organization that helps find bone marrow transplants for those in need.

[Sam Rosenbaum photo]

BOWLING FOR ZAREINU: Zareinu Educational Centre students Shalom Brothman, left, and Hershy Lowy flank Danna Zevy, centre left, and Eliana Goldberg, students at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto and organizers of a recent "Bowlereinu" fundraiser that aimed to raise awareness about students with special needs. The second annual such event, held Mar. 14 at Richmond Hill Pro Bowl, raised $20,000 for Zareinu, which serves students with special needs.

Coast to Coast

Israel faces tough choices on torture, prof says

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Is torture ever permissible? If so, under what circumstances? Initial responses to the contrary, these questions themselves prove tortuous to the legal minds wrestling with them.

Prof. Yuval Shany, a law professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and academic director of the Minerva Center for Human Rights, has been involved in this area of research for a number of years. Currently teaching international law at Columbia University Law School, he spoke March 11 at Ottawa's Agudath Israel Congregation at the invitation of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on "the prohibition against torture in Israel: how absolute is absolute?"

Shany said that there's "a growing acceptance in international law, and in the domestic laws of most countries, including Israel, that human rights are relative and have to be balanced against other individual rights and society interest."

The challenge of balancing, however, is extremely problematic, he said. From a human rights perspective, the adoption of absolute norms of behaviour would be preferable. However, in real terms, there are considerable costs to this approach.

Shany outlined international legal rulings dealing with the absolute prohibition against torture and the establishment of a "two-degree understanding of the norm... degree two involves cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and degree one involves the more intense forms of suffering."

In other words, such treatment as sleep deprivation, excessive noise exposure, sensory deprivation, food manipulation and "wall standing" would be considered cruel and inhuman treatment, but not necessarily torture, he said.

The argument for an absolute ban on torture is strengthened by such considerations as the "slippery slope argument," that once an exception is made for one circumstance, it becomes easier for each successive exception to be accepted. Another compelling consideration is that torture corrupts the torturer.

Theory is, however, only abstract, but in day-to-day reality, Shany said, "Israel has really faced a very serious security threat – in particular a wave of suicide bombing, which rendered many standard law-and-order responses inadequate."

While admitting that Israel has employed "coercive interrogations" in relation to terror cases in the past, and that there have been major debates about the possible use of torture in extracting information from terrorists, Shany is of the opinion that torture has probably not been eradicated in Israel, but exists "below the surface."

He added: "Torture is evil, but in real life, sometimes you have very cruel dilemmas and there is no right thing. You have to exercise moral judgment, assume the consequences and minimize the harm you inflict.

"Sometimes you create laws knowing that there will be circumstances when the application of the law will be wrong. There are cruel dilemmas, and the law's ability to solve the dilemmas is often limited."

Quebec's health system defended

By JANICE ARNOLD

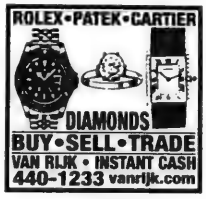
MONTREAL — The man overseeing health care on the Island of Montreal insists the situation is not as bad as it is being portrayed, with daily stories of overcrowded emergency rooms and long delays for surgery and other treatment.

"The media give the impression... that we have probably one of the worst systems in the world," said David Levine, president and executive director of the Montreal Health and Social Service Agency.

"There's a touch of exaggeration in that."

But he didn't deny the system is desperately in need of fundamental change.

Levine was the keynote speaker at a two-day conference organized by the Cummings Jewish Centre for Seniors (CJCS) and attended by about 150 community and public sector health and social service professionals working with anglophone seniors in different parts of the province.



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Murray Goldkind
Broker of Record

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Quebec Press Council raps 'racist' headline

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Quebec Press Council has faulted a Laurentian weekly newspaper for "an inaccurate, sensationalist and racist" headline on a story last year about Jews living in Val-David.

In a decision released March 12, the council upheld a complaint by Harold Lehrer against *Accès Laurentides* about a headline that appeared on the July 3, 2009, front page. It read: "Ecole, Synagogue… Les Juifs de Val-David Condamnés – Plus de $20,000 d'Amendes! [School, Synagogue… The Jews of Val-David Condemned – More than $20,000 in Fines!]."

Lehrer, a Montreal lawyer with a country home near Val-David, pointed out that the headline didn't jibe with the story, which he found to be a reasonable account of a trial that took place in Ste. Adèle municipal court.

He deplored that the headline was not only wrong, but that it left the impression every Jewish resident had been condemned, and it would, therefore, promote racism.

Lehrer told the council that the impression was left that all the Jews of Val-David had been found guilty. In fact, it was only members of the Disciples des Rabbins de Belz pour Renforcer la Torah, a chassidic community, who were fined for violation of a municipal regulation.

He noted that the newspaper is distributed widely in supermarkets and other stores, and its front page was seen by many people, giving it an impact beyond the region it serves.

The council agreed that the headline was a generalization that made it appear the entire Jewish community had been condemned, and thereby might expose all Jews to prejudice.

The council decided it wouldn't have been hard for the editor to come up with a headline that was more precise and just as succinct.

Lehrer wanted the newspaper, which is published by Transcontinental Inc., to print a retraction and explain that it was one group not the entire Jewish population that was involved in this case.

This demand was upheld by the council as well, and *Accès Laurentides* editor-in-chief Eric-Olivier Dallard was reprimanded for not publishing a timely correction after Lehrer's complaint.

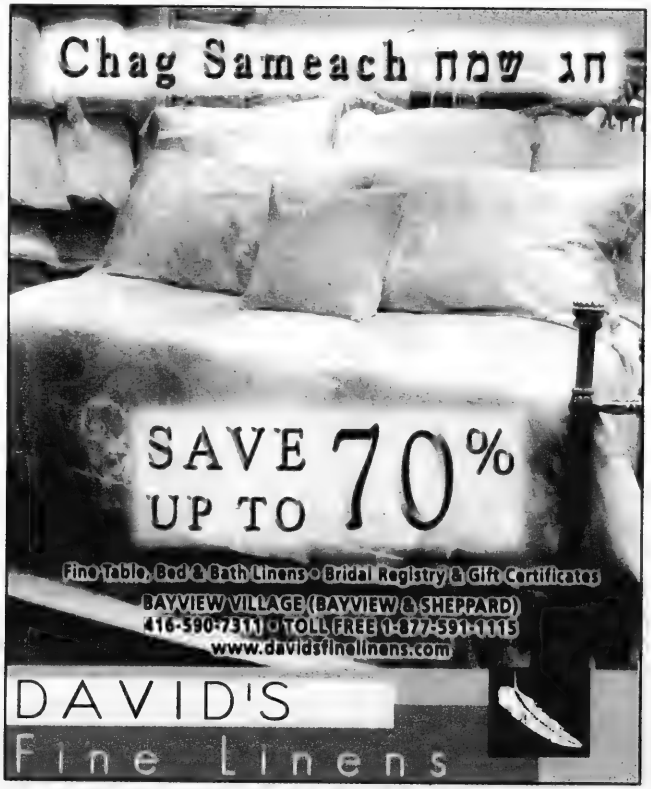
Dallard told the council that he decided to use the headline for two reasons. Firstly, he felt that using the long name of the Belz group was unwieldy and that the words chosen had a "very specific resonance" for local readers – the chassidic group in question.

Secondly, Dallard said "the art of titling in journalism must combine economy of words and concepts charged with meaning, all the while taking into account the facts of the news." He felt no one could have been misled by the headline.

He claimed it would "create a dangerous precedent" with repercussions for the Quebec press if he was found blameworthy.

In its decision, the council cited its code of ethics for the media, which stipulates that headlines must "respect the meaning, spirit and content" of the text. "Those responsible must avoid sensationalism and make sure that headlines and titles do not serve as vehicles for prejudice and bias."

Dallard did not appeal the decision within the 30 days provided.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Negev Gala to honour couple for philanthropy, leadership

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Larry Vickar has been active with the Jewish National Fund for most of his adult life.

He and his wife, Tova, will be honoured at this year's Negev Gala on June 1. The Vickars are being celebrated for their philanthropy and leadership in both the Jewish and the greater community.

Larry Vickar

Tova Vickar

"It runs in the family," Larry Vickar said. "My father, Norman, is a past president of the JNF and was the honoree 10 years ago," adding that 20 years ago, his late uncle, Ed, was the honoree.

"Larry has been on our board for many years," said Jacqueline Freedman, JNF development co-ordinator for Manitoba and Saskatchewan. "He and Tova have also played a prominent role in many other charitable and communal organizations, both in the Jewish and general community. We wanted to recognize them for their exemplary community service."

The Vickar family hail from Edenbridge, the early 20th-century Jewish farm colony in Saskatchewan. For more than 50 years, the Vickar name has been associated with the auto industry. Ed Vickar, who died about 10 years ago, was the founder of Vickar Community Chevrolet Oldsmobile in Winnipeg.

Larry Vickar was raised in Melfort, Sask., and moved to Winnipeg when he was in his early 20s to work in auto sales for his uncle, Ed. Larry eventually became a partner, and bought out his uncle in the mid-1990s. He built Vickar Community Chev into one of Canada's top General Motors dealerships.

Tova Vickar is originally from Israel. She came to Winnipeg, also when she was in her early 20s, and worked in the fashion industry. Now, she is also part of the Vickar Community Chev team.

The Vickars are true partners, both at work and in their community and charitable endeavours. For example, Larry chaired Winnipeg's Combined Jewish Appeal campaign in 2004 and 2005, while Tova co-chaired the Women's Campaign in 2005 and 2006.

Larry has been president of the Manitoba Motor Dealers Association and president of the Transcona Rotary Club, and he has served on the board of Ducks Unlimited.

The funds raised at this year's Negev Gala go toward the Alexander River Project in Israel. The goal of the JNF project is to clean up the Alexander River, which flows from the West Bank in the area around Nablus westward to the Mediterranean.

The Vickars' choice of this project is a reflection of their long-term interest in improving the environment. "There are a lot of stone-cutting factories along the path of the river," Larry Vickar said. "Run-off from the factories, as well as raw sewage from local communities, have badly polluted the river. The JNF is working with the Israel Water Authority and the Palestinian Authority to reclaim the river and create a green belt around it."

He said that another aspect of the project that excites him and Tova is that the river flows through the Hepher Valley, a tract of land that the JNF was able to purchase, thanks to several hundred thousand dollars that the organization raised across Canada in the late 1920s.

The Vickars viewed the Alexander River reclamation project first-hand in January when they were in Israel to attend the 2010 Manitoba-Israel Water Experts Symposium, which brought together water experts from Manitoba and Israel to exchange ideas.

"Most of the scientific meetings took place at Kfar Blum in the Hula Valley," Larry Vickar said, adding that the Hula Valley was once a swamp, which was drained by the early settlers with the help of the JNF.

"It is now recognized that that wasn't a good idea," he said. "In recent years, the JNF has recreated wetlands in the area. There is a new lake, the birds are back, and the area has become a beautiful tourist site."

Class Acts

PESACH FROGS: Associated Hebrew Schools junior kindergarten students – from left, Yoav Yshaia, Leora Prutschi, Leah Switzer and Ben Sadeh – learned about the 10 plagues while dressed up as frogs by the Nile River.

MATZAH MUNCHER: Gan Netivot children at Netivot HaTorah Day School visited the Chabad Lubavitch Matzah Factory, where they learned the many intricacies of baking matzah. Pictured here is Kyra, who couldn't wait for Pesach.
[Rebecca Ansel photo]

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov
The Canadian Jewish news

Congratulations to Esther Edery & Adam Ohayon on your marriage. Proud parents, Chantal & Henri Ohayon and Kathryn Edery.

Mazel tov to Minnie Strauss, who will be turning 100 years old on April 4. She will mark this joyous occasion in celebration with her loved ones.

Mazel tov to Barbara (Babs) Usher on her upcoming 80th birthday. Wishing you all the best from your children and grandchildren.

Robin & Jerrold Lerman, Barbara & Shawn Dalgorf announce the engagement of Evan & Ashley. Proud grandparents, Violet Thompson and Lyle & Dave Cappe.

David & Laraine Fleishman and Giselle Holman announce the birth of first grandchild Samantha Reese Holman. Proud parents are Mark & Lisa Holman.

Shelley & Smadar Koral, Sammy & Susan Stern and their families are thrilled to welcome Max Shael to Ilana & Jonathan Stern on Feb. 10.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Social Networking @ The Canadian Jewish News
for the :-) generation

What's New holiday deadlines: Deadline for the April 8 issue is March 24. Deadline for April 15 is April 7. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Saturday, March 27

MEANINGFUL SEDER

Rabbi Wayne Allen, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, leads a discussion on adding to the Passover story. 6:45 p.m. following Minchah.

SHABBAT SERVICE

B'nai Shalom of Halton-Peel, a Conservative egalitarian congregation is holding its monthly Shabbat service in Oakville. Kiddush follows services. Location and details, info@bnaishalom.ca or visit www.bnaishalom.ca

SHABBAT HAGADOL

The community is invited to a Shabbat hagadol drashah, 6 p.m., by **Rabbi Moshe Stern**, Shaarei Tefillah Congregation. Topic, "Lessons of Pesach As We Confront a Hostile World." Men and women welcome. 416-798-1631.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah Torah class, 10-11 a.m., Tzav. Everyone welcome.

SHABBAT LUNCHEON

Beth Jacob V'Anshei Drildz Congregation is holding a Shabbat hagadol luncheon. Tickets, $18 for adults, children under 5 are free. Call the shul office, 416-638-5955.

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (Central) meets at Toronto Heschel School, Sheppard and Faywood. Shiur 9 a.m., services 9.30 a.m. Kiddush following. For information, tpmcentral1@gmail.com.

Tuesday, March 30

PASSOVER SEDER

West Toronto Jewish Community Association holds a potluck Passover seder, March 30, 6:30 p.m. $25 adults, $10 children, $60 maximum (plus Passover dish to share). **Francine**, 416-588-9436, passoverseder@rogers.com.

Thursday, April 1

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rabbi Cory Weiss, Temple Har Zion, will discuss Pirkei Avot: Wisdom of the Fathers, at a community lunch and learn, noon-1 p.m. Bring lunch, coffee/tea supplied. Program runs weekly until May 13.

OTHER NEWS

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre requires drivers for Meals on Wheels and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP, **Judy**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or judy@djds.ca.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m., followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m., followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

BAYCREST VOLUNTEERS

The Museum at Baycrest seeks volunteers for two projects over the summer. An online catalogue project requires volunteers who have computer and research skills, and are detail oriented. The Museum on Wheels is a bedside art program that requires volunteers with a background in art and/or anthropology, and previous experience working with an elderly clientele. 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, or alefkovitz@baycrest.org.

Continued on page 31

Class Acts

OLYMPIC VISIT: Wearing red and white to celebrate Team Canada, students at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus enjoyed an inspirational visit from Shelley-Ann Brown, back row left, a member of the Canadian Olympic silver-medal bobsled team. Pictured with Brown, back row right, is Grade 5 language arts teacher Andrea Glassman (who organized the visit); along with, middle row from left, Aaron Groskopf, Matthew Shuman, Jordan Smith, Rayna Bernstein, Marlee Train, Lauren Walter and Bailey Stern, and front row from left, Itamar Zaltzman, Samuel Barsky, Max Gill, Noah Grossman, Albert Bloom, Sydney Greenspoon and Rachel Shulman.

A PARALYMPIC MOMENT: Paralympian Shayne Smith, who lit the Paralympic cauldron in Toronto, visited grade 5 and 6 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School. Smith recounted his inspiring climb to becoming a Paralympic athlete while encouraging students to never give up on their dreams. With the help of Parasport Ontario employee Lauren Dickler, Shayne also ran wheelchair basketball clinics, during which students were able to try his sport. Pictured are grade 5A Peacemakers/Peer Mediators, who for their annual tikkun olam project collected pop tabs as a fundraiser to purchase wheelchairs, presenting their collections to Smith. Pictured, back row from left, are Samantha Plotnik, Arielle Amacker, Julia Zinman, Anna Rosen, Aaron Tepper, Jack Kline, Jason Lechter, Rachel Shiff, Megan Hoffer and Malanie Zerker, and, in front, Smith and Sydney Kavanagh.

Continued from page 30

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com, for info:

Younger Widow/Widower Bereavement Group: Six-session discussion series for individuals 60 and under who have recently lost a spouse, April 1, Lipa Green Centre, 6th floor, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

How to Achieve a Good Divorce: A workshop for people who are thinking of separating or in the beginning stages of separation and divorce. Presented by a lawyer and divorce coach/mediator. April 1, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Picking up the Pieces: Six-session group for parents and children who are going through divorce. Starts the week of April 12. **Janice Shaw**, 905-882-2331, ext. 232.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six-session group. Topics include coping with grief, resolving unfinished business. April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Living with Teens: Parenting your adolescent without losing your cool. A six-session group, April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Widow/Widowers Bereavement: Six-session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. April 14, 1-2:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Five-session group for couples who are going to be married in the next year. Offered in partnership with the Rabbinical Assembly-Ontario Region. April 14, 7-9 p.m., at Beth Tzedec Congregation. Also six sessions beginning April 2, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at First Narayever.

Successful Step-parenting: Six-session group for couples living in blended families, April 14, 7:30-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: Four-week group for parents of ADHD-diagnosed children, April 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St., 6th floor. Call **Pam**, 416-638-7800, ext. 315.

Aspergers 101: One-session workshop for anyone wanting to know more Aspergers syndrome. Presented by **Margot Nelles** from the Aspergers Association and Aspergers et al. April 21, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: Six-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. April 21, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Couple Communication: A four-session group for couples wanting to learn communication skills, April 22, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 7-9 p.m.

Stepping Stones for Women: Creating Your Journey Towards Employment: One-session workshop for women who are looking to enter or re-enter the workforce, April 28, 7 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. No charge. Registration required.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing their life skills. Topics include: building self esteem, time, stress management, assertiveness, April 29, 7 to 9 p.m,. Lipa Green Centre.

100th ANNIVERSARY

The Stashover-Slipia Congregation is 100 years old in Toronto in 2010. Call to find out how you can support, reconnect and help us celebrate, 416-789-1333 or Stashover100@bell.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or to drive seniors to medical appointments. **Lysa Springer,** 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

Circle of Care Hospice and Jewish Hospice are looking for volunteers. 30-hour training program begins April 12. **Mindy Shiel,** mshiel@circleofcare.com or 416-635-2900, ext. 467.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Hope Through Healing, a spousal bereavement group for 55+ meets Wednesdays, April 14-June 9, 10-11:30 a.m., Circle of Care. Call **Rebecca Sorokin**, 416-635-2900, ext. 462.

BROADWAY

Broadway from the Bimah, featuring **Marvin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** and 45-piece symphony orchestra, May 27, 7:30 pm., Adath Israel Congregation. For tickets, Sheila, 416-635-5340 or sheila@adathisrael.com

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for a variety of learning opportunities. "Hero or Villain? The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn," with **Paul Franks**, April 15-May 6, 9:30-11 a.m. Prosserman JCC (Men and women welcome).

"Nidah: In-depth Exploration of Laws of Family Purity," with **Rivka Sonenberg**, Mondays May 3 and 10, 9:45 a.m., hosted at 543 Coldstream Ave.

"How Can We Sing a Song of God in a Foreign Land? Destruction and Healing After the Destruction of the Temple," with **Hindy Najman,** July 15, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. (Men and women welcome). 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca, www.mekorot.ca

THIRD SEDER

Winchevsky Centre's annual third seder, April 10, 4:30 p.m., Sala Caboto, Villa Columbo, 40 Playfair Ave. $45 adults; $25 children 3-6; $30 children 7-12, students and unwaged. Features musician **David Wall** and Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. www.winchevskycenetre.org or 416-789-5502.

PARSHAH OF THE WEEK

Lodger Centre Congregation holds the Parshah of the week, Wednesdays, with **Judy Hazan,**7:30 p.m, open to all, no charge.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC, April 8, 1:30 p.m., "The ABCs of Fraud, Identity Theft, Telemarketing and More." 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Friendly atmosphere and beautiful surroundings, Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Sunday dance, April 18, 7-10 p.m. with live music. Lunch and laughter, April 12, noon, dairy lunch provided. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. for discussion group, Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-9444.

BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Bingo Bonanza, 1-3 p.m., April 7, 1-3 p.m.

Lecture, "Joseph to Nasser," April 1, with **Diana Mingail**, 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

Contact registration desk to receive $25 discount on adult program courses, including Ryerson/Chang course, theatre classes, dance, mah-jong. Ext 4235.

April 28, 10-11:30 a.m., open house. Experience folk dance led by **Teme Kernerman** and **Sandy Starkman**. Room 221.

Lunch and Learn with **Rabbi Meir Rosenberg,** executive director, Mizrachi Canada, April 9, 12-1 p.m.., Room 107.

Check out our family programs including Sports with Jay, Shabbat party, and prenatal classes. ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Passover seder, March 29, 7:30, presented by Chabad of Midtown, Miles Nadal JCC, JF&CS. Led by **Rabbi Deitsch**. At Miles Nadal JCC. $60 adult, $35 child. 416-516-2005 or www.chabadmt.com.

March 28, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Sundays on Bloor, "The Crypto Jews of Portugal," $9, drop-in ($5 student with valid ID). Ext. 154; 2-3:30 p..m, "History of Jazz in Toronto" with **Andrew Scott**. $9, drop-in ($5 student with valid ID). Ext. 0.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

MATH TREASURE HUNT: Students from several Toronto and Hamilton schools took part in the annual Weizmann Canada Math-by-Mail Treasure Hunt, held March 4 at Beth Tzedec Congregation. Dr. Yossi Elran, creator of Math-by-Mail from the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel, led the hunt. Picured standing are Shira Silver, left, and Michal Silver, and sitting are Tamar Walfish, left, and Leah Sugar.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 44

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Reznik, Raisa	March 4/10	Private
Davis, Sydney	March 6/10	7300 Yonge St
Lippy Lipschutz, Lillian	March 5/10	Private
Goldhar, Samuel	March 7/10	47 Dell Park
Muchmaker, Marilyn	March 7/10	16 Flintwood
Kent, Tibor	March 7/10	155 Marlee Ave
Kaploun, Mikhail	March 7/10	Private
Siegel, Evelyn	March 7/10	Private
Adler, Lilly	March 9/10	Private
Shapiro, Bentsion	March 10/10	205 Hilda Ave
Gotkin, Joan	March 9/10	17 Tefley Rd
Doppelt, Sally	March 9/10	
Pine, Joseph	March 11/10	Private
Kirshenblatt, Howard Stephen	March 11/10	Private

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Karen Silver	Feb 28/10	150 Maplehurst Ave
Lillian Goldberg	Feb 25/10	33 Christie St
Florence Coleman	Feb 27/10	1925 Steeles Ave E
Sidney Birken	Feb 28/10	3560 Bathurst St
Helen Jacobs	Mar 1/10	3560 Bathurst St
Esther Bem	Mar 1/10	65 Spring Garden, 2106
Rose Zamikoff	Feb 26/10	54 Stormont Ave
Eva Bermack	Mar 2/10	180 Cook's Mill Cr
Joyce Orenstein	Feb 28/10	37 The Bridle Path
Albert Wasserman	Mar 3/10	205 Old Forest Hill Rd
Lionel Joseph	Mar 3/10	343 Clark Ave W, 1001
Jack Morris	Mar 2/10	77 Dunfield Ave
Rachel Schur	Mar 5/10	645 Castlefield Ave
Edith Propp	Mar 7/10	343 Clark Ave W
Gloria Richmond	Mar 9/10	33 Lower Village Gate

HEBREW BASIC

Millicent Pitt	Feb 15/10	541 Finch Ave W
Jaffa Stern	Feb 18/10	49 Ladysbridge Dr
Ouida Stromberg	Feb 22/10	200 Woodmount Av

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Obituary

Bookstore owner helped people in Israel and at home

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Israel (Izzy) Kaplan was a passionate Israel activist and a pillar of his Orthodox synagogue who ran a book and Judaica business – Israel's Judaica – catering to the entire spectrum of the Jewish community.

Kaplan died March 15 of pancreatic cancer at Toronto General Hospital. He was 63 and had been in hospital for three months. A funeral was held in Toronto, with burial following in Israel.

Adam Fuerstenberg, a retired English professor who is editor of *Parchment*, Canada's only journal of contemporary Canadian Jewish creative writing, told *The CJN* last week that Kaplan "was a very important part of Toronto's, and even Canada's, Jewish culture."

Kaplan gave *Parchment* a prominent place in his store "because he felt it was something that was important to Jewish culture in Canada," said Fuerstenberg. "He was always promoting Jewish books, not just religious books."

Kaplan also initiated literary readings at the store, and supplied Jewish schools across Canada with textbooks, Fuerstenberg noted.

He said Kaplan was a vibrant man with a terrific sense of humour, "always a smile," and an interest in other people.

Avivi Gottschalk, Kaplan's assistant at Israel's, said that Kaplan was "an excellent employer. He was kind, he was understanding, and he was a real mensch."

She added that he "would get people walking in off the street requesting donations. He always had envelopes ready to give."

As well, Gottschalk, said, Kaplan "just loved Israel and he worked on its behalf morning, noon and night."

Yossi Winter, president of the Toronto Zionist Council and a friend of Kaplan's, said that Kaplan, the council's vice-president and treasurer for the past several years, was the nicest man he had ever met.

Israel (Izzy) Kaplan

At the height of the intifadah, Kaplan organized an "Israel Mall," bringing Israeli merchants here to sell their goods on at least two occasions.

"He was buying whatever he could in Israel, and saw that the merchants were suffering," Winter said. "He made sure it didn't cost a penny for the merchants [to come to Toronto.]"

Kaplan, the youngest of four siblings, was born in Toronto and attended Associated Hebrew Schools on Brunswick Avenue. His father, David Aryeh Kaplan, founded Negev Bookstore, which is now run by Izzy's brother, Arthur.

Izzy was in the family business before branching off on his own 28 years ago.

Jerry Rosenfield, a longtime friend of Kaplan's who served with him on Congregation Bnai Torah's executive and on its religious committee, and studied with him at a daily *daf yomi* Talmud class, said Kaplan was "such a beautiful person, soft-spoken but determined, [with] a passion for the people and for the land [of Israel]."

As well, Rosenfield said, Kaplan was non-judgmental and respectful to everyone.

Kaplan probably visited Sderot and Gush Katif (the Jewish communities in Gaza) more often then many Israelis, said Rosenfield, who is president of Mizrachi Canada.

"Nothing took him away from working on and for the people of Israel. Every time he went to Israel, he invariably extended his ticket, because he had more to do. He would arrange for friends to help people live better. They were in shacks when they were evacuated from Gush Katif [in 2005]. He arranged for them to have the necessities of life and be more comfortable," Rosenfield said. "He would raise funds privately."

Kaplan leaves his wife Susie; children David, Dayna Pappagallo and Tamara Okun, all of whom live in Israel; seven grandchildren; and, in Toronto, siblings Arthur, Morty and Fay.

SUTZKEVER SHLOSHIM

Liba Augenfeld, a Vilna Ghetto partisan and friend of acclaimed Yiddish poet and fellow Vilna Ghetto partisan Avrom Sutzkever, in photo, who died in January in Israel at age 96, spoke at a recent shloshim memorial service held at the Montreal Jewish Public Library.

Feature

Ex-Montrealer becomes a beekeeper in Israel

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

Davy Gertel remembers a time when people didn't get on a plane to Israel to make aliyah – they came by boat.

"Only prime ministers flew," says Gertel, 73, a pioneer who came to Israel from Montreal on a ship in 1949. "My family sold everything, packed a box, and came here, cold turkey."

His entire extended family in Poland had been wiped out in the Holocaust, and this is what prompted his father to bring his wife, daughter and then-13-year-old son, Davy, to Israel.

Five years after their arrival, the Gertels settled in Moshav Orot, near Ashkelon, where Gertel and his wife still live today. He attended the nearby Nahalal Agricultural High School. It was there that he discovered what would become his lifelong passion – bees.

Bees were particularly important during the early years of the state. They were critical to the country's development. "Without bees, you have no apples, pears, avocado, sunflower, watermelon, cucumbers, squash," lists Gertel. "All of these plants require cross-pollination, which means they need bees."

But this was not his only reason for going into the field. "I was fascinated by them, their behaviour," says Gertel, one of Israel's top beekeeping specialists. "When you raise cows or sheep or horses, they are mammals. They are a lot like us. But bees are a completely different world. And they are not domesticated. Their behaviour hasn't changed for millions of years.

Davy Gertel works with his bees

"I look at a nice bee the way someone else appreciates a beautiful dog or horse. I love bees."

The first beehives in Israel were brought by the Templars. Based on findings at an excavated apiary near Beit Shean dating back to the time of King Solomon, it is estimated that those ancient bees produced some half a ton of honey per year.

The first modern Israeli beekeepers were in Nes Ziona. The city's bee industry was started at the turn of the 20th century by an immigrant to Israel, Reuven Lerer, a Jew from Prussia (now in eastern Germany). Lerer traded his land for a farm formerly owned by a Templar descendant, who had abandoned his land – and his hives – and returned to Prussia, after losing his whole family to malaria.

Lerer gathered together a small group of farmers who became Israel's first beekeepers. "In the beginning it was very good. It was World War II and there was no sugar, so honey was the only sweetener available," says Gertel. Not only did Nes Tziona have a huge number of hives, it also had a huge number of orange groves, which make for the sweetest honey.

"I had the honour of knowing some of the founders," says Gertel, who has a picture from the first Israeli beekeepers' course dating back to the early 1900s. "Nuts, every single one of them."

Continued on page 34

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Photo credit: David Shankbone, Yad Vashem Hall of Names

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Feature

'Israel is such a miracle'

Continued from page 33

When Gertel started his beekeeping career, he had to work with the local apis mellifera syriaca bee, a bad-tempered race that was difficult to work with. He was among the first beekeepers to import friendlier bee races from Europe and America, and begin the process of "re-queening" hives and improving the local stock. Now, he says, the apis mellifera syriaca bee is non-existent in Israel.

In the beginning, he was among some 2,000 beekeepers across the country, a pool that has shrunk to about 200, each handling many more hives, a total of some 100,000 across Israel. "I think we're one of the most crowded bee places in the world," he says, adding that the United States has some two million hives.

"Bees have so much to teach us," says Gertel. "They are all for one and one for all. They sacrifice themselves, and they work so hard. They are thrifty. They are amazing creatures. It's one of the animals we like to compare ourselves with," he says, noting that the bee appears on many crests of arms.

Gertel says that in some ways, the bees' way of life encapsulates his political outlook. "When the drones finish mating, they drop down, dead. They don't breathe a second more than needed," he says. "Maybe it's not politically correct, but I think maybe politicians could take a lesson from them – as soon as you're not productive, you're out."

At the height of his career, Gertel kept 1,000 hives and made his livelihood from honey, which he produced some 40 tons of each year. But it grew too taxing for him to collect the honey, and care for them – to protect them against hornets, disease, colony collapse disorder and more recent problems such as insecticide illnesses – and five years ago, he sold most of his hives.

He still looks after some 100 of them, which he uses to raise and sell queen bees. "It keeps me busy," says Gertel, explaining that when a hive loses its queen, they choose a random larva to become queen and feed it special food – royal jelly. When she is born, she stings all her sisters to death, mates, and starts laying eggs at a rate of 2,000 eggs per day, five times her own weight. At this point, Gertel puts her into a little box and sells her, and begins the process again, with another queen.

Now that he is semi-retired from the bee business, he has more time to spend with his four children and 12 grandchildren, all of whom live in Israel.

"We count our blessings every day," he says. "Israel is such a miracle. Since we live it every day, we tend to forget. But everything is miraculous here – the language, the nature – and to not be a part of it would be a shame. I am so happy that I have been a part of it."

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The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

NOTICE

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SHAAREI TZEDEC CONGREGATION HAS SUBMITTED BY-LAWS TO THE REGISTRAR OF THE CEMETERIES ACT (*REVISED*).

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PASSOVER FOOD IDEAS

Tastes from around the world

You can heat up that matzah ball soup and whip up grandpa's famous firehouse horseradish, but make room for new Passover tastes from India, Estonia, and Israel. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), the world's largest Jewish humanitarian assistance organization, sponsors hundreds of Passover seders around the world as part of its community building and welfare programs, and these recipes were chosen to represent some of more than the seventy countries JDC works in.

With remarkable regional flare, you'll be bowled over by our spicy Moroccan fish appetizer, crave the delicious matzah stuffing with walnuts for your roast turkey, and satisfy your sweet tooth with sweet potato balls rolled in mixed nuts. As we all know, Jewish food recipes can play fast and loose withingredient amounts and cooking time, so be prepared to be adventurous for this year's festive meal. Dayenu!

Appetizer From Israel:
MOROCCAN FISH
Recipe courtesy of Rachel Tachvilian from Beit Shemesh, Israel.

4 slices tuna or Nile perch (if available)
2-3 ripe tomatoes
salt (for marinating fish and for sauce)
lemon juice
1/4 tsp. turmeric
1/2 tsp. chicken-flavoured pareve soup mix
2-3 cups boiled water, plus more boiled water if using tuna handful of fresh coriander chopped
1 red pepper, cut into wide strips
1 long chili pepper, preferably dry, cut into wide strips
1 clove fresh garlic, peeled and chopped
about 1/2 cup vegetable oil
1 tbsp. sweet red paprika.

Preparation: Sprinkle salt and lemon juice over fish and let marinate for 30 minutes. In the meantime, prepare sauce by peeling the tomatoes and placing them in a wide pot. Add salt, turmeric and soup mix and bring to a boil. Mash cookedtomatoes (can use a potato masher). Then add 2-3 cups boiled water to pot. Bring sauce to a simmer.

Rinse fish: if using tuna, rinse it first with boiling water and then with tap water; if using Nile perch, rinse it with tap water. Place fish in sauce in a single layer. Place chopped coriander, pepper strips and chopped garlic on top of fish. Bring fish to a boil. In the meantime, thoroughly combine the oil and sweet paprika in a separate dish and add this mixture to fish.

After fish has boiled for 10 minutes, reduce flame to simmer. Simmer fish about another 30 minutes. Serve fish with sauce, hot or at room temperature. (serves 4)

Entrée From Estonia:
TURKEY WITH MATZAH STUFFING
Recipe courtesy of Larisa Simonova from Tallinn, Estonia.

1 large turkey

For the stuffing:
10 pieces of matzah
1 1/2 cups of white wine
vegetable oil
2 medium-sized onions, cubed
2 tbsp. of soup mix
1 stalk of celery, diced
10 rosemary twigs
3/4 to 1 cup of walnuts, chopped

For the basting oil:
1/2 cup of olive oil
1 1/2 tsp. of mustard;
1/2 tsp. of black pepper;
1/2 tsp. of paprika.

Clean turkey thoroughly. Soak matzah in a dish with the white wine, until soft. Fry the onion until the color is golden. Mix the onion together with matzah, then add the celery, rosemary, and walnuts.

Heat oven to 350. Mix olive oil, mustard, black pepper and paprika in separate dish and then smear on turkey using your hands. Stuff turkey with the matzah stuffing, placing any additional stuffing under the turkey.

Cover with foil and roast for at least 3 hours, turning it from time to time, until it gets tender and golden.

Dessert From India:
ROLLED RATALU (SWEET POTATO) WITH NUTS.

A specialty of the Bene Israel community; recipe courtesy of Rosy Solomon Moses of Mumbai, India.

1 lb of sweet potatoes
2 tbsp. of mashed dates
1/2 cup each of crushed almonds pistachios, and cashews.

Boil sweet potatoes with a little salt. When tender, peel and mash potatoes and add the mashed dates. Mix and create small balls. Roll in crushed nuts and serve.

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CHOOSE 1
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Slow Roasted Boneless Turkey Breast Stuffed with Sautéed Mushroom, Spinach and Onion Matzo Stuffing
~ or ~
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CHOOSE 2
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A Pesach tradition on a cake plate

By SYBIL KAPLAN
Special to The CJN

There is no blessing, there is no special plate. There isn't even a brachah over it! Can you guess what this well-known part of Pesach is?

It's sponge cake.

Sponge cake comes in two types: angel food and true sponge. Angel food cake has cream of tartar, an acid ingredient, which used to be combined with baking soda and salt to make a form of baking powder before baking powder was produced commercially.

Cream of tartar is what gives the angel food cake the pure white colour, and it also creates an acid reaction in the batter.

Sponge cake has a more delicate cousin referred to as sunshine cake. Most people, however, refer to the Passover version as sponge cake.

Sponge cake is usually baked without shortening or butter or baking powder, but with lots of eggs. Its lightness and texture come from careful handling and the air beaten into the eggs. Recipes with nine to 12 eggs are not uncommon.

The aim of making a sponge cake is to beat the maximum amount of air into the yolks and whites while handling them as little as possible to retain the air. Egg yolks should be room temperature when beaten. An electric or rotary beater gives better results than whipping by hand. Since there is no baking powder, the main rising factor is the air plus steam.

When you make a sponge cake, it is important that the yolks are beaten until light and thick – and the whites must be beaten until they are stiff but glossy. Essences such as vanilla, lemon or orange rind add special flavour to sponge cake.

The best pan for a sponge cake is a tube pan with removable rim. Thus the central tube gives support to the batter. The pan should also be ungreased. A preheated 350-degree oven is the best heat for baking a sponge cake.

When the cake is done, the pan should be inverted to cool for about an hour and a half. Before removing the cake from the pan, you should loosen the sides with a knife. It's best not to try to cut a fresh sponge cake with a knife. Use a divider with prongs instead, and slide back and forth gently.

Zell Schulman in *Let My People Eat* offers these additional tips to keep your sponge cake from falling: have the eggs at room temperature and use only large eggs; don't add sugar until the egg whites begin to hold small, soft peaks; beat the egg whites until good and stiff but not dry; and never make a sponge cake on a wet day!

When choosing a special cake for Pesach, try one of these.

ORANGE GLAZED SABRA SPONGE CAKE

1/2 cup unsalted margarine
2/3 cup sugar
1 tsp. orange rind
2 tbsp. Sabra liqueur
3 eggs separated
2 tbsp. sugar
1/2 cup potato starch
6 tbsp. orange juice
3 tbsp. Sabra Liqueur
4 tsp. orange rind

Preheat oven to 325. In a bowl, cream margarine and sugar. Add 1 tsp. orange rind. Add 2 tbsp. Sabra and egg yolks. In another bowl, beat egg whites until stiff, gradually adding 2 tbsp. sugar. Add to creamed mixture gently then stir in potato flour. Pour into greased tube pan and bake in 325-degree oven 45 minutes to one hour.

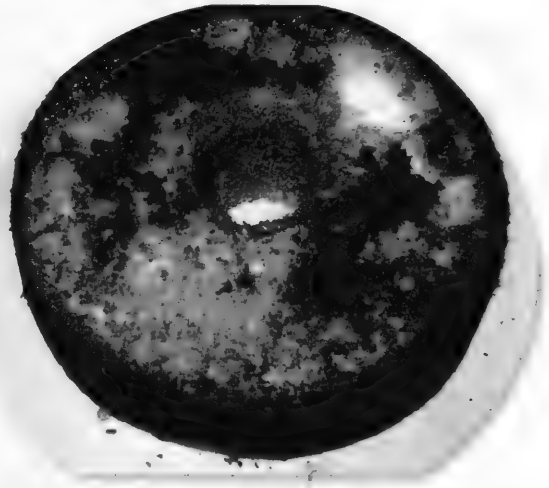
In a bowl, combine orange juice, 3 tbsp. Sabra and 4 tsp. orange rind. While cake is still hot, punch holes around cake with a toothpick and pour glaze over.

MIRIAM'S BANANA CAKE

This comes from one of my closest friends whom I left behind in Overland Park, Kansas, and who's a really creative cook.

7 separated eggs
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup mashed bananas
3/4 cup potato starch
1 cup sugar
1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350. In a bowl, beat egg whites until stiff but not dry then refrigerate. In another bowl, beat egg yolks until thick and lemon coloured Gradually add sugar and salt, beating continually.



Fold in bananas and potato starch. Fold in egg whites then nuts. Turn into an ungreased tube pan and bake in 350-degree oven 45-50 minutes. Invert pan to cool.

PAN DI SPAGNA

This recipe comes from *The Classic Cuisine of the Italian Jews* by Edda Servi Machlin. Pan di Spagna (bread of Spain) is also called Pasta Reale and was made in the matzah bakery with the same flour that was used for matzot.

6 eggs separated
1/8 tsp. salt
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
1/2 cup Passover cake meal
1/4 cup potato starch
freshly grated rind of 1 large lemon

Preheat oven to 350. In a small bowl, beat the egg whites with salt until soft peaks form. In a larger bowl, place egg yolks, sugar and orange juice and beat until frothy and lemon coloured.

Combine the cake meal with potato starch and gradually add to the egg-yolk mixture, beating until the batter is smooth. Add the lemon rind and fold in the egg whites.

Pour into an ungreased tube sponge-cake pan with removable bottom, and bake in preheated 350-degree oven for one hour. Remove from oven and invert pan over a wire rack to cool before unmolding. 8-12 servings.

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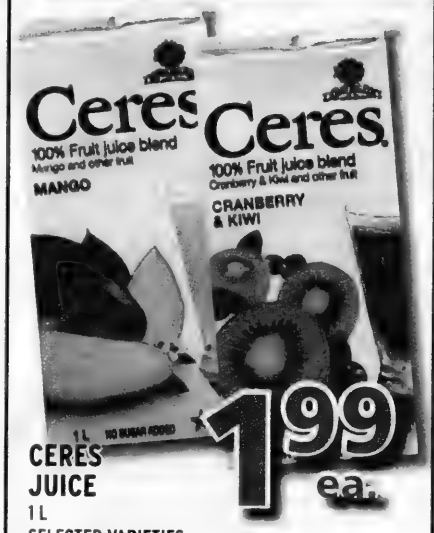

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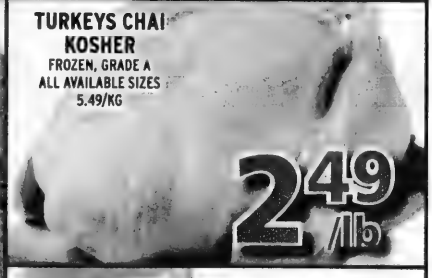

KEDEM GRAPE JUICE
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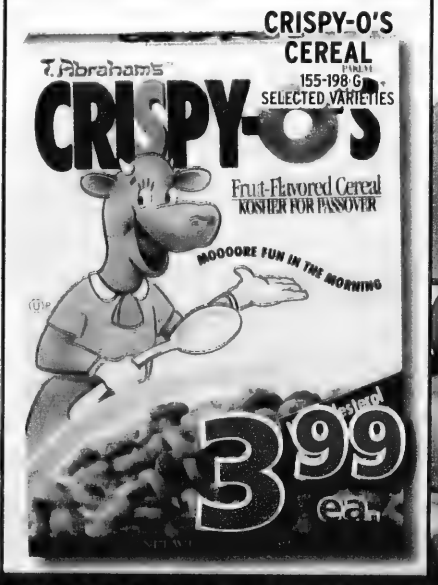

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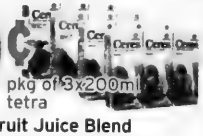

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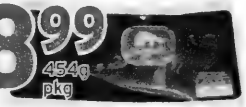

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Passover Food Ideas

The Open Door Haggadah

BY BEVERLY LEVITT
Special to The CJN

On the first night of Passover, Abayudaya in Uganda; Tutsi exiles in Brussels; descendants of the Bnei Menashe in Mazoram and Manipur, India; and students in Yeshiva Kineset in Neve Yaakov, Israel, will join Jews as far away as Vera Cruz, Mexico; Warsaw, Poland; and Boston, Mass., to retell the story of a 3,000-year-old miracle.

Some are Jews by choice, others are descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Still others are B'nei Anusim, Jews whose ancestors were forced to convert during the Inquisition and are just now returning to their faith.

All will gather around very different dining tables to take their children's hands and lead them in their own language – with a little Hebrew interspersed – along the path their ancestors took as they escaped slavery in Pharaoh's Egypt, plunged into the Red Sea as it magically parted, and they emerged on the other side free men.

In his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. called the biblical story of the Exodus an inspiration for blacks in America fighting for their own liberation during the Civil Rights Movement. What King realized as he read from the Bible the story of how Moses stood in Pharaoh's court, pleading for the liberation of the Jewish People, is that it is a metaphor about freedom for all mankind.

As the moon rises in the night sky on March 29, families adorned in their holiday best will read aloud from *The Open Door Haggadah* (Central Conference of American Rabbis, 2002), with its mixture of mystical, yet practical words by Rabbi Sue Levi Elwell of Philadelphia and breathtaking, inspirational drawings by artist Ruth Weisberg.

To Yeshiva Kineset graduate, 21-year-old Moshe Boruch Levitt: "What does a little child understand better than pictures? When it goes through your eyes it stays in your heart," he says.

Rabbi Elwell's Haggadah says, "Tonight we open our doors to family and friends and embark on a journey into the past. We discover how single travellers can pursue a common destiny, how individuals can become a people..."

We gaze in wonder at the sacred seder plate filled with symbolic foods, the bottles of kosher for Passover wine, ready to be poured, and the small bowls of salt water waiting for parsley sprigs to be dipped. Burning candles inspire us; the fragrance of spring flowers makes us feel renewed. And we begin our service, anxious to teach our children and revered guests – of all cultures, colours and beliefs – why this night is different from all other nights.

As Jews, we have always defined ourselves by our food. At the seder, it will punctuate every emotion our ancestors experienced. We bite into herbs so bitter our eyes sting and we all but choke – a visceral reminder of the harshness of slavery. We dip parsley sprigs into salt water to simulate their tears. We mindlessly chew tasteless matzah, the bread of affliction, and wash it down with four cups of wine, each linked to an aspect of our liberation.

We smile with glee, anticipating our favourite Passover treat – the fruit, nut, honey and wine mixture charoset, even through it symbolizes the bricks and mortar the Jewish slaves used to build Pharaoh's pyramids. We pile maror (bitter herbs) and charoset between two pieces of matzah to make the Hillel sandwich that denounces the bitterness of slavery and celebrates the sweetness of salvation.

Continued on page 40

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OR
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CHOOSE ONE
Farm fresh baby spinach salad with red onions, toasted almonds, mandarin oranges, topped with a citrus vinaigrette
OR
Traditional coleslaw

CHOOSE TWO
Brisket served with gravy au jus
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Baked salmon with an orange miso glaze
OR
Grilled salmon with a sweet teriyaki glaze

CHOOSE ONE
Garlic infused mashed potatoes with caramelized onions
OR
Farfel with sautéed button & shiitake mushrooms
OR
Roasted mini red potatoes with fresh herbs & Kosher salt

CHOOSE ONE
Green beans with caramelized onions & toasted almonds
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The PICKLE BARREL

Holiday's food evokes memories of our ancestors

Continued from page 39

When we walk a mile in our ancestors' shoes alongside the guests at our Passover table – laughing and crying with compassion – surely this is a first step at making us realize our similarities and healing our differences.

"Until recently, family seders were an internal conversation. Today, they're more expansive," says Emily Soloff, director of the Chicago chapter of the American Jewish Committee. "Although we come to the seder with different experiences, everyone can relate to its compelling message. We should all walk through the door as if we've never been to a seder before. If we have the same expectations as last year, it's a superficial veneer. We don't want the classic Hollywood depiction – Read! Sing! Let's eat! Religion is an important part of our lives. We should approach each other's celebrations with an open heart."

MANGO-DATE CHAROSET

From *Adventures in Jewish Cooking* by Jeffrey Nathan.

1/2 cup walnut pieces, chopped coarsely
1/3 cup pecan halves, chopped coarsely
3 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. fresh young ginger, peeled, shredded and minced (use the large holes on a box grater)
2 ripe mangoes, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch dice
2/3 cup seedless red grapes, quartered
1/2 cup pitted dates, cut in 1/4-inch dice
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 cup sweet white wine
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice

Toast nuts in dry sauté pan over low heat, about 4 to 5 minutes. Watch it carefully so it doesn't burn. Combine with sugar and ginger. Stir in mangoes, grapes and dates. Dissolve cinnamon in wine; stir in lemon juice; gently stir into fruit mixture with a rubber spatula. Store in airtight plastic container for at least 2 hours or overnight. Bring to room temperature before serving. Makes 3-1/2 cups.

CHICKEN ROULADEN WITH MATZAH FARFEL STUFFING

3 to 3-1/2 lb. chicken, boned and pounded flat, into an even, rectangular shape
2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more if needed
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 1/2 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary, divided
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme, divided
1 1/2 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade
2 tsp. potato starch dissolved in 2 tbsp. cold water

Wild Mushroom-Farfel Stuffing

3 cups matzah farfel
3/4 cup chicken stock
2 tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tbsp. sun-dried tomatoes, plumped and diced
8 oz. assorted wild mushrooms, such as cremini or shiitake, stemmed and coarsely chopped
1/2 cup coarsely chopped arugula
1 large egg, beaten
2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

To make the stuffing: heat a large empty skillet over a medium fire. Add the farfel and heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly toasted, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Add the stock and let stand to soften while preparing the other ingredients.

In the same skillet heat oil over a medium heat. Add onions; cook until translucent, about 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in sun-dried tomatoes and garlic; cook for 1 minute. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until they give off their liquid, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in the farfel, arugula, egg and basil. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to refrigerator to cool while preparing chicken.

Preheat oven to 350. Position a rack in the centre of the oven. Lightly oil a roasting pan.

To make the chicken, lay it flat, skin side down, on the cutting board. Cover with plastic wrap. If the chicken is uneven, pound it down further so it is all the same thickness. It should be about 14 in. long and 8 in. wide. The chicken's legs should be facing you; the breast away from you so each slice will have both dark and light meat. Remove plastic wrap. Place stuffing 1 inch from the edge closest to you and spread the rest of the stuffing on the chicken. Roll it up as if you were rolling a sushi roll. When finished, tie it with butcher's twine to keep it in shape.

Brush chicken with the oil. Mix 1 teaspoon rosemary, 1/2 teaspoon thyme, and the pepper in a small bowl; sprinkle over chicken. Place chicken in the roasting pan, seam side down. Roast about 1-1/4 hours until golden brown outside and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the centre registers 140.

Remove from oven. Let sit 10 to 12 minutes until slightly cool. Place on a carving board, remove string and slice. Place decoratively on a platter.

To make sauce. Place roasting pan over medium-high heat. Pour in the stock and bring to a boil, scraping up the browned bits in the pan with a wooden spoon. Cook until thickened and reduced to 1-1/2 cups, about 10 minutes. Stir in the remaining rosemary and thyme. Whisk in enough of the dissolved potato starch into the boiling liquid to thicken according to your preference. Season with salt and pepper. Pour into a sauceboat. Serve with the stuffing and sauce. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

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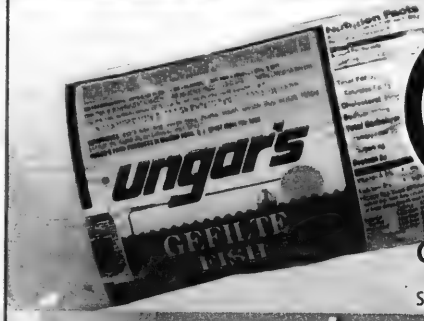

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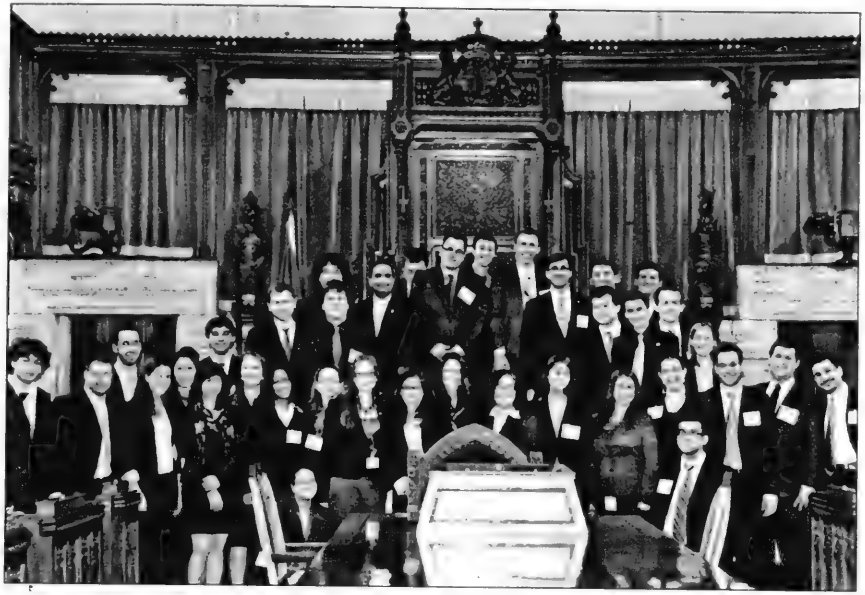

CJPAC fellows in the House of Commons

CJPAC fellows receive 'hands-on' political training

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Nearly 40 university students from 13 campuses across the country have been participating in an extracurricular activity that includes a trip to Ottawa.

The trip, however, involves far more than sightseeing in the nation's capital.

The students, all of whom have a keen interest in politics and a strong desire to participate in Israel advocacy, are the 2009-2010 Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC) Fellows. Chosen on the basis of an application and an interview process, successful students get the opportunity to meet with MPs and senior political strategists, as well as attend a national political conference in Ottawa and engage in a full day of advanced campaign training.

Throughout the academic year, the students work with local campaign and constituency offices and are trained to plan and implement a political program on their own campuses. They also take part in bi-weekly conference calls that provide exposure to a wide variety of political speakers, and are able to network with other Israel activists from campuses across the country.

"The goal [of the program] is to get Jewish and pro-Israel students engaged in Canadian politics at an advanced level. Most of the students are already politically involved prior to participating in the program, but the fellowship program encourages them to volunteer on political campaigns, take on leadership roles in youth wings of political parties, and ultimately work on Parliament Hill or in a provincial legislature," said CJPAC executive director Mark Waldman.

"By the end of the year, we ensure that all of our fellows have received enough political and campaign training that they can feel comfortable working on a campaign. Many of our past fellows have gone on to work in senior positions in government," Waldman said.

Goal is to get students engaged in Canadian politics

Josh Zelikovitz, a fourth-year student at Queen's University in political studies and history, found the practical, "hands-on stuff" to be the most valuable skills he learned at the CJPAC Fellowship Conference, held Jan. 28 to 31 in Ottawa.

According to his YouTube testimonial, he found the training in fundraising and canvassing to be very useful, and, as a Liberal, he most enjoyed the group's meeting with federal leader Michael Ignatieff.

The CJPAC Fellowship Program runs each year from September to the end of April. Applications for the 2010-2011 academic year will be available on CJPAC's website by Aug. 1.

For more information or to apply for next year, go to www.cjpac.ca.

Young professionals shmooze with politicians

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Hundreds of young professionals recently mingled with politicians from all levels of government at the fourth annual ACTION party organized by the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC).

This year's event, held at the National Ballet School in Toronto on March 11, was created to encourage young Jewish Canadians and pro-Israel supporters to become politically active and make an impact on issues of concern in the community, said Leah Carr, one of four co-chairs of the event, along with Emily Burnett, Noah Godfrey and Jay Klein.

CJPAC is a national, grassroots, independent organization whose mandate is to engage the community in the political process, said Mark Waldman, executive director of CJPAC. "It is the only organization that can engage in multi-partisan politics. We help the community look coast to coast to build critical relationships with friends from all parties and all levels of government. Relationships matter if we want to have an impact beyond our numbers. There are 308 ridings in Canada, not just the few we live in."

Waldman said many young professionals are naturally passionate, but don't know much about the political process. "We try to demonstrate with the ACTION party that getting involved in politics is a great way to make a difference on the issues they care about. There are also many young professionals who are political leaders. Getting these groups together helps promote political involvement."

He said CJPAC's ACTION party provides an opportunity for young professionals and politicians to unite in a relaxed and casual atmosphere. "The informal setting that the party presents allows CJPAC to demonstrate to young Jewish professionals that meeting politicians and ultimately getting more engaged in the Canadian political process should not be intimidating and can actually be a lot of fun."

Since 2007, Waldman said the ACTION party has become CJPAC's largest event. Tickets to this year's affair, which featured live entertainment, an open bar and delicious hors d'oeuvres, were sold out more than two days in advance. Politicians and political candidates in attendance included Ontario PC party leader Tim Hudak, Toronto city councillor Adam Giambrone, Toronto mayoralty candidate Rocco Rossi and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

"The ACTION party has been a huge success since the first year we started it. The fact that it grows each year says that both the young professionals and politicians think it is a great event since they keep coming back. Positive word of mouth helps it grow," Waldman said.

A similar party is scheduled for Montreal on May 6. To ensure that young professionals of the Ottawa community can be part of the "action," CJPAC will arrange transportation between Ottawa and Montreal.

Aside from its annual ACTION party, Waldman said CJPAC promotes various initiatives across Canadian university campuses "that seek to build an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement for students." The organization runs programs, seminars and volunteer opportunities "to increase students' understanding, skills and enthusiasm in the decision-making process to ensure a strong voice that will carry forward."

He said CJPAC encourages students to become active in the offices of candidates between and during elections and to attend national and regional conferences across the country. CJPAC's Fellowship program allows students to enhance their understanding of election campaigns and Israel advocacy in Canada, as well as opportunities to meet with elected officials and senior political strategists throughout the year.

The Fellowship program even includes a trip to Ottawa, where students can attend a national political conference, including a day of advanced campaign training, Waldman said. Currently, 37 Fellows from 13 university campuses across Canada are enrolled in the program.

For more information about CJPAC, visit www.cjpac.ca.

Young professionals recently mingled with politicians at a Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee party. From left are party co-chair Jay Klein, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and party co-chair Noah Godfrey

[Cara Edell photo]

Dealing with custodial-parent rudeness and interference

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 28 years

Question: I have a court order that allows me to call my eight year old son at 7 p.m. every other evening. Every time I call, his mother picks up the phone and says something like: "Oh, it's the stupid bastard." She then either hangs up or, if she lets me talk to Joey for a minute of two, always listens in on our talk, and hangs up before we can finish. I always pay our support on time. I'm not a "deadbeat dad." What do I do?

Answer: Plug your phone into a tape recorder. Go to any store that sells the kind of device that allows you to bug your own phone, like Radio Shack. So long as you are taping your own phone conversations it's perfectly legal and you don't have to tell the person who you are calling. Then after a few choice recordings of her rudeness are taped, have your lawyer send a copy of the tape and a transcript. Her lawyer should remind her that unless she follows the court's order, she could be found in contempt of court and will have to pay the court costs for interfering in your rights of access. Before each call identify the time and date of each conversation. It's amazing how quickly your conversations with your son will magically improve.

Question: My ex-wife does not tolerate my daughters' friend and frustrates all access to my 12 and 18 year old daughters. What do I do?

Answer: Sue. The Court will likely give you scheduled nights of access and a good chunk of your legal costs if she forces the matter to a Court hearing. If she then frustrates the Order, the judge can fine or even jail her.

On behalf of my family, and all of us at Garfin Zeidenberg, I wish you and your family a happy and healthy Passover.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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On Campus

Attacking York could harm Toronto Jewry

By RUTH LOCKSHIN

It's sad that a fine institution such as York University is suffering from attacks by certain communal organizations and even by certain Jewish writers. York will make it through this crisis. But what's suffered more than York is our own Jewish community.

For a few happy generations, Toronto was a wonderful place to be a young Jewish adult. University education was (and still is) cheap. Most kids lived at home, met other Jewish kids at university, married and settled down in Toronto.

Both the University of Toronto and, later, York, provided places where kids across the Jewish spectrum could meet, whether they had gone to public school, Bialik Hebrew Day School, Associated Hebrew Schools or Eitz Chaim Day Schools. (Full disclosure: I am married to a York faculty member, and I am the mother of graduates of both York and U of T.)

The Jewish community as a whole reaped large benefits from having university-aged kids who, unlike their U.S. counterparts, remained in the community. These kids staffed youth groups and summer camps, serving as role models and teachers for the next generation, while they themselves were becoming the new young leaders of the community. They did this with very little financial help from the organized Jewish community (which was busy raising money for hospitals, schools, and always Israel). Hillel never had much of a budget in those years, and they made do without fancy viral marketing campaigns.

These kids developed Jewish networks and succeeded professionally. With a relatively low intermarriage rate, they raised traditional families and stayed committed to Jewish and Zionist causes in larger numbers than their U.S. counterparts. Jewish giving in Toronto, and support of Israel, was long the envy of other North American cities. The delicate mingling of the secular and traditional groups that took place on Toronto college campuses helped to form the rich stew that is our community.

But in recent years, this system has been weakening. Affluent families, many not Jewishly affiliated in any significant manner, have led the way, snubbing York and imitating the U.S. trend by sending their kids far away from home for school. Those kids generally don't go to popular Jewish destinations such as the Ivy League schools – their parents aren't *that* rich and haven't yet adopted the U.S. lifestyle of getting and spending huge sums on fancy schools.

Rather, Canadian Jewish kids have ended up in places that most of their parents had never heard of at their age – schools in small Canadian communities where Jewish life is less to be found and intermarriage becomes a much greater threat. Away from their home atmosphere and, most likely, from any Jewish youth group involvement, Judaism plays a diminished role in their lives. Meanwhile, the demand on the community to fund Jewish campus services in those far-flung places grows.

In addition, some more observant families have also felt the trend. With York incessantly and inaccurately portrayed as an unsafe place to send their kids, the more right-wing parents (admittedly responding to other trends, too) sometimes just don't send them to university at all. Even students who get their degree here in Toronto have one foot out the door, ready to bolt for New York or some other destination at the first opportunity, taking our investments in Jewish schools with them.

It's not too late to preserve our grand system. With all the problems, there's still vital Jewish student life at York and U of T. Exaggerating the problems, portraying Jewish kids as victims, and scaring them away from local campuses will harm Toronto's Jewish life a lot more than anything any of our kids will ever experience on our local campuses.

Ruth Lockshin lives in Toronto but was born in the United States.

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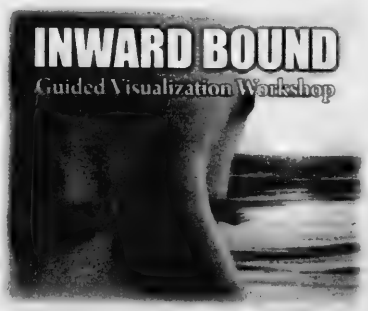
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דער ייִדיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

דער וואַרשאָווער נעמאָ אויפֿשמאָנד האָם אונדז נעוועבן דאָס רעכט אָנצוצינדן זעקס מיליאָן יאָרציים ליכט ביים ערשטען סדר
פֿון דזשערי קעין

איך האָב דאָ נישט לאַנג צוריק געלייענט אין דער "דזשעראוסאַלעמ פּאָסט" אַ קאָלום ווו עס איז געשריבן אַז מיר מוזן לייגן אכט צו דעם אמת אַז דער דור וואָס האָט דורכגעלעבט דעם חורבן פֿאַלט אויסק. דאָס אַרטיקל האָט געשטעלט אַ וואַרנונג אַז דער באַמיט פֿון דעם חורבן און דעם וואַרשעווער געטאָ אויפֿשטאַנד שטייט אין געפֿאָר איבער צוויי טעמים; די טריוויאַליזאַציע פֿון דעם וואָס איז געשען אין וואַרשע און די פֿאַרבייטערונג פֿון וואָרט חורבן– "Holocaust" צו מענטן אויך וואָס איז באַפֿאַלן נישט נאָר ייִדן נאָר אויך רוסן, פּאָלאַקן אין ציגיינער. דער נייער אַנטי־סעמיטיזם וואָס רודערט המנם אין דער וועלט קערט איבער וואָס מיר פֿאַרשטייען אַז סאָרן קיינמאָל נים לאַזן אַנדערע פֿאַרגעסן – דער הורבן—איז אַ ריבּ אין דער קייט פֿון אונדזער ייִדישער געשיכטע. וועג אַנדערע , ווי דער איראַנישער פּרעמיער, דער־אַלזן אַז עס אַ חורבן צו די פֿאַלעסטינער איז עס אַ דערמאָנונג אַז די וואָס וויל זען די וועלט ייִדן ריין האָבן נאָך נישט אויפֿגעגעבן ייער אָרבעט. און דאָס ברענגט מיך צו די געשיכטע פֿון די געטאָ קעמפֿער. דאָס פֿאַלק לעבט אין לעבט איבער דורך איר זכּרון, איר געשיכטע. "דער וואָס פֿאַרגעסט די פֿאַרגאַנגענהייט, איז פֿאַרשפּט די איבערצולעבן נאָך אַ מאָל." דאָ, מיט עטלעכע מאָנאַטן צוריק איז געשטאַרבן דער לעצטער קאָמעדאַנט פֿון די וואַרשעווער געטאָ קעמפֿער. זײַן נאָמען איז בעוועג מאָרעק עדעלמאַן– אַ בונדיסט.

וואָס האָט זיך בונדיסטישע פֿאַליטיק צו טאָן מיט זײַן העלדישקייט? אין עזרת נאַרישת. דער אויפֿשטאַנד, אַפּריל 19, 1943 איז אָנגעפֿירט געוואָרן פֿון יונגע לײַט פֿון אַלע פֿאַרטיין אָן ריכטונגען וואָס זיינען געווען אַ טייל פֿון ייִדישן לעבן אין די יאָרן פֿאַר דער מלחמה. אָבער טיפֿע, אָפּילו ווי אין אונדזער היינטיקן לעבן, האָט די פֿאַליטיק, אין אָנדענק פֿון קאָמף צווישנאָלען די גרופּעס פֿון מיטאַרבעטן אינם מיטן אָנדערן. אָבער די היסלער אַרמיי האָט זיי אין ניכן נעמען צו פֿאַרשטיין אַז אַן אייניקייט וועלן די קעמפֿער באַרישט קענען אויפֿטאָן. דער גורל האָט זיי צוזאַמענגעבראַכט אין די Zydowska Organizacja-Bojow-ZOB.

די פֿאַליטיק איז אַוועקגעלייגט. בעוואָרן אין אַ זיפּ.

42 טעג האָט גבורהדיקע דער ניט־גלויבער פֿאַרמעסט צום ערשטן מאָל אין די פּינצטערע מלחמה יאָרן איז צעשרייסלט בעוואָרן דער גלויבן, אַז די דייטשן זיינען אומבאַזיגבאַר. אין פּינעי אָן בלום איז פֿאַרשריבן בעוואָרן אַ נײַ קאַפּיטל אין דער מאָדערנער־נעשיכטע פֿון ייִדישן פֿאָלק.

לאָמיר אין אונדזער פּינקן פּסח אָפּגעבן כּבוד צו דעם לעצטן קאָמעדאַנט פֿון וואַרשעווער געטאָ אירפֿשאָטן, מאָרעק עדעלמאַן, אין דורך אים אַלע פֿאַרטיין, אַלע קעמפֿער, וואָס האָבן בעקעמפֿט אַז מיר זאָלן היינט קענען לעבן פֿרייַ.

אויב איר האָט נעדאַנקען וועגן אונדזער וויקל לאָזט וויסן. שרייבט מיר אויף מיין אַדרעס, דוד פּאָסט אַדער בליץ־פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

On Campus

Students learn about different faiths

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

"You're the only Jew I've ever met" is a phrase Alicia Krumholz has heard often at the University of Western Ontario (UWO).

This is one of the reasons that she participated in the university's third annual Abrahamic road trip last week. The road trip, which is hosted by the Centre for Catholic-Jewish Learning at King's University College at UWO, takes students to a Jewish, Muslim and Catholic centre, where they hear from representatives of each community.

The trip, which was free to all students and had more than 35 participants, was created to help dispel religious stereotypes and educate students about different cultures and faiths.

For Krumholz, a fourth-year religious studies and geography student, the event is a chance to both ask and answer questions.

"There are a lot of things out there to believe [about Judaism]. If you take everything at face value... that's dangerous," she said.

"This is my second year going... I feel like this is a great thing. What I've learned in religion is that there are really more similarities [than differences] between the three Abrahamic religions," she said, adding that the trip helped explain some Jewish values and misconceptions.

"History teaches us that Jews have suffered a lot of persecution. It's important to get an accurate portrayal of what a Jew is like."

This is one of the Centre for Catholic-Jewish Learning's goals, said Andrea Rector, the centre's secretary.

"I think everyone's recognizing that we're living in an increasingly globalized society and it's becoming more and more difficult to live in our isolated societies," she said, adding that the centre will be changing its name to the Centre for Catholic, Jewish and Muslim Learning in September.

"It's very important to us that people don't use religion... as a reason for conflict, and particularly for discriminating against one another. The goal is to increase people's knowledge, compassion and understanding," she said.

This year, the theme of the trip was women and faith, meaning that participants spoke to female leaders in the three religions, said Bianca Canave, one of the event's founders and a fourth-year religious studies student.

"We knew that... it would be best if we had women in the faith speak... because there are a lot of misconceptions about women in most orthodox religions, [such as] that they don't have as much of a role," she said.

Canave, who is Roman Catholic, sees the road trip as a unique learning experience.

"Students have lectures five times a week. The good thing about this is that it's fun and we only spend about 40 minutes at each place. Students leave wanting to hear more," she said.

For Canave, interfaith events like the road trip are crucial for university students.

"I think it's important for everyone to learn about the people that you interact with every day. There are a lot of students who went to [Jewish day schools] and only had Jewish friends. It's really nice to see how much they learn about [other religions]," she said.

Hanaa Alaubaid, another trip founder and participant, agrees.

"I feel like there's a lot of misconceptions about Islam and Judaism where people are mixing the cultures with religion," Alaubaid, who is Muslim and a fourth year religious studies and English student, said, adding that a road trip is a good forum for interfaith interaction.

"You get on a school bus with random people... and you're taught [about] religion. It's a completely different experience," she said.

From left, Bianca Canave, Hanaa Alaubaid and Alicia Krumholz participated in the third annual Abrahamic road trip in London, which teaches participants about Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Participants of the Abrahamic road trip listen to Sister Farah Al-Dhaher, a professor of sociology at Fanshawe College in London, Ont. The road trip was designed to teach students about Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

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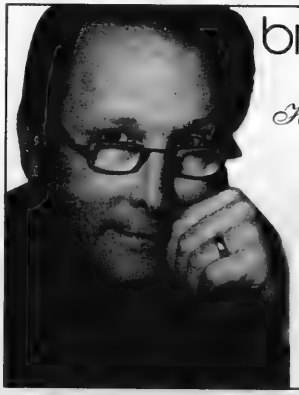
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Differences between male and female brain explored

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

Advances in genetics as well as differences between the male and female brain were hot topics at a recent lecture organized by Weizmann Women and Science, a branch of the Canadian Society for the Weizmann Institute of Science.

The March 9 event was moderated by former *Breakfast Television* co-host and broadcast journalist Liza Fromer. It featured guest speakers Dr. Tali Kimchi of the department of neurobiology at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, and Dr. Kathy Siminovitch of the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai Hospital.

Kimchi said that different genes lead to brain differences and therefore behavioural differences in males and females. However, while men and women often appear to be polar opposites, their brains are surprisingly similar, she said.

For more than half a century, scientists have believed that prototypically aggressive males and calm, nurturing females are mainly set apart by sex hormones that control genes and sexually dimorphic neuronal circuits that develop during youth. But, Kimchi said, current studies have suggested that gender-specific behaviours might have more to do with a single genetic "switch" that can be turned on and off.

Kimchi said her experiments performed at Harvard University involving mutant mice have helped her understand human genetic diseases that relate to social behaviour. She said her findings have shown that the behaviour of female mice can be radically altered when the creatures are deprived of their ability to sense pheromones, the subtle scents that animals give off and receive to communicate.

Removing the gene responsible for picking up pheromone signals from the female mice caused them to neglect their pups in the pursuit of potential mates, whom they tried to mount while emitting courtship whistles, she said. The male mice that could not smell the pheromones became less forceful and spent more time taking care of the newborn pups.

From left are Francie Klein, chair of the Toronto chapter of Weizmann Women and Science; broadcaster Liza Fromer; Dr. Katherine Siminovitch, of Mount Sinai Hospital; Dr. Tali Kimchi, of Weizmann Institute and Cathy Beck, president of Weizmann Canada. *[Neil Meirovich photo]*

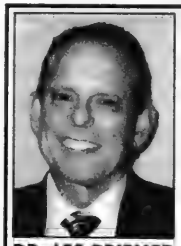
Kimchi said these results imply that the brain is capable of both male and female behaviour and that neurochemical cues initiate different actions. In the long run, her findings might improve the understanding of some disorders believed to be related to gender (males are more prone to autism, Parkinson's disease and schizophrenia, while females are more prone to anxiety, depression and panic disorders). This will in turn aid in the development of gender-specific drug treatments, she said.

A senior investigator at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Siminovitch is striving to provide new knowledge and technologies to enable more effective and "individualized" therapies for major diseases.

Siminovitch's research is directed at identifying the molecular factors that regulate normal immune responses and that, when disrupted, result in immune deficiency or autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and inflammatory bowel disease. Such information is essential for improved therapeutic treatments yet to be created, she said.

Siminovitch's presentation focused on the shift in science from genes to genomics. She said the shift in science through genome education will help identify biological determinants of diseases and improve health-care delivery. Genomics examines genetic information to determine biological markers predisposing an individual to disease, while genetics simply uses the information from one or two genes to explain a disease state.

Siminovitch spoke about targeted gene therapy – "the right dose of the right drug with the right indication for the right patient at the right time." She said gene therapy is a technique for correcting defective genes responsible for disease development, and while the technology is still very new, it has been used with some success. Scientific breakthroughs continue to move gene therapy toward mainstream medicine, she said.



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HELPING THE HOMELESS: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School senior kindergarten students welcomed Eric Cisterna from Ve'ahavta and presented him with socks, hats and gloves that they collected for people living on the street. The children – the youngest participants in this Ve'ahavta initiative – also baked treats, which were distributed from the Ve'ahavta van.

Activist challenges kids to make a difference

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Amanda Belzowski knows that nothing is impossible.

To date, the 12-year-old has raised about $135,000 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, spoken to a room full of CEOs at the Toronto Stock Exchange about her fundraising efforts, and in 2007, she shared the stage with billionaire U.S. developer Donald Trump at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

And she's not done yet.

Amanda, who has been running an annual lemonade stand to raise money for the Heart and Stroke Foundation since she was about two years old, has issued a challenge to kids nationwide.

"I really just wanted to teach kids that no action is ever too small and you're never too small to make adifference in the world," she said.

"I wanted to make kids realize that turning the water off or helping an elderly neighbour really does make a difference. I wanted to teach them that they can have their own lemonade stand."

That's why Amanda and her four-year-old brother, Joshua, launched the Nothing's Impossible Challenge 2010.

The initiative, which will soon be detailed on her website, www.lemonade4heart.org, has six categories – conserving, volunteering, helping, fundraising, learning and sharing, and random acts of kindness.

Kids are encouraged to do something in five of the categories, such as bringing their family to a soup kitchen to volunteer or turning off the lights in their house to conserve energy.

Participants can log on and keep track of their progress on the website, a feature that should be up soon, Amanda said, and they'll get a certificate upon completion of the challenge.

Amanda and Joshua will also match every dollar raised, regardless of the cause, by collecting an equivalent amount for her charity.

"All the money they raise goes to their causes, and we'll meet that money and give it to the Heart and Stroke Foundation," she said. "I think it's important to realize that there are so many different causes. It's not only Heart and Stroke, it's cancer, animal shelters, cleaning up our world... I want to challenge [kids] to make a difference, I want them to see their progress, and I want them to do a lot of different things."

Amanda's lemonade stand started with a simple request. As a toddler, she saw a stand and asked to run one herself.

Lisa Belzowski, her mother, couldn't refuse.

"She didn't know what money was at that point, we thought it'd be a good idea to teach her. To teach her she could help other people. She raised $500 in her first year," her mother said.

Now Amanda's goal is to reach $200,000 for Heart and Stroke.

"When I was little, we started [raising money for Heart and Stroke] because my grandmother and great-grandfather had artificial [heart] valves, but really it's gotten bigger than that," Amanda said. "There are so many other important causes that we all need to help."

While all the money raised at her lemonade stand goes to heart and stroke research, the 12-year-old also speaks on behalf of other causes, such as preventing malaria in developing countries.

Now, with Amanda's 12th annual lemonade stand and Joshua's second cookie counter coming up in May, the activist has another challenge to meet.

She needs to find a front lawn.

This year, due to personal problems, Amanda can no longer use her grandparents' front lawn, where the event usually took place.

"The thing is that people have said, 'Why don't you do it at a community centre?' And she's really specific about saying, 'I want to leave it on a front lawn,'" her mother said.

Amanda Belzowski and her brother, Joshua, are seen here collecting donations for the Heart and Stroke Foundation lemonade stand in 2007. *[CJN file photo]*

"Because that's the message: anyone can do this. You can do it on a front lawn without having to rent out a place... I think it would be easier to find a school or park or something, but she really doesn't want to change that message."

Amanda's lemonade stand will be held May 16. The ideal lawn would be visible and fairly large, around 100 feet by 60 feet. For more information or to volunteer the use of your lawn, e-mail amandaslemonade@sympatico.ca.

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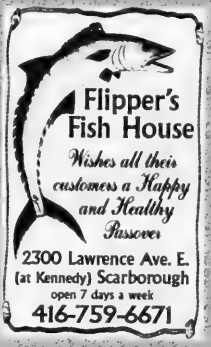

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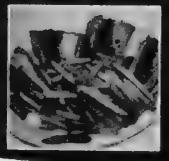

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Immigrant plans to sponsor family, then save the world

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Oleg Shteyner moved to Canada from Sderot, he left behind rocket attacks, bomb sirens and his mother. Now, as a first-year university student, Shteyner's mission is simple.

"I came here with a clear goal. I didn't come here to discover Canadian life or assimilate into the culture. I came here... to save my family," he said.

Shteyner, whose parents divorced when he was young, immigrated to Sderot, Israel, from Ukraine with his mother in 1999.

"At the time, the town was very peaceful. It looked like a prosperous place... Only a year and a half afterwards a war broke out. Rockets from Gaza shot into Sderot daily," Shteyner, 20, said. "It not only crippled the economic situation of the city, but it really stopped people from looking forward to a better future."

Shteyner spent his childhood and teen years living with the knowledge that every class, every meal and every day might be his last.

"When I just moved there, I was still nine years old, still an innocent kid, and you move into a place where suddenly you're being attacked and targeted for reasons you don't understand and there's so much hate," he said, adding that, because he lived in the top floor of an apartment building, any government-enforced safety precautions became difficult to follow.

"The government built up bunkers. The problem was I lived with my mother on the highest floor of a building. Our bunker was downstairs, there was no way to get there. So you kind of understand if the bomb falls on your building, that's it."

Some nights, Shteyner would sit through up to 30 rocket attacks, one after the other. This, paired with Shteyner's financial difficulties, made one thing clear for the student.

"I realized I want to get out of Sderot and move on with my life," he said. "I (didn't) want to end up dead at the age of 16, because I happen to be at the wrong place at the wrong time."

It was in 2006 that Shteyner got his chance to leave. At that time, his father, who had moved from Ukraine to Canada, came to visit and offered to sponsor Shteyner so that he could immigrate to Canada.

"He said, 'You're playing with your life... I'm able to sponsor you,'" Shteyner said.

Shteyner left Sderot in 2007, when he was 17.

"When I left I promised my mother, aunt and grandpa that once I get to Canada, I'll get my education as soon as I can. My goal is to be able to find a job and sponsor (my family.)"

It's this goal that has shaped Shteyner's life and studies in Canada.

"When you sit in the library for five or six hours and try to memorize whatever for a test, (you ask), 'Why am I doing this? I don't even like this.' You can always say, 'Listen, if you don't pass this test, you're not going to help your family,'" he said.

After graduating from Newtonbrook Secondary School, Shteyner was accepted to the University of Toronto's mineral engineering program, where he's currently a first-year student.

Oleg Shteyner, now a first year University of Toronto student, immigrated from Sderot several years ago, where he suffered through up to 30 rocket attacks a night.

Unlike most youths, Shteyner doesn't own a television and he doesn't spend much time on the computer. His life is mostly made up of school and volunteer work.

"My family is very important to me. I'll do everything to help them. If that means I have to study hard and not do whatever an average teenager wants to do, that's OK," he said.

While at Newtonbrook, Shteyner got involved with the school's Jewish Student Union Club and with NCSY (formerly National Conference of Synagogue Youth) Canada, a group that engages youth through social and recreational activities. Through this group, Shteyner, who had remained secular in Ukraine and Israel, began to learn about and immerse himself in Judaism.

"Ukraine historically is an extremely anti-Semitic country... I remember also when I was still a kid, every single year on Hitler's birthday, there were parades and skinheads all over the place," he said.

"Judaism was something very foreign to me. In Ukraine, if you know you're Jewish, that's amazing, but just don't tell it to anyone if you want to be safe."

When Shteyner moved to Sderot, he was too preoccupied with his living situation to learn more about his religion. It was only in Canada that he started to connect to the Jewish community.

"Once I came to Canada, I see people welcoming me. There's no pressure, you can express yourself and learn... I started to become more observant," he said, adding that he joined NCSY's Torah High program, an after-school Jewish studies group.

Shteyner also worked with Jewish Immigrant Aid Services as a youth-to-youth leader, is involved with his university's Hillel, works at Kachol Lavan, a Hebrew Sunday school, and volunteers as a big brother with Chai Lifeline Canada, which supports families with sick children.

Shteyner's work and life story helped him win the 2009 Dennis Waldman Scholarship, which is awarded to youth involved in the Jewish community.

The student's interpretation of tikkun olam goes further than volunteerism. He chose to major in mineral engineering at U of T, one of the school's smallest engineering programs, because he wants to physically repair the world.

"The reason why I chose this program is because I really care about the environment," he said, adding that his long-term goal is to reduce carbon emissions through mineral engineering, which includes the study of mining and geology.

Rabbi Avi Levinson, NCSY Canada's director of student advancement, thinks that, for Shteyner, repairing the Earth is a realistic goal.

"Politicians would probably die for his personality," Rabbi Levinson said. "There's no such thing as an obstacle, it's one thing after another. When he sees a cause and he believes in it, there's no stopping (him.) it's like a train coming at you head on."

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Netanyahu aims to repair U.S. ties

By BARAK RAVID
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WASHINGTON — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Washington Monday for a visit that marks a fresh chance to repair the frayed personal ties between him and U.S. President Barack Obama.

In front of the cameras Sunday, special Mideast envoy George Mitchell invited Netanyahu to meet with Obama at the White House Tuesday evening. It will be the fourth time the two leaders have met since they took office.

The three previous meetings took place in a tense atmosphere against the backdrop of the Obama administration's dissatisfaction with Netanyahu's actions and his positions on the Palestinian issue.

As they did the last time, they were to meet in the evening. As a result, there would be relatively little immediate media exposure in Israel. It was also not certain that the White House would allow photographers in, or whether the two leaders would make public statements.

The meeting between the two men came after Netanyahu's positive response to most of the demands made by the U.S. administration following the controversy over the announcement of plans to expand the Jewish neighbourhood of Ramat Shlomo in east Jerusalem.

Netanyahu agreed to ease the economic siege on the Gaza Strip, release Palestinian prisoners affiliated with Fatah and discuss the conflict's core issues in the context of indirect talks with the Palestinians.

Netanyahu did not agree to the American demand to limit Israeli construction in east Jerusalem, but did commit to closer monitoring of building in the city to avoid embarrassing incidents such as the announcement regarding the apartments in Ramat Shlomo during the visit of U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden.

Netanyahu was to meet with Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and address the current American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference.

Special Mideast envoy George Mitchell and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem last weekend.

At the beginning of Sunday's cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said his government would continue to pursue a policy held by all governments since the Six Day War, stressing Israel's right to build in east Jerusalem.

"From our standpoint, building in Jerusalem is like building in Tel Aviv," he said.

He later added that "these are things that we made clear to the American administration. We also made it clear that in the proximity talks with the Palestinians, each side could present its positions on all matters in dispute, but a real solution to the fundamental problems between us and the Palestinians is achievable only through direct talks, in direct peace negotiations.

"It is only if [the parties] sit together and together clarify the issues that they can come to joint solutions. This is the only way to come to a genuine peace agreement."

Netanyahu also met Sunday with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Tony Blair, the envoy of the Quartet of Mideast mediators – the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia.

Efforts to get indirect talks started with the Palestinian Authority topped Netanyahu's agenda with the visitors. Mitchell told the Israeli prime minister that the Obama administration hopes to embark on indirect talks at full speed as soon as possible, to be followed by direct talks.

Sources in Jerusalem expect the proximity talks to begin after Passover. After a meeting Sunday between Mitchell and Defence Minister Ehud Barak, the U.S. envoy called relations between Israel and the United States strong. He added that the U.S. commitment to Israel's security is unbreakable.

Barak travelled to Washington with the prime minister.

Because of the meeting with Obama, who was initially due to be out of the country during Netanyahu's visit, the Prime Minister's Office decided to defer his scheduled visit to NATO headquarters and the European Union in Brussels.

Yoffie urges east Jerusalem moratorium

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

WASHINGTON — The leader of the Reform movement called for a temporary moratorium on building in eastern Jerusalem.

In remarks delivered March 18 to the board of trustees of the Union for Reform Judaism, Rabbi Eric Yoffie noted Reform's commitment to Israel's claim to Jerusalem and its right to build there.

"The Union for Reform Judaism, like most American Jewish organizations, supports a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty," the URJ president said. "This means that we believe housing units constructed in Jerusalem by Israel are not settlements and they are not illegal. But a great many things that are legal are not prudent or wise, and building in Arab sections of Jerusalem in the current political climate is one of those things."

Rabbi Yoffie recommended the moratorium as a means of easing tensions with the United States sparked this month when Israel announced a major building start in Jerusalem during a visit by U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden aimed at showing U.S.-Israel unity. The announcement also led the Palestinian Authority to pull back from planned renewed peace talks.

"Surely no opportunity to move toward an enduring settlement must be squandered," he said. "I hope that the government of Israel will see the declaration of a temporary moratorium on building in east Jerusalem as a means of seizing the initiative, deepening her ties with America, rallying her allies around the world, and challenging the Palestinians and Arab world to come forward with confidence-building steps of their own."

Among U.S. Jewish Jewish groups, Rabbi Yoffie and the Reform movement tack toward an aggressive U.S. posture in brokering Israeli-Arab peace, something its leaders have made clear in meetings with the Obama administration. However, Rabbi Yoffie also has assertively defended Israel from what he sees as unfair attacks in recent months, particularly against calls on Israel to face war crimes charges after last year's Gaza war.

In related news, AIPAC's president and a key donor to U.S. President Barack Obama's campaign urged the White House to keep differences with Israel private.

"Allies should work out their differences privately," Lee Rosenberg said to a standing ovation in his inaugural speech as president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Speaking at AIPAC's annual policy conference in Washington, Rosenberg described the tensions between Israel and the United States as "very unfortunate" and made it clear he believed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had done his part in apologizing for the announcement of construction plans for a Jewish neighbourhood in eastern Jerusalem during Biden's visit this month.

"How friends disagree, how they react when missteps occur, that can determine the nature of the relationship," Rosenberg said.

He suggested that the Obama administration should focus its pressure on the Palestinians to bring them back to peace talks.

"The reluctant partner in this peace process is not Israel's elected leader, Prime Minister Netanyahu. The recalcitrant partner are the Palestinians and their leader: President Mahmoud Abbas," he said.

Rosenberg, a Chicago-based venture capitalist, was a key fundraiser for Obama's presidential bid.

Wishing all of our clients, colleagues and friends a happy & healthy Passover.

RSM Richter

Knesset will consult with Diaspora on conversions

JTA

JERUSALEM — An Israeli lawmaker told a delegation of U.S. Jewish leaders that he would consult with Diaspora Jewry on issues involving conversion.

David Rotem, the author of a bill that will allow local rabbis in Israel to perform conversions to Judaism, made his comments last week during a meeting in the Knesset with Diaspora Jewish leaders led by Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky and Jewish Federations of North America senior vice-president Rebecca Caspi.

Overseas Jewry is concerned about a provision in the conversion bill that says a convert to Judaism who visited Israel before converting either in Israel or overseas would be prohibited from becoming an Israeli citizen under the Law of Return.

The Jewish Federations of North America has issued a statement strongly rejecting the proposal and has written directly to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the subject.

Explaining that no law would be passed before the Knesset's Passover break, Rotem assured the group that no future bill would affect the status of conversions done outside of Israel. Rotem, of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, also stressed that Netanyahu is aware of the importance of these issues for Jews around the world.

"From my conversations with the prime minister and the government secretary, it is clear that the law that is viewed as problematic by Jews in the Diaspora will not be passed during the current Knesset session which goes into recess on March 21," Sharansky said. "We have received assurances that we will be consulted in this process, so that the views of world Jewry are taken into consideration."

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Israel Briefs

Hamas terrorist arrested

Israel arrested a senior Hamas terrorist who was said to be responsible for the deaths of more than 70 Israelis. Maher U'dda was arrested in a joint Israeli army, Shin Bet and Israel Police operation. U'dda, 47, has been wanted in Israel for more than a decade. He is reported to have been involved in terror activity including the twin terror attacks at Cafe Hillel in Jerusalem and at the bus stop near the Tzrifin military base in central Israel on Sept. 9, 2003. U'dda had been held in a Palestinian prison for a number of months in 1998 and then released.

Unarmed soldiers attacked

Three unarmed Israeli soldiers who accidentally entered the Arab-controlled area of Hebron were attacked and wounded. The soldiers, stationed near Hebron, lost their way last Thursday during a physical training exercise. When they realized they were lost, the soldiers asked a local Palestinian for directions to Kiryat Arba, on the outskirts of Hebron. They were directed instead into the heart of Arab Hebron, where they were attacked. All of the soldiers required medical attention. One remained hospitalized last Thursday night.

Lula lays wreath for Arafat

Brazil's president laid a wreath at former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat's grave after refusing to visit the grave of Theodor Herzl. President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva met with Palestinian Authority leaders last Wednesday in Ramallah. "I dream of an independent and free Palestine living in peace in the Middle East," Lula said while in the West Bank. "I believe the Palestinians and Israelis are going to share the land of their forefathers." Israel had criticized Lula's plan to visit the grave of the PLO leader prior to the visit. Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman boycotted Lula's address to the Knesset March 15 to protest his refusal to visit the grave of Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism.

Bezalel Academy moving

The Bezalel School of Arts and Design plans to build an $80-million campus in downtown Jerusalem. Proponents say the plans will help revive the city centre. The first phase of the new campus plans has been completed and detailed plans are now being drawn up, Bezalel president Amon Zuckerman, told JTA. Building is set to begin in the summer of 2011 and will take four years. The academy is currently located on Mount Scopus. It will move to Jerusalem's Jaffa Road. The move is expected to strengthen the identity of Jerusalem as a cultural centre as well as a historic centre, bringing visitors and audiences to the heart of Jerusalem, Zuckerman said. It also will bring 3,000 students and 500 faculty members into downtown Jerusalem.

PA presses on with Goldstone

The Palestinian Authority is acting to set up a standing committee to monitor implementation of the United Nations' Goldstone report on last winter's Gaza war on a permanent basis, and to assess the credibility of Israeli investigations into allegations from the report. In a move that has angered Israel, the PA has submitted a draft resolution proposal regarding this committee to the UN Human Rights Council, which was scheduled to meet in Geneva this week to discuss the Goldstone report's implementation.

– JTA and Ha'aretz

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Settlements jeopardize peace process, Clinton says

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinians should be serious and substantive, warning that new Israeli settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank are jeopardizing progress in the peace process and undermining U.S. mediation.

"New construction in east Jerusalem or the West Bank undermines mutual trust and endangers the proximity talks that are the first step toward the full negotiations that both sides want and need," Clinton said in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), an influential pro-Israel lobby group, at its annual conference in Washington.

"It exposes daylight between Israel and the United States that others in the region could hope to exploit. And it undermines America's unique ability to play a role – an essential role, I might add – in the peace process," she said on Monday.

Clinton's speech underscored the Obama administration's "rock solid" commitment to Israel's security and its future, but she added that the United States was prepared to "tell the truth when it is needed" regarding the situation in the Middle East.

"Guaranteeing Israel's security is more than a policy position for me. It is a personal commitment that will never waver," Clinton said. "As Israel's friend, it is our responsibility to give credit when it is due and to tell the truth when it is needed."

The secretary of state added that Israel faces "difficult but necessary choices" on the road to Mideast peace because the status quo with the Palestinians was unsustainable.

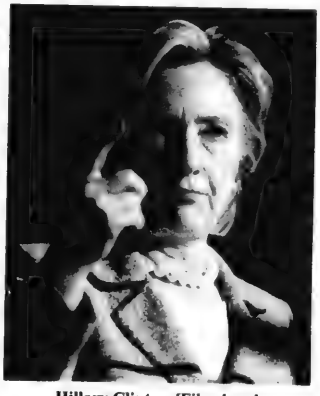
Clinton stressed Washington's view that "the dynamics of demography, ideology and technology" would eventually force political change in the region.

"There is another path. A path that leads toward security and prosperity for all the people in the region. It will require all parties – including Israel – to make difficult but necessary choices," she said.

Clinton told AIPAC delegates that the United States would continue to demand that Hamas, the Islamist Palestinian group that controls the Gaza Strip, renounce violence and recognize Israel. She also repeated U.S. calls for the release of captured Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit.

She also said the United States would continue to press for direct negotiations that could lead to a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians, with U.S. Mideast peace envoy George Mitchell's efforts to start indirect "proximity" negotiations as an essential foundation.

"These proximity talks are a hopeful first step, and they should be serious and substantive. Ultimately, of course, it will take direct negotiations to work through all the issues and end the conflict," she said.



Hillary Clinton *[File photo]*

In related developments, European Union foreign ministers met in Brussels on Monday to look for ways to pressure Israelis and Palestinians into launching proxy peace talks, amid fears that the peace process is in jeopardy.

"There's a lot to discuss on… how we can keep the pressure on to get the proximity talks moving… We think that the settlements should stop. Most importantly we believe the talks should begin," the EU's foreign-policy director, Catherine Ashton, said.

She was talking shortly after returning from her first official visit to the Middle East. That visit was largely overshadowed by Israel's decision to expand its settlement building.

The EU is "very disappointed by the position of the Israeli government, I think I can say very clearly that Jerusalem is not Tel Aviv," said Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, stressing the EU's position that Jerusalem should function as the capital of both the Israeli and a future Palestinian state.

Asselborn's comment was in reference to a declaration made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a day earlier: "Our policy on Jerusalem is the same policy followed by all Israeli governments for the 42 years, and it has not changed," Netanyahu said. "As far as we are concerned, building in Jerusalem is the same as building in Tel Aviv."

Asselborn said: "The Israeli people do not want to be in the position where, every time the international community takes a step forwards, they take a step back and do something to make sure that peace talks can't start again."

But ministers remained at odds over the question of how to put more pressure on Israel. The EU is the country's largest trading partner, but has so far ruled out any calls for trade sanctions.

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Israel & the Jewish World

Chimen Abramsky was a noted Jewish historian

By PAUL SHAVIV

TORONTO — Prof. Chimen Abramsky, one of the most formidable intellects among 20th-century Jewish historians, passed away in England on March 15 at the age of 93.

Abramsky was a son of the renowned Talmudist Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky (1886-1976), author of the monumental, multi-volume commentary on the Tosefta, *Chazon Yechezkel*. Yechezkel Abramsky was exiled to Siberia under the Communist regime in Russia. He later was admitted to England and became head of the London Beth Din under Chief Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz.

Chimen Abramsky made his way to Palestine in the early1930s. He was a prominent Communist leader in the Yishuv, but devoted himself to studies of medieval and modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with the great historians of the "Jerusalem school." He later reached London, and for years managed a Jewish bookshop in the East End of London – "Shapiro, Vallentine" – which was owned by his wife's family.

He was appointed to the faculty of Jewish studies at University College London

Few who went to buy bar mitzvah presents, sets of machzorim or Haggadot, could have known that the diminutive, round-faced figure serving them, with a hat affixed to the back of his head (as a tribute to his trade), was one of Europe's leading communist intellectuals, expert on the writings of Marx, Engels and a host of Soviet and east European revolutionaries, or that at the back of the shop was a stock of world-class rare Hebraica and Judaica that he sold to universities and collectors all over the world.

Abramsky was an international expert on Jewish and Hebrew bibliography. For years, he was Sothebys' main consultant on Hebraica and Judaica. He was adviser to the now world-famous collector Jack Lunzer in building his collection, and he attempted to establish the royal provenance of the famous Bomberg Talmud acquired by Lunzer from Westminster Abbey.

In the 1970s, already in his 60s, and without advanced academic degrees, he was appointed to the faculty of Jewish studies at University College London, and was a visiting fellow at St. Antony's College, Oxford. He simultaneously taught a seminar on Marx at the London School of Economics, described to me by a non-Jewish participant as "talmudic." Abramsky was a master of footnotes, and was given to comments such as "Scholem's famous footnote number 36 revolutionized the world of Jewish history."

By 1975, he was appointed professor of Jewish studies at University College, London, an appointment that recognized his brilliance, but also leapfrogged over a group of other faculty, causing no little stir.

He published only occasional essays and studies. However, he influenced many scholars and historians in his twin fields of Jewish history and Marxist studies (he had left the Communist Party in 1956).

Of his two children, one, now Dame Jenny Abramsky, is the recently retired and highly respected very senior member of the BBC, credited with being one of the most outstanding producers – and the most senior female – in the history of that august institution, and a public figure in the United Kingdom. .

Her father – totally immersed in Jewishness, fluent in the arcane worlds and works of eastern European Jewish history, and very reverent of his father's memory and legacy – was, however, a very private person who took no prominent part in Jewish community life.

Cal-Berkeley student gov't reportedly endorses divestment

JTA

SAN FRANCISCO — The student government at the University of California, Berkeley reportedly endorsed a divestment resolution.

The Associated Students of the University of California, Berkeley passed the resolution by a wide margin on March 18, it was reported.

The *Daily Californian* reported that the association was considering the move late the previous night.

The resolution calls for divestment of ASUC assets from General Electric and United Technologies "because of their military support of the occupation of Palestinian territories." It further claims that the move is not an expression of support for either Israel or the Palestinians, but rather is "a principled expression of support for universal human rights and equality."

Despite global efforts by pro-Palestinian groups, no American university has yet taken steps to divest specifically from firms alleged to support Israel's military presence in the Palestinian Authority. Last year, Hampshire College's trustees approved a measure to divest from 200 companies deemed to be in violation of the school's investment guidelines, among them a number of companies that do business with Israel.

A student group, Students for Justice in Palestine, initiated the process that led to that decision and subsequently claimed that the school had divested from Israel. The school denied that Israel had been targeted, an announcement endorsed by the Anti-Defamation League and Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz.

The Berkeley bill specifically names Israel, which it accuses of "collective punishment" of the Palestinians as well as settlement expansion and the "blockade" of Gaza. It also recommends further divestment from other regions where war crimes are alleged to be taking place, naming Morocco, the Congo "and other places as determined by the resolutions of the United Nations and other leading international human rights organizations."

"Divesting from Israel is immoral, bigoted and if done by a state university illegal," Dershowitz said in a statement March 18. "It encourages terrorism and discourages peace. Any university that would actually divest from Israel will be subjected to countermeasures--financial, legal, academic and political. We will fight back against this selective bigotry that hurts the good name of the University of California."

JDC Haggadah includes historic Passover photos

By LAUREN KRAMER
Special to The CJN

The Passover seder can feel like a blessing or a curse, depending on whose table you're sitting at.

At the best of times it's an enlightening, relevant, entertaining and meaningful ritual. At its worst, the seder is arduous and too long, with insufficient correlations to modern-day circumstances and many a tummy rumble as dinnertime approaches ever so slowly.

What you need, in the latter circumstance, is a Haggadah that keeps your interest piqued with great images, quality pages and content that's riveting. If yours is a dull, aged Haggadah with none of the above, consider getting your hands on a copy of one of the following two releases.

The JDC Haggadah (Devora Publishing) is the perfect seder accompaniment, a handsome hardcover whose 88 pages combine the seder service with a series of fascinating photographs derived from the archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Open it up and you'll see one page containing Hebrew and English seder prayers and songs, while the opposite page displays images from the archives and stories relevant to those images.

I paged through *The JDC Haggadah* with no prior knowledge of the JDCs work and found it a fascinating photograph album that pays tribute to the organization's many acts of charitable kindness over the years. There are pictures of Yemenite Jews conducting seders in Israel in the 1960s and Ethiopian

Jews in Gondar in 1988. The images skip seamlessly between the years, contrasting 1935 scenes from Hungary with pictures from the Dominican Republic in the '40s, Israel in the '80s and the Soviet Ukraine in 1925.

Every image contains the faces or figures of Jews, oftentimes engaged in Passover rituals, prayer, Jewish summer camp or family life. The stories behind these pictures, with commentary by journalist and author Ari Goldman, are equally fascinating and give readers a greater depth of understanding about Jewish affliction all over the world, and how the JDC has helped improve lives quietly but steadily over the years.

The Haggadah portion of the book is clearly displayed in a good-size font so it's easy to follow. The only problem I foresee is that the JDC's photograph album and anecdotes are so interesting you could easily lose track of the seder service and find yourself engrossed in these stories all night. The good news is dinner will come faster. The bad news is, you might miss the seder all together!

A second new release is the *Passover Haggadah in Another Dimension* (Lambda Publishers Inc), which comes with a handy pair of 3D glasses for the reader. Slip on the glasses and the images on each page spring to life, a feature that can add fun to the service for children, especially.

There are pictures of figurines throughout the story of Exodus, including an Egyptian whipping a Jew, a depiction of the Four Sons and the Egyptians drowning in the Red Sea. They are cleverly crafted and certainly make the story more meaningful for the son – or daughter – who is too small to follow the verbal commentary at the table.

This Haggadah contains English, Hebrew and Hebrew transliterations. There's definitely more English than Hebrew, and much of the Hebrew is in a small font that makes it difficult to read and follow for English speakers.

But that's OK if you're a child more interested in the major chapters and songs of the seder sequence than in the tiny details. If you're a seder warrior for whom every word counts, though, stick to a Haggadah that's a little more traditional – and a little less gimmicky.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

FILM FOCUSES ON THE HOLOCAUST IN ARAB LANDS

Lost Stories from the Holocaust in Arab Lands is a new documentary film that presents "a vast, lost history of what actually happened to the half-million Jews of the Arab lands of North Africa under Nazi, Vichy, and Fascist rule."

Based on a book by **Robert Satloff**, the film is scheduled for special community screenings in New York and Los Angeles until early April, and for broadcast on the American PBS network on Monday, April 12, 10 p.m.

The film, produced by MacNeil-Lehrer Productions and narrated by **Robert MacNeil**, asks the central question: did any Arabs save Jews during the Holocaust? It also sets out in search of a hopeful response to the problems of Holocaust ignorance and denial in the Arab world. Filmed on location in Tunisia, Morocco, France, Israel and the United States, the film, according to a press release, makes "surprising discoveries" that challenge both Arab and Jewish perceptions of this dark historic chapter.

* * *

Stars On Spadina: Some of Toronto's brightest talents pay tribute to the Y at Bloor and Spadina and the contribution it has made to the cultural evolution of downtown Toronto in the show, *Stars on Spadina*. The talent roster includes **Andrew Craig**, **George Sue-Ping**, **Hilario Duran**, **Julie Michels**, **Kellylee Evans**, **Melanie Doane**, **Micah Barnes**, **Real Divas** and **Sophie Milman**.

The host is **Tom Allen**, the director is **Ted Dykstra** and the house band is directed by **Daniel Barnes**. Tickets cost $180 and include a post-show dessert reception. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

* * *

Socalled

Archeological Adventures On Vision TV: *The Naked Archaeologist* begins its third season this week on Vision TV. Hosted by amateur archeologist, award-winning filmmaker and irrepressible showman **Simcha Jacobovici**, the show is an irreverent journey into the archeology of the ancient world.

The 13-part series was filmed in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Britain, Turkey, Greece and Italy. "When we first started *The Naked Archaeologist*, we were told that fun, history and the Bible don't mix," said Jacobovici. "Now, in our third season, I think we've proven the naysayers wrong." Except for the opener on March 22, *The Naked Archaeologist* airs weekly on Mondays at 10:30 p.m.

* * *

Names in the News: *So-Called*, a feature-length documentary film about klezmer hip-hop artist **Josh Dolgin** (a.k.a. **Socalled**), premières this week on YouTube during the South By Southwest festival. The Montreal-based musician is known for his eclectic mix of hip hop and klezmer. The film was shot in a Montreal neighbourhood where chassidic Jews and hipsters crowd the sidewalks, and in New York, France and Ukraine. A co-production of reFrame Films and the National Film Board, the film will be in Canadian theatres this spring.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Musicologist **Judith Cohen**, an expert in Sephardi music, speaks on the Crypto Jews of Portugal. Cohen has spent considerable time in Belmonte and other Portuguese villages with a strong historic, and sometimes contemporary, Crypto-Jewish presence. For more than a decade she has returned to the region to study the role of music in the lives of the Portuguese "Judeus." $9, $5. Miles Nadal JCC, Sundays on Bloor. Sunday, March 28, 11 a.m.

• **Andrew Scott**, professor and jazz performer, presents "History of Jazz in Toronto." $9 includes light refreshments; students $5. Miles Nadal JCC, Sunday, March 28, 2 to 3:30 p.m. music@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• The Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People presents *Hana's Suitcase*, based on the book by **Karen Levine** and adapted for the stage by **Emil Sher**. For ages 10 and up. $10 to $20. 165 Front St. Runs April 18 to May 21. 416-862-2222, www.lktyp.ca

• Metaphor Entertainment of Los Angeles has announced plans to produce *Land of the Angels*, a film about the Nazi destruction of the 70,000-strong Sephardi Jewish population in Salonica, Greece, and an uprising at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps in which 135 Salonica Jews perished. The story is based on a memoir by survivor **Heinz Salvatore Kounio**. "Sadly, the telling of the story of the Greek Jews has become particularly necessary and timely," Kounio said, "as Crete's historic Etz Hayyim synagogue was vandalized by anti-Semitic arsonists twice in January 2010."

Simcha Jacobovici

Sophie Milman

The Simpsons head to Israel for Passover

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

The upcoming episode of *The Simpsons*, titled *The Greatest Story Ever D'ohed*, will feature the animated family in Israel.

Recently released scenes show Homer and Bart at the Western Wall with their Israeli tour guide, who will be voiced by British comedian Sascha Baron Cohen, of *Borat* fame.

In the episode, Homer gets "Jerusalem Syndrome" and believes that he's the Messiah. Also, the tour guide bickers and exchanges political barbs with Marge.

"This is an episode that people from all three [Abrahamic] religions will be equally offended by," said *Simpsons* producer Al Jean.

The show has featured many Jewish jokes and characters during its 21 seasons on the air, most prominently Krusty the Clown (whose Jewish name is Herschel Shmoikel Pinchas Yerucham Krustofski).

The episode will air in Canada on Global TV on March 28.

Arts & Travel

First-time novelist short-listed for prize

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

First-time novelist Michael Tregebov has gained international recognition.

Tregebov's novel, *The Briss*, published by New Star Books, was recently short-listed for best first book in this year's Commonwealth Writers' Prize.

Although he didn't win – the winner was Shandi Mitchell, the author of *Under This Unbroken Sky* – he's quite pleased.

"Actually, I was surprised my book was even published," said the Winnipeg-born writer. "After so many rejections, one more surprise was nothing I couldn't handle."

Michael Tregebov

Described by the *Globe and Mail* as "aggressively funny and stealthily horrific," *The Briss* is about a Canadian Jewish medical school dropout who visits Israel, falls in love with a Palestinian woman and impregnates her. The affair arouses the ire of his father, a Zionist and veteran of the 1948 War of Independence in Israel.

"At the narrative level, what interested me was the way political conflicts in families are sometimes the sublimation of other conflicts," said Tregebov in an interview from his home in Barcelona.

Tregebov, 55, said that Israel has played a major role in his identity.

"For my grandmother's generation, Jewish identity was defined in relation to the major political events of the day: socialism, anarchism, Yiddish culture versus Hebrew, assimilation and so on. Zionism was still very isolated from the mainstream.

"For my parents' generation, in Canada, Jewish identity was defined in relation to the issue of assimilation."

But after the 1967 Six Day War, Jewish identity became inextricably linked to Israel's fortunes, he added.

"What is happening now is that changes inside Israel are causing new turbulence in that identity. A small example: I have two Israeli friends, hardened Zionists born and raised in Israel, who refuse to visit Jerusalem because they can't stomach the religious Jews. When they told me this, I almost fell off my chair.

"And American policy is shifting, which is very important for the region and for how Jews will define themselves in relation to Israel."

Long before *The Briss* struck pay dirt, he wrote for himself, for the drawer, producing an assortment of unpublished manuscripts, one of which was similar to *The Briss* in terms of tone, time and place.

Tregebov began writing at the age of 14. "First, little plays for the theatre school in Winnipeg, then poems, then novels."

He earned a BA degree at the University of Manitoba, majoring in English literature and minoring in economics. In 1978, he completed an MFA degree in creative writing at the University of British Columbia.

Shortly afterward, he read Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. He was so overwhelmed that he decided to learn Spanish and read it in the original language.

Tregebov has lived in Spain since 1983 and has made a living as a translator. "I mostly translate texts about chartered accountancy and tax and corporate law," said Tregebov, the translation director of PriceWaterhouseCoopers in Barcelona.

He also works on literary translations, having translated the South African novelist Nadine Gordimer into Spanish.

Recently, he finished translating William Carlos Williams' classic, *Kora in Hell*, into Spanish.

Tregebov is currently writing a novel whose working title is *The Poorest Jew in America*. "It's somewhat self-explanatory, I'm afraid," he said ruefully.

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Vision's Beasts in the Bible *explores myths and realities*

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The Bible brims with some pretty strange and mysterious creatures.

There is the whale that swallowed Jonah, the serpent that seduced Eve in the Garden of Eden and the angel that appeared before the prophet Ezekiel.

And then, of course, there are the winged insects and the frogs that devastated Egypt.

Beasts of the Bible, which will be presented by Vision TV on Wednesday, March 31 at 9 p.m., poses two enduring and interrelated questions: are these creatures merely mythical? Can they be found today?

In this speculative and interesting documentary, producer Ric Esther Bienstock grapples with these issues. She gets a whole lot of help from a host of experts and 3-D CGI technology.

Bienstock revisits the story of the four-legged serpent, which tempted Eve, against her better judgment, to taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

Rabbi Natan Slifkin holds a baby salamander.

Tiny spurs in the bodies of snakes indicate that serpents may once have had legs. On the other hand, could the serpent have been a poisonous salamander?

In biblical lore, Aaron's rod turned into a crocodile, one of ancient Egypt's most revered gods. Bienstock pursues this angle assiduously.

Of the 10 plagues that befell Egypt, touching off the Israelite exodus to the Promised Land, six were in the form of amphibians and insects. Bienstock lists frogs, mosquitoes, flies, hornets, gnats, wasps, locusts and even bacteria.

Beasts of the Bible speculates that Jonah could not have survived for three days inside the acidic body of a whale or a white shark until he was spit out. It posits that Jonah may really have been "swimming" in a constellation of stars, theorizing that this is really an issue of astronomy.

Much of the commentary is provided by a cavalcade of erudite historians, biblical scholars, archeologists and herpetologists.

Among them are Rabbi Natan Slifkin, a British-born Israeli lecturer and author on Torah and the natural world whose books became a subject of controversy among some haredim; Andy Orchard, the former director of the University of Toronto's Centre for Medieval Studies; Sara Poirier, an astronomer at the Ontario Science Centre; Jason Head, a paleontologist at the University of Toronto, and Aren Maeir, a professor of biblical and ancient Near Eastern archeology at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

And thanks to the latest high-tech gimmickry, the stupendous beasts in the Bible come to full-throated life.

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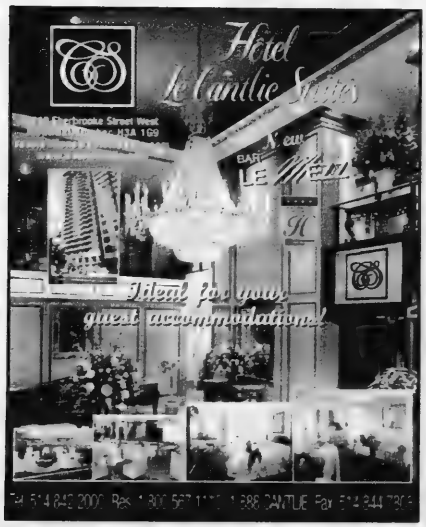

Singles try to connect in character-driven film

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Noah Baumbach's sensitive, character-driven film, *Greenberg*, turns on lost souls adrift in a sea of uncertainty.

The two central characters, Roger Greenberg (Ben Stiller) and Florence Marr (Greta Gerwig), may be made for each other romantically, but in terms of temperament they are worlds apart.

Whether they can connect and find peace of mind and a measure of happiness is the theme of this quiet, thoughtful movie about desperate lives in contemporary Los Angeles.

Greenberg, which is scheduled to open in Toronto on March 26, starts with a panoramic shot of the city smothered in its seemingly perpetual smog and then pans on Griffith Park, a favourite destination for joggers, strollers and dog walkers.

Florence, a sweet-tempered personal assistant in her mid-20s, is taking Mahler, her boss' German Shepherd, for a walk just before he and his family leave for Vietnam on a holiday.

Shortly after their departure, Roger arrives to house-sit for his brother while he is gone. The swanky house, set in the folds of the Hollywood Hills, is close to a chassidic neighbourhood.

Roger, 41, is a carpenter who can build everything but his own life. Recently released from a mental institution, he is a pill-popping former musician who lost a potentially lucrative record deal when he was much younger. Now at loose ends, he is vulnerable and embittered.

Greta Gerwig, Rhys Ifans and Ben Stiller star in *Greenberg*.

Roger, whose father was Jewish and whose mother was a Protestant, has a somewhat distant relationship with his Jewish background. Stiller, who himself is of Irish and Jewish descent, delivers a fine performance as a man searching for stability. With a lot of time on his hands, Roger looks up old friends. He spends much of his time with Ivan (Rhys Ifans), a former bandmate whose dream exploded and whose 10-year marriage has imploded.

Despite his best efforts, Roger is inexorably drawn to Florence, an aspiring singer who has just ended a long relationship but who has an affinity for casual sex.

Though Roger tends to be brusque and even abusive, Florence likes him immensely. A 1960s-type flower child, she's "impressed" by the fact that Roger is indifferent to success and is content "to do nothing." Gerwig is ideal for the role. She is soft-spoken, gentle, accommodating and naturalistic. There is not a mean bone in her body.

Roger, his judgment clouded by his medication or his abrasive personality, can't initially see that Florence is a wonderful human being who may be right for him.

This issue is never quite resolved, but in *Greenberg*, the possibilities seem endless.

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Guilt over murder becomes part of author's imagination

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

It is impossible to begin reading Jacques Chessex's slim novel, *A Jew Must Die* without knowing what will happen in its climactic scene.

The original French title, *Un Juif pour l'exemple*, leaves something to the imagination. But for the English translation, published in 2009, the book's cover is inscribed with the phrases "1942, Switzerland, a Nazi plot... A novel based on a true story."

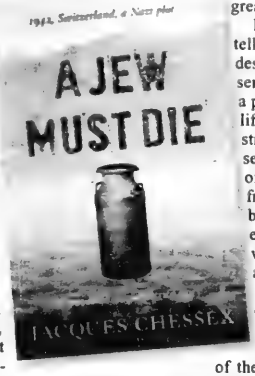
Norman Ravvin

The book's inner flap fills the reader in further, listing the place and time when "Arthur Bloch, a Jewish cattle merchant" from the borderlands shared by Switzerland and France is lured to a stable by Swiss Nazis and murdered.

When the murder scene does occur, it is drawn out over a page or two, making use of a certain cinematic suspense, yet the event itself, carried out as planned, is swift, violent and unsurprising.

Chessex won the major French literary prize, the Prix Goncourt, for his 1973 novel, *The Ogre*. He is a major figure in Europe, having published numerous novels, volumes of poetry and children's books. His death in 2009, preceded by a collapse before a Swiss audience, had its own touch of the grotesque, reminiscent of the author's fictional work. Reports of Chessex's demise included the detail that just before he collapsed he had been asked to comment on the arrest by Swiss police of the film director Roman Polanski.

The events that Chessex documents and fictionalizes in *A Jew Must Die* take place in Payerne, the town where he was born and raised. There are passages in the novel where he conveys the Swiss landscape's vernal loveliness, its "idyllic radiance" in early spring. And the particularity of its local economy is brought home, too, in a scene set at "seven o'clock" as the farmers tether "their beasts on Market Square to the wide metal railings that clank whenever the cows, bullocks and bulls pull on their halters and chains."



The killers are a haphazard group – know-nothing farmhands directed by a Swiss Nazi who pronounces a "Heil Hitler!" after kicking the dead man's corpse. In the leader one senses cravenness; in the followers a kind of lunkish carelessness. Behind their crime lies the influential motivation of a pastor whom the author presents, near the end of the novel, as an unreconstructed anti-Semite.

The Missing Person newspaper announcement placed by the victim's family is moving in its simplicity, and Chessex describes the local response as, at first, "coarse jokes and loaded comments about "'Jewry,''profiteering' and 'parasitic' business." When *A Jew Must Die* appeared, reviews made claims for the importance of its philosophical views on evil, complicity and human nature. And certainly these are the kinds of themes one expects to be explored in literature that confronts the events of the war.

In a collection of memoiristic stories published shortly after the end of World War II, the Polish author Tadeusz Borowski, who spent a year at Auschwitz, wrote: "Observe in what an original world we are living: how many men can you find in Europe who have never killed; or whom somebody does not wish to kill?" Borowski's dark view of Europe seems to underwrite Chessex's. But *A Jew Must Die* lacks the detail, the ironic voice and the sympathies of Borowski's great postwar stories.

Part of Chessex's motivation in the telling of his hometown's history is the desire to convey how intimately the sense of guilt over the murder became a part of his and the town's imaginative life. It may be guilt that motivates the strangely emotional concluding scene, set in a Berne Jewish cemetery, which offers "a moment of grace detached from a world where Aryan rule is bloodily imposed." Still, the author's effort at coming to terms with the war's victims races out of control, as he compares the Holocaust to "Golgotha," and invokes the "crown of thorns and the barbed wire of the camps." Clearly a personal cry, *A Jew Must Die* presents itself as one of the stranger books about the war published by a major author in recent years.

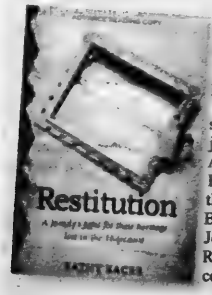
Norman Ravvin is chair of the Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. His books include the story collection Sex, Skyscrapers and Standard Yiddish *and* A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory.

New Kacer novel for adults

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Kathy Kacer, an award-winning author of several children's books including *Secret of Gabi's Dresser*, *Clara's War* and *Hiding Edith*, which won the 2009 Yad Vashem Prize for Children's Holocaust Literature, is now releasing her first adult book, *Restitution*.

Published by Second Story Press, *Restitution* tells the true story of the Reesers, a Czech Canadian family that faced down Nazis, Communists and corruption to recover four stolen paintings spiritied away just before the Nazi invasion in 1938.



In *Restitution*, Kacer tells this story in compelling detail, the story fleshed out with the Reeser family's pictures and documents.

The book will be in stores on April 15. You can join Kacer at the launch on April 11 at 3 p.m. at 918 Bathurst (that's the name of the venue, at Bathurst and Bloor streets in Toronto). Joining Kacer will be Karl Reeser, one of the book's central characters.

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SUMMERHILL / ST. CLAIR - $1,279,000.
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SHEPPARD / BAYVIEW - $1,269,000.
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YORK MILLS / LESLIE - $1,199,000.
Elegantly designed & meticulously maintained, 4 bdrm., 4 bath home. Recently reno'd eat-in kitchen walks through to large dining & living rm. Fabulous flow for entertaining. Main flr. family rm. w/w/o to backyard oasis & inground pool w/cabana, 2 pce & kitchen. ***Marc Shleifman/**Darren Slavens**

BAYVIEW / STEELES - NEW LISTING
$849,000. Beautiful detached, 4 bdrms., 4 bath home features wonderful addition. Open concept - great for entertaining. Custom gourmet kitchen w/sunroom. Main flr. family rm. Finished lower level. Gorgeous landscaping & inground pool. ****Richard Sherman / *Ruth Kaufman**

BATHURST / ATKINSON - $849,000.
Magnificent home on quiet, child safe cul-de-cac. Exquisite custom kitchen, w/out deck. Hu[illegible]er with stunning ensuite. Sunken family room, gas fireplace, hardwood floors, and finished lower level. ****Richard Sherman / *Marlene Federman** SOLD

BAYVIEW / STEELES - $799,000.
Great home for family & entertaining situated on oversized lot on child friendly cul-de-sac [illegible]. Sun-filled breakfast rm/den reno. Fireplace., 2 walk-outs to patio, wainscotting. ***Ruth Kaufman** SOLD

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BATHURST / ST. CLAIR - $649,000.
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AVENUE RD / ST. CLAIR -$599,000.
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Passover wine suggestions

By YONATAN STERNBERG
Special to cjnews.com

On seder night, each person (at least those of legal drinking age) is required to drink four glasses of wine. Multiply that by the number of guests, and we are looking at an average of one bottle for every two people, or in other words, a whole lot of wine.

Judging from the number of phone calls I received over the past few weeks as an Israel-based wine expert, it seems that choosing the right wine for the Passover meal is a rather daunting task. Do you start off with a dry or off-dry white wine? Perhaps a light red or a sparkling wine would be a better way to get the evening started? Grape juice is also a good option, especially due to the fact that we pour the first glass before we have eaten anything.

To read Yonatan Sternberg's article, please go to cjnews.com.

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Negev Desert scene of gruelling Israman competition

By DAVID SHULMAN
Special to The CJN

EILAT, Israel — Swim 3.8 kilometres, bike 180 kilometres and then run a full marathon in the winter?

It wouldn't be a Canadian's first choice of sporting activities. But I was curious about a winter iron distance triathlon when I read that *Triathlete* magazine voted Israman Negev as one of the 10 best iron distance races in the world. I was on my way.

The Negev is a melange of arid, rocky and dusty mountains. The unending landscape of sand and rocks is interrupted here and there by wadis, or dry river beds, and by patches of green. These green oases are the kibbutzim, communal farms where palm trees and all manner of tropical fruits grow.

At the southern end of the barren Negev lies Eilat, a teaming oasis of modernity on the Red Sea. The Red Sea is alive with tropical fish, sharks and rays darting in and out of the profuse, colourful corals. It's a diver's paradise.

Israman Negev 2010 was held on Jan. 29, and the date was chosen for its full moon, which would become important on the run course. Eighty–six competitors from seven countries started the early morning 3.8-kilometre swim in the Red Sea at Eilat. A southerly wind was blowing, creating a moderate surf.

The real challenge of the race was the bike course. Starting at sea level, we climbed 800 metres into the mountains above Eilat in the first 18 kilometres. Stopping at the top to catch my breath, I viewed the majestic scene before me of rolling hills with no vegetation to stop the incessant wind. A single road ran through this moonscape.

The out-and-back course was virtually deserted, other than the water stations and turn-around, where crowds came out to stand on the sand and cheer. The strong southerly winds directly into our faces slowed us to a crawl as we rode southward back toward Eilat.

On the bike course there were insufficient water stops, but the inventive Israelis had already planned for this. In our race kits were cards with a phone number to call for water. At 136 kilometres, my bottles were

David Shulman

empty, so I called the number on my cell. Within five minutes a van arrived and gave me full bottles, bananas and dates. Only in Israel.

The bike-to-run transition was at the top of the initial climb. We dismounted and started the run from a plateau, descending into Eilat. While running downhill, I was mesmerized by the spectacular view of the Arava valley at sunset. In the distance, the Jordanian hills turned from café-au-lait to copper. Then we were running in complete darkness on unlighted paved and unpaved roads and dirt tracks. We were provided with headlights and glow sticks and the full moon helped greatly. The finish in Eilat was on the seaside walkway filled with curious passersby and the athletes' supporters.

Israeli Gilad Rotem was the top finisher in 9:26, and the top female was Nina Pekerman in 10:36, world-class times especially for this difficult course.

I finished in 14:40, which was good enough for second place out of five in my age group of 55-plus, and it was good for 46th overall. The last finisher came in at almost 19 hours.

This was an exotic and exciting race and should attract more competitors as word gets out. There was also a half-iron distance and running races for the children during the day, and the atmosphere was festive on the course and at the resort. For me, the difficulty of training in the winter was more than offset by the challenge and beauty of this unique race.

David Shulman, 60, is a resident of Toronto who lived in Israel for eight years. Israman was his sixth iron distance race, including Ironman Canada.

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Hank Rosenstein, player in first NBA game, dies at 89

JTA

NEW YORK — Hank Rosenstein, who played for a mostly Jewish New York Knicks team that took part in what is considered the NBA's first game – in Toronto in 1946 – has died.

Rosenstein, a member of the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame, died Feb. 27 in Boca Raton, Fla., of heart failure. He was 89.

Rosenstein, who at six-foot-four inches played in the frontcourt, was one of eight Jewish Knickerbockers when they played the Toronto Huskies in Toronto on Nov. 1, 1946 in the debut of the new Basketball Association of America (BAA). He scored five points in a game won by the Knicks 68-66.

The BAA merged with the National Basketball League in 1949 to form the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the NBA considers the Knicks-Huskies game its first.

Rosenstein was traded to the Providence Steamrollers, then helped the Scranton Miners of the American Basketball League to championships in 1949-50 and 1950-51. In the latter season, he led the team in scoring with an average of 11.7 points.

He later became a coach in the Eastern Pro League.

Rosenstein, who also starred at Boys High School in Brooklyn and City College, was inducted into the Jewish Hall of Fame in 1998 and the New York City Basketball Hall of Fame in 2007.

Gifts from my father

By MICHAEL GORDON

Ephraim's brown eyes were like saucers – bright and full of excitement.

I had a plastic kite in my hand, and I was checking the somewhat unclear diagrammatic instructions. I knew from my childhood how to put the kite together to achieve the aerodynamic shape it needed to fly. As I unravelled the long red plastic tail, I could feel the wind tugging at the plastic that was longing to catch the wind.

The Senior Side of Life

It rose above the other kites that were held by children from the low-income, primarily immigrant community of Bat Yam, south of Tel Aviv. Ephraim, an eight-year-old Ethiopian immigrant, danced around the sandy beach, yelling to his friends to look at his kite.

He tugged on the string, letting more out as the kite pulled higher than all the other kites, some of which had not been assembled correctly and circled furiously before hitting the ground. The owners then picked them up and adjusted the sticks and the strings, to try to achieve aerodynamic success.

Bat Yam's sandy beach reminded me of Brighton Beach in New York, where, as a child, I flew kites with my engineer father. Pre-formed kites did not exist then. We cut the material from which the kite was made and bought the dowels and string in a hardware store.

My father was a master at kite building and flying, and taught me how to make a good kite. We would sit on the beach with the kite flying high, or if we went to sports fields, we would sit on the grass with the kite often so high, we could hardly see it, or so it seemed to me.

Even though Ephraim's kite was pre-made out of plastic and wood, it was based on the same principles I had internalized so many years previously. Ephraim's excitement lasted all afternoon. After we brought the kite down, he continued to describe its flight to his classmates.

Of the many gifts from my father, kite flying was not the most dramatic or one I might have recalled, if not for the Bat Yam visit. His gifts to me have helped sustain me throughout life and continue to impact my life.

My love for books was nurtured by his taking my younger sister and me to the local library every Saturday. We would return home with a pile of books for the week's reading. He loved libraries and would say, "The library is the most wonderful invention of mankind." And when we learned to ask the question, "Why is that, Daddy?", he would reply with his standard, "Because it contains all the knowledge of the world within it."

I tried to follow suit with my own children many years later. Our financial situation, unlike that of my childhood, made it possible for us to buy books, however, I continued to love libraries.

Other gifts I received from my father include the desire to understand how things work – from his engineering background, a profession I, too, almost pursued. Lastly, he gave me, along with my mother, a love for music and, most profoundly, a sense of fairness and social justice. What more could a child ask for to sustain a lifetime?

He is 98, and although not very communicative these days, his gifts will be with me for the rest of my life. I hope I have transmitted at least some of them to my own children.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey, can be researched from his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

BALSAMIC LEMON CHICKEN

8 chicken pieces, skin on, bone-in
2 tblsp Passover balsamic vinegar
2 lemons, zested, 1 juiced, 1 cut into wedges
2 tsps salt
2 tsps ground pepper
2 tblsps sugar
2 tblsp canola oil

Poke chicken pieces with fork; set aside. In large bowl, whisk balsamic vinegar with salt, pepper, half of lemon zest. Add chicken turning to coat. Refrigerate 20 mins. In small bowl, mix sugar with remaining lemon zest; set aside. Preheat oven to 400°. Heat oil in large oven-safe skillet over medium heat. Place chicken skin-side-down in pan along with remaining marinade. Cook until browned 3-4 min., then flip piece over and cook 1 min. more. Sprinkle lemon sugar over chicken; transfer skillet to oven. Roast until chicken is cooked through, about 25 min. Remove from oven and pour lemon juice over chicken. Serve with lemon wedges on side.

The Caplan Family extends best wishes for a Peaceful & Healthy Passover

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Vitamin D: are you getting enough?

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Vitamin D is often called "the sunshine vitamin," because our skin produces it when exposed to UVB rays from the sun.

Vitamin D helps maintain normal blood levels of calcium and phosphorus, assists in the absorption of calcium, may prevent hypertension, MS, osteoporosis and even some cancers.

It's obviously important, but do we get enough? The problem in Canada is that in the winter months, we don't get enough sunlight of the quality required to produce sufficient vitamin D. We may not even get enough in summer because we use sunscreen or wear protective clothing. Even dark pigmented or aging skin reduces the amount of vitamin D production possible.

How much do we need? Adults age 19 to 50 require a minimum of 200 IU per day. Older adults require more: age 51 to 70, a minimum of 400 IU; and 70+, 600 IU. It's recommended that we not exceed 2,000 IU. I would suggest aiming for about 1,000-1,200 IU for adults daily, especially in winter.

Canadian Pediatric Society suggests pregnant women get 2,000 IU per day and breast-fed infants be supplemented with 400-800 IU per day. Infant formula is supplemented with vitamin D. Children and teens also need about 400 IU per day.

Can we find enough vitamin D in our food? Although dairy products are fortified with Vitamin D, it's hard to get enough from food. Some good sources are wild salmon: 3.5 oz. has a whopping 600-1,000 IU; farmed salmon, though, only has 100-250 IU in 3.5 oz.; canned salmon is 300-600 IU, 1 cup cow's milk (fortified) only 88 IU.

If we need to rely on supplementation, we have several choices. Supplements come in many varieties, from drops for babies to pills for adults, gummies for children and chews for all ages. Choose vitamin D3 for optimal absorption.

Always check with your doctor first and make sure you aren't combining this with another supplement that may cause you to exceed safe limits.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Pesach: Mom loved the fish heads

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

The seder was about to begin.

The chandelier on the ceiling in the dining room illuminated the table and its finery. A bulbous white pillow had been placed on my father's armchair, waiting to be creased by his recline, and sweet and tearing Pesach smells intertwined with the aromas of the rest of year. Eliyahu would accept our invitation, wholeheartedly.

URBAN WRITER

The Pesach plate was prepared. So was the delicious meal. Egg. Bone. Maror. Karpas. Charoset. Chazeret. The fish heads my mother loved, stared up at us as if disappointed. Everyone had chosen their favourite wine-stained Haggadah.

The guests had arrived.

Nobody was ever turned away from our seder. Indeed, if an artist were to paint it, it would look like a busier *Last Supper*. As a little person, I saw layers upon layers of company, some of whom were familiar, others who were newcomers, and still others who were mendicants, living on alms.

From time to time, my elbows resented the fact they had nowhere to rest on the table, but mostly I was in wonderment at the exaggerated "space versus people" formula these holidays allowed. Old ladies living alone; zestful, ideological university students debating Hegel; Jews and non-Jews. They were all present. Lots of them.

It was the opening night of the Exodus, and like Jerusalem, which expanded during the three pilgrimage festivals, so too did our home. It was awe-inspiring.

My father welcomed us all to the seder: "Family, friends, once we were in Egypt. Today we are free.

"History is now," he would say. "We are Nachshon ben Aminadav. We are the Jews who escaped Egypt. Dive into the sea," he would shout.

My father continued: "We are the Jewish People, and tonight Moses sits at our table and so does the sweet Jewish sexton from Kiev. We are they, and they are us."

And he never forgot the Holocaust, even in good times. Nor did he forget the Inquisition, the pogroms or the Jewish community leaders hanged in Iran in our times.

"Let us remember our *kedoshim* tonight, those Jews who courageously broke the middle matzah in Auschwitz to remember *Yitziyat Mizrayim* [the Exodus from Egypt]."

My mother was the hero, though. She was the chief chef, the general, the industrial engineer navigating, and adjusting the Passover table and its place-settings, in order to squeeze one more person around the table. Our seder was chaos contained. And my mother made sure those who were hungry came and ate.

We poured the wine. We blessed it and drank. (I was tipsy. It's great to be a Jew. I'd been drinking since my bris.) I stood and sang *Ma Nishtanah* (the Four Questions) in Hebrew and Yiddish. Father was perturbed when I said Mr. Been in place of "*misubin*." But I had to. I was a kid.

Rabbi Tarphon and Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah sat and learned in B'nei Brak. We said *Dayeinu*, ate, sang about a goat and talked Torah until 2 a.m.

By then, most of the guests had gone home. Much of the family slept, their heads resting on folded arms at the table. But I was awake and ever so proud. Tomorrow I'll be asked how long our seder went. I will say till 2:30 in the morning. Nobody would beat that.

Today, years later, some of us are gone. But that Passover grandeur and camaraderie will forever be ours. It will be mine – because I was a kid and everything was 10 feet taller. I was free.

Chag Samayach. Happy Pesach. Next year in Jerusalem?

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Literary Supplement

The Canadian Jewish news
Passover Greetings
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Cover Illustration by Avi Katz

Wiedergutmachung

By PEARL ADLER SABAN

Wieder: "again"
Gut: "good"
Machung: noun form of verb machen," meaning "to make"
"To make good again."
Reparation.
Restitution.

He never took a penny of the money –
the money that should have been coming to him, too –
leaving it instead to the masses
to take and do with it what they willed.

Condos in Miami.
Holidays on sunny isles.
Visits to Israel and European spas.
A new luxury car
every few years.

He suffered,
oh, how he suffered.
A victim of circumstance from such a young age.
His losses were great –
immeasurable really.
You can't measure a life.
You can't measure a loss,
he explained.
Yet he did spend a lifetime measuring.
Measuring lengths, waists and inseams
but more importantly,
measuring his words and actions.

Reparation – this blood money
was not for him.

"Your life can be made easier."
"You have it coming to you."
"At least you'd have that."
Taunting refrains that he continually ignored.

Wiedergutmachung.
"To make good again."
And he did.
On his own.

**In memory of Jacob Adler*
July 4, 1920 – March 8, 2009

Rebirth

By DOROTHY GOLDWATER

The dream Herzl created
By a nightmare was related
Into a laughless mirth
Creating Israel's birth...
Israel is the resurrection.
Rejected by the Orthodox
Who await messianic direction
She remains the Mid-East paradox.
A symbol of man's self-affirmation
Against basest forms of negation
Is her strong will to survive
And keep human ideals alive,
Strong on remembering the past,
she is becoming modern fast.
In a world where peace is hard won
She is not waiting to be outdone .
Theatre, fashion, music and art
Are alive and play an important part
Having multi-cultural national root
Never forgetting the Nazi boot,
Israel is full of arrogance
There is no time for false penance,
She is the Noah's ark of diaspora Jew
And pure gold of an alchemist's brew ...

Happy Passover
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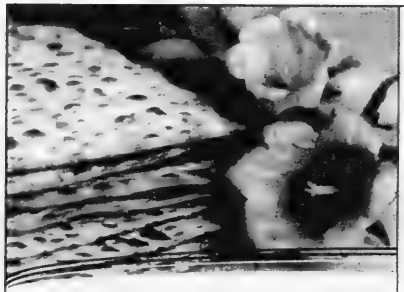

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Marla Dan, CHW National President
CHW National Officers
Alina Ianson, CHW Executive Director

The Pesach Dishes

By PAULA HURWITZ

I wake up early this morning, before the rest of my family, and creep into my parents room. "Mommy, wake up," I whisper as I gently shake her shoulder.

"Sarah, it's before seven. What's the matter?" she groans. She rolls over to face me and barely opens one eye.

"Mommy, isn't it time to go to Baba's to get ready for the seder? You know Baba needs my help today."

"Honey, the seder's not until sundown. You've got hours to prepare. Baba's probably still sleeping and you should be too. Go back to bed, I'll wake you when it's time." Mommy rolls over again so I know I better leave.

I wander back to my room and crawl under my quilt but I'm too excited to sleep. Pesach is one of my favourite holidays. I'm the oldest granddaughter, a big girl of eight, and Baba lets me help her set the table. My little sister is five, still a baby, so she's not allowed to help, she might break something.

Everyone's going to be at the seder tonight, me, mommy, daddy, my sister, and my aunt and uncle and cousins. Baba's brothers and sisters will be there too because their children and grandchildren live far away. So Zaida will add two bridge tables to the end of the dining room table and Baba will cover them with white tablecloths.

The prettiest lace tablecloth goes on the dining room table where the old people sit. I sit with my sister and cousins at the bridge table that stretches into Baba's living room. Baba gives us her 'everyday' tablecloth just in case somebody spills grape juice. Mommy and daddy and my aunt and uncle sit at the table in between us and the old people.

Illustration by Trevor Miller

At 8:00, mommy finally says I can come out of my room. I hurry through my breakfast and get dressed. Daddy's staying home today since it's the start of Pesach, so my sister stays with him while mommy drives me to Baba's.

After mommy parks the car she holds my hand until we get inside, but once in the lobby I race to the elevator and push the up button. Mommy shouts, "don't get on the elevator without me Sarah!" I jump up and down as I watch the numbers light up, "12, 11, 10..." When the "L" lights up the doors open. Mommy and I step inside and I push four, Baba's floor.

Baba's hallway smells like Pesach; gefilte fish, chicken soup, brisket and turkey. I guess Baba's not the only one having a seder tonight. When I get to the corner apartment, I knock on the door. Zaida bellows, "who's there?"

"It's me Sarah. Let me in Zaida."

"Sarah? Sarah who? Baba do we know any Sarahs?"

"Zaida, you know me, it's Sarah your granddaughter. I'm here to help with the seder."

"Sarah my granddaughter. Of course, why didn't you say so."

Zaida laughs as he opens the door and lifts me into a big hug. I hear Baba's 'Tender Tootsies' padding about the kitchen so I wriggle out of Zaida's arms, quickly say goodbye to Mommy and report for duty.

Continued on page B4

This
~~Next~~ Year in Jerusalem

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Continued from page B3

A big pot of gefilte fish is bubbling on the stove and Baba's stuffing the turkey at the counter. Steaming Pesach rolls sit in a basket on the small kitchen table. Zaida's already got the bridge tables and the extra chairs set up. I see he's even remembered to put a pillow on his seat. That's where he always hides the *afikoman*.

While bending to kiss me, holding her stuffing coated hands away from my hair and clothes, Baba says, "Sarah, I'm so glad you're here. You know where I keep the good dishes, in the hutch in the living room. Why don't you start taking out the plates and setting the table. There's going to be 18 of us tonight. Can you count to 18?"

"Of course I can count to 18 Baba. I'm already in grade three!"

"Okay then Sarah, you use your counting skills to get that table set while I finish the turkey. Zaida can help you carry if anything's too heavy."

I go to the living room hutch and open the bottom cupboard. I carefully pull out the padded cases that Baba uses to store her good china. I unzip the biggest one to find the dinner plates.

I think Baba's dishes are beautiful. They're white with a shiny gold circle around the edge. Each plate is separated by a round piece of foam so they don't get scratched. Once I've counted out 18, Zaida puts them in a pile on the table and then I set one in front of each chair. I do the same with soup bowls and fish plates. The dessert plates and cups and saucers I stack on top of the sideboard so we can use them after dinner.

After I lay a napkin and Haggadah at each place, I get to my favourite part, the cutlery. Baba keeps it in a big wooden box. She says that the special cloth inside keeps the silver shiny. Sometimes we still have to polish the knives but today they look just right. At the bottom of the box I pull out a knob revealing a secret compartment. That's where I find the teaspoons. I carefully place the silverware next to each plate. Now the table's complete, except for the wine glasses. Zaida has to do those because I can't reach yet but, Baba says maybe next year. I already can't wait until next year.

***

Fast-forward 30 years. Again I wake up early to prepare for Pesach, but now the seder's at my house. Now I have an eight-year-old of my own to help me. After breakfast my daughter's anxious to start setting the table. We go to our dining room wall unit and, with tears in my eyes, I help her remove those same padded cases that I'd pulled from Baba's hutch so many years ago.

You see, Baba's in a nursing home now, suffering from Alzheimer's. When Zaida could no longer care for her, she moved, and now there are no seders at Baba and Zaida's. But Zaida knew Baba would not want her Pesach dishes to sit unused. He lovingly packed all the padded cases into boxes and my mother put those boxes in her car and drove them across the country to me.

When my daughter and I open the cases, we find the white and gold dishes. The gold is faded and scratched in places, and some of the plates are separated by napkins instead of the round pieces of foam that by now have been lost or torn but, to me, the dishes are still as beautiful as they were when I was a little girl.

My daughter places the dishes on the table and then I show her the cutlery box. She removes forks, knives and soup spoons but can't find the teaspoons. Her eyes open wide and she claps her hands when I point out the secret compartment, enjoying it as much as I did.

When the table is set, we call Zaida.

"Hello Zaida, it's me Sarah."

Zaida returns to his old joke, "Sarah who?"

"Sarah your granddaughter, of course, *goot yontiff*, Zaida."

"Oh, Sarah my granddaughter, why didn't you say so?" Zaida's encouraged by my daughter's background giggles.

"Zaida, we just set the table. I used Baba's dishes and silverware. It looks beautiful. I wish you could be here with us."

"I wish I could be with you too Sarah, but I'm too old to travel. Instead, I'll spend a quiet Pesach with Baba at the home. I'll tell her about the dishes though, she'll be so pleased. Now let me talk to that great granddaughter of mine."

"Okay, here she is. Goodbye Zaida. And thank you."

***

Six months later, Zaida is gone. And by the following Pesach, Baba is laid to rest beside him. But my daughter still rises early the morning of the seder.

"Mommy, wake up. It's time to set the table."

"Honey, we've got hours until the seder. Why don't you get more sleep."

"But Mommy, Zaida and Baba's dishes have been waiting all year for another seder. I don't think we should keep them waiting anymore."

As I drag myself out of bed, remembering my younger self, I laugh and say, "you're probably right. Let's get those Pesach dishes on the table."

And when I pull the aging foam packages out of the wall unit, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I still miss Baba and Zaida so much, but with the white and gold dishes on my table it feels like they've come to celebrate Pesach with us again.

Wishing good health and happiness to all our friends and clients during this season of celebration and reflection.

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Westerbork

By RHONDA HASSMANN

I walk up the gravel path in the rain
under an enormous black umbrella,
the kind you see in Holland,
across the grey-green misty fields
along the hundred and two railway ties
for the 102,000
deported
At the far end is the punishment block
where they kept Anne Frank,
the special block for those who tried
to hide
to escape
to live
Maybe that's where they held my Tante Käthe
before they sent her off
on one of the Tuesday trains,
1,000 people per train
every Tuesday morning
If there weren't enough people to fill the train
everyone could live another week
to sing and dance for their captors
every Tuesday evening

The Invisible Shrine

By ESTHER A. DAGAN

Invisible. Hidden within my soul, a shrine.
Folded, wrinkled in, memories of spirits.
My compass. The torch to the light of my north.
The spirits of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
The spirits of judges, kings and prophets.
The spirits of warriors, heroes, sinners, poets.
And my ancestors weeping on the shores of Babylon
Still weeping at the Wailing Wall.
Invisible. Hidden within my soul, a shrine.
Folded, wrinkled in, memories of families and loved ones.
My compass. The torch to my future passed.
The spirits of many I loved and long have gone.
The spirits of my parents, a grandfather who named me Malka.
The spirit of my daughter, a butterfly above an erupting volcano.
And my first love, a trumpet player in an army band.
On his grave: "Sacrificed his life to free Jerusalem 1930-1948".
Invisible. Hidden within my soul, a shrine.
Folded, wrinkled in, memories of foreign deities.
The spirits of Telem, Njoku, Mamiwata, Eshu and Kalunga.
Periodically, masked in full regalia all reappear.
On Jewish holidays, on national and memorial days.
Enchanting, uplifting and elevating my spirit to the sublime.
And deeply engraved in my multiple mixed identity.
My compass. The torch leading to my daughter's grave.

Happy Passover

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Passover Greetings

A light From the ashes

By ORITTE RUDSKI

Mumbai. 2008.
I searched for truth in an ashram.
But found it in myself.

A flame shines. Warm.
Bright. Comforting.
I stare, not believing,
Through the tears in my eyes.
I see a candle burning.
A candle that I lit.
Years ago I ran away
from the light
from the candles...
from the joy of the Sabbath
for it gave me no joy.
As I hid in my room
and listened to my music
Under the dark covers,
the song of happy voices
taunted and mocked...
"You'll never be like us"
Echoed their silent chant.
"Your questions have no answers."
"We have no arms wide enough
to hug away your pain."
I traveled to the farthest fields
To harvest foreign crops,
Through dark and hidden tunnels
To mine a stranger's gold.
My questions still remained.
Tonight I see the tears of a child
Rising from the ashes of terror.
My terror, my tears, my childhood.
I reach out and hug this child
With the light of my Sabbath candles.

Prayer Is Like This

By SUSIE PETERSIEL BERG

the mirror
of prayer reflects the image of humans
the high-heeled shoes
of prayer take practice
the desert
of prayer can change without warning
the world series
of prayer is a last-ditch effort
the sunset
of prayer proves timing is everything
the senior prom
of prayer feels like the very first time
the DNA
of prayer begs decoding
the reality TV
of prayer strips us bare
the human body
of prayer is its own daily miracle
the airline travel
of prayer reduces us
the hurricane
of prayer has both eye and storm
the Internet
of prayer pretends to connect
the symphony
of prayer has a sound for every ear
the mirror of prayer
reflects the image of God

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'Rabbi Ortzig's tsuris sack'

By HERTZIG AARON BENJAMIN

The little Litvak shtetl of Ackmene was thick with complaint. Everyone was miserable. Everyone was whining. No one was listening or helping, working or loving. They'd almost forgotten how to daven. The entire village, 47 miles southeast of Riga, was perpetually pulsing with self-absorbed *kvetching*. It was a mess. Life was at a standstill.

The wise and judicious Ackmener Rabbi decided that something had to be done. All this constant, disruptive fussing had to stop, and the sooner the better. But how? What to do? Rabbi Ortzig (for that was the name of the 90-year-old rabbi of this poverty-stricken Litvak town) sat on a rock and reached for a solution from heaven that was made for Jews on earth. He thought and he puzzled. He wondered and meditated. He fasted, prayed and wept. And eventually, because *HaShem* loved him like a father loves a son, he was rewarded with illumination.

Shortly before noon on a brilliant summer's day, Rabbi Ortzig summoned the Ackmener *Yidden* to the centre of the village. He made them stand in a huge circle under the broiling sun. Rich and poor, able and lame, smart and foolish, everyone was present.

"Not the old, nor the sick, nor the anti-social!" the elderly rabbi proclaimed. "Let this be like at Har Sinai! No one left behind in Mitzrayim!" And no one was. From the oldest grandparents down to the youngest children, everyone *schvitzed* equally.

Oy, but such a racket! The great circle of shtetl Jews was abuzz with queries, theories and newly-minted complaints about why they were where they were and how it couldn't possibly be one degree hotter even in Odessa, Izmir or Eretz Yisroel. O, those never ending Yiddishe complaints!

After calling for quiet, Rabbi Ortzig produced an immense sack of great age, which he placed in the middle of the circle. That got everyone's attention, for this was the legendary "*Tsuris* Sack" passed down to Rabbi Ortzig by his great-great grandfather, the storied Itzik-Avrum, the Ackmener *Chacham*. Itzik-Avrum's sack hadn't been seen in the village since Rabbi Ortzig was a yeshiva boy of 14.

Since many villagers had always thought the sack's existence was only a *bubbe meise*, there was a brisk flurry of wary speculation concerning its provenance, significance and impending use. Soon enough, a cranky crescendo of Jewish gossip rose high into the sky. So high, in fact, that busy though He was, *HaShem* himself could hear the shrill obligato ascending from *ha'aretz* to *shomayim*. Such a village of grievance was this, this fractious, compulsive shtetl!

Again, Rabbi Ortzig was compelled to call for quiet, whereupon he instructed the villagers to take their most painful and pressing problems to the centre of the circle and push them deep inside Itzik-Avrum's *tsuris* sack. Now, because the old rabbi was a compassionate and scholarly man who had seen them through thick and thin during the pogroms of the *goyim*, the locals complied without question. One by one, they stowed their well-nurtured sorrows inside the rabbi's enormous bag. Then they returned to their places on the circumference of the circle to wait and watch. Anticipation was intense. The air within the circle felt electric. Sparks of divine light flew hither, thither and yon.

It went on like this for hours, a constant parade of miserable Jews divesting themselves of their life-defining distress until, eventually, the rabbi's sack had grown into an immense, swollen, heaving mass of human aggravation. It was so filled to the brim with festering *krenks* and *broigus* that there wasn't room enough left for even the smallest whimper of the tiniest baby.

Rabbi Ortzig was exceedingly pleased. "So far so good," he thought to himself. "*Emmes*, this is going well." But he was not yet done. For there was something else still up his sleeve, and it wasn't his tfillin.

Dwarfed by the colossal container of contentiousness, the good rabbi announced that, "in accordance with generations of Jewish wisdom," he could now reveal that it was not actually the Almighty's plan to relieve the *Yidden* of Ackmene of their every trouble and worry on this particular day.

"A human being is a receptacle for all that life has to offer," he explained, "the good and the bad, the happy and sad. When *Mashiach* comes, we will greet him with perfect hearts because the world will be redeemed. But until that blessed day..." Rabbi Ortzig's voice trailed away, leaving unsaid what didn't need saying.

The village Jews understood. They were waiting for redemption. They were desperate for a consignment of cure from Above. But the *Mashiach*, the one whose presence they craved with full mind and soul, would never come, this was certain. Yet, because they were Jews, and Jews are chosen to wait, they weren't free to give up hope that, somehow, miraculously, he might still arrive when they weren't looking!

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Only the beleaguered Jews of Ackmene could survive such existential ambiguity. And this was the true source of their power in a hateful world so keen to see them destroyed. They groaned a collective groan. "*Oy*!" they murmured. "*Oy*! Enough already!"

But Rabbi Ortzig was still not finished. "Starting now," he said, "starting here, we will begin to redeem the world, one Jew at a time."

Imbued with superhuman strength (for great wisdom in old rabbis often wears the cloak of magical powers),

he hoisted the congested *tsuris* sack high above his head and turned it upside down. With a calamitous rush and a deafening roar, all the agonized distractions of the village spilled out in a mountainous pile! A chaotic collection of personal catastrophe, it was! A veritable Everest of individual woe!

The Ackmeners were dismayed by the terrible sight. "*Oy*!" they muttered again. "*Oy*! *Dayenu*!" But, no, it was not sufficient. With the afternoon waning and *Minchah* fast approaching, there was not a moment to lose.

Rabbi Ortzig ordered his flock to contemplate each of the crawling, mewling miseries now on display at the centre of town. "Consider well the sorrows you see before you!" the trusted sage admonished. "Know what *krenks* fill your neighbours' hearts!" And because their beloved rav was an honourable, respected leader so obviously gifted with powerful and exemplary oratory, the men and women and boys and girls did precisely that. They contemplated and they considered. They ruminated and they cogitated. They imagined and they dreamed. Everyone in the little town studied the unhappy causes of their collective depression. They investigated them. They discussed them. They extrapolated them.

The sun began to set. The village had an immediate appointment with *Minchah* and could not be late. Gratified though he was with the work of the day, Rabbi Ortzig was still not done. He raised a trembling hand to the sky, closed his eyes and petitioned The Holy One, blessed be He, in the privacy of his heart: "Master, if it be Your will, I need a little more time."

The sun suddenly stopped its transit to the other side of the world. For once and once only, the village of noisy Jews fell utterly silent in dumbstruck awe of the scorching crimson ball pinned motionless to the Latvian horizon. They knew they were now in God's time.

In a commanding voice, Rabbi Ortzig instructed the Jews of Ackmene to return to the centre of the circle and select one lone *tsuris* from among all the others – that one solitary misery they believed they could live with for the rest of their days. And because they trusted their communal guide, they complied once more. Quickly but orderly, and one by one, from the oldest zayde to the youngest seamstress-in-training, they hurried back to the *tsuris* pile. Then one by one, they resumed their designated places in the circle, each schlepping his or her very own precious and life-defining heartache!

In the end, it was all as it had been at the beginning; nothing had changed. For it was exactly as Rabbi Ortzig had foreseen on the riverbank. Having witnessed the crippling sorrows that all the other Jews of the village had been afflicted with for so very long, each Ackmener was only too happy to reclaim his or her original burden. As one young bride was overheard whispering to her *chatan*: "My sadness and I are one. We belong to each other from here to eternity. From now until the hour of *Mashiach*." And so it was for one and all.

The sun roused from its miraculous sleep and sank into a distant, unseen sea. After davening *Minchah-Ma'ariv*, Rabbi Ortzig folded the battered *tsuris* sack and dismissed the villagers, blessing each and every one by name. He shook the hands of the men and boys with great vigour; he bowed with dignified respect to the women and girls. And they all went about their business, smiling happily at one another and at peace within themselves at last.

From that day forward, they worked, they loved, they learned in *cheder*, they prayed in shul and they hoped fervently for the redemption of the world. They lived and coped and waited patiently for the time of *Mashiach*. And of course, they continued to suffer, too, each in his or her special way. Their lives remained imperfect, because the world remained unrepaired, as it does to this very day; but somehow they endured. They had their beloved Rabbi Ortzig. They had their faith in *HaShem*. And, most of all, they had one another.

Harmony came to the Litvak shtetl of Ackmene, 47 miles southeast of Riga, because each and every Jew finally understood how serious and worrying were the troubles of his family, friends and neighbours.

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In The Mikvah

By FRANCINE DICK

I go down once
and the little girl appears,
naked and violated,
filled with fear.
I weep for her shame,
I ache with her pain,
for all that she suffered,
how I held her to blame.
I come back up
and the little girl is gone,
I come up
to the Rabbi's voice lifted in song.

I go down twice
and the rebel is there,
vocal and cocky, an insouciant air.
underneath fearful, acquiescent, confused,
a soul that is hidden by drugs and by food.
Stumbling along, falling farther and lower,
taking the hand that is held out toward her.
I come back up
ready to be renewed,
I come up
to the Rabbi and I saying Shehechianu.

I go down thrice
And I am I.
No longer why?
My body is mine, its strength and its pleasure,
a spirit connected, no longer tethered.
At peace with myself and with my past,
free to move forward, my own self at last.
I come back up
and see a different face in the mirror,
I come up
filled with faith and free from fear.

Shabbat dinner on Brookdale

By RACHEL ORNOY

I was invited to Shabbat dinner at my friend's cousin's home. I met the cousin, Lilly, a couple of times at Sarah's house for lunch, and once at a book club. She seemed to be a very nice lady, friendly and intelligent.

The last time I saw her was at the Promenade Mall where she was having coffee and invited me to join her. We had an interesting conversation about children, politics and books. When I got up to leave, she said, "I would love to have you and your husband for Shabbat dinner. Are you free this Friday at 7 p.m.?"

"Thank you. We will be delighted. What is your address?"

"We are not too far from you – 235 Brookdale Ave."

"Thank you. We will be there," I said and shook her hand.

That week was a very busy one with many meetings during the evenings, so I was looking forward to a relaxed Shabbat dinner with Lilly and her husband. I assumed there would be other guests and was pleased at the opportunity to meet new people.

"As far as I know, they are religious, at least observant," I told my husband.

"How do you know, and why are you mentioning it to me?" he asked.

"I seem to remember that her cousin Sarah told me that a long time ago, when she first mentioned her. Also Lilly declined my offer to bring a pie, saying she keeps a very kosher kitchen. I think that it will be best to bring a kosher wine. You will be in charge of it."

Friday morning arrived, and as always, much too fast for me.

"Can you believe it's already Friday?" I asked my husband before he left for work.

He smiled. "You always ask me this question. Every Friday."

It was true. I always did. I was not happy with how fast the week passed, and with it, the months and the years. I was not looking forward to growing older, let alone so quickly.

"Don't forget to buy the wine" I called after him.

He waved his hand, as if to say, "I heard you."

Part of my unhappiness in growing older involved the various deficiencies I discovered in myself, my husband and my friends. We are talking about people in their late 50s. I thought we were too young for all these difficulties. (Especially me, who for the last – too many years to mention – still celebrate my 30th birthday.)

One friend, for example, lost the hearing in the right ear, another in the left. They can hear when you speak to the good ear, but I could never remember which is which.

It is even worse when both men are in the room at the same time. I am never sure if they heard me or just smile out of politeness.

Continued on page B10

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Continued from page B9

Then there are friends – and this includes me – who need glasses either for reading or for seeing far.

Just the other day, we went to a restaurant and saw two of the couples we came to meet sitting with their backs to us. Suddenly one of them started calling and waving to a couple who came in through the other door. Her friend pulled her down and turned her around toward us.

"Those are not Rachel and Jack. Look, here are Rachel and Jack coming in the other door."

My friend smiled sheepishly. "Without my glasses, the other couple looked like them."

Memory is one of the "big ones" – they are all complaining of their short-term memory. The most popular complaint, which I heard often: "I opened the fridge and stood there for awhile till the hair in my nose froze, but could not remember what I am looking for."

My friend called me last week. "Rachel, I know I needed to call but can't remember why. Can you tell me why I'm calling you?"

My husband will often ask me in the restaurant, "What is this dish?"

"Don't you remember you ate it last time?"

"Did I like it?"

So you can imagine my frustration when my husband arrived at 6 p.m. that evening, empty handed.

"Sorry, I forgot."

We showered and changed and decided on Plan B. I would go to Lilly's house and he would follow, after buying the wine. At least only one of us might be a bit late.

I find that if I repeat something again and again, I remember it better. In the car I repeated the address – 235 Brookview Rd. I was quite sure I knew where it was, as I pass this street quite often.

The sun was starting to set, and I couldn't see the numbers. I drove slowly, mumbling about how inconsiderate people are who don't have large numbers on the front of their houses.

It was 6:45 when I arrived at Lilly's house. The light was on and the number was 235. I knocked on the door, but there was no answer. I went and looked through the living room window and could see the table in the dining room set with a white tablecloth, flowers and long white candles. I knocked again and tried the handle and pushed the door open.

"Hello! Lilly! Can you hear me?" I took off my boots and put on my dress shoes. Took off my coat and put it on the banister. "Lilly, it's Rachel. I came early to see if you need help." Still no answer.

But the festive table with the gefilte fish on the small plates and the covered challah at the head of the table were a sure sign that Lilly was expecting us.

"Maybe her husband went to the synagogue and she is taking a shower. I will wait for her."

I surveyed the large kitchen – one of these open concept rooms that includes a sitting area. It was very homey. There was a big pot of chicken soup on the stove, a plate of fruit and two cakes on the kitchen table. The enticing smell of cinnamon, garlic and fried onion was overwhelming. Especially because I was so hungry and could hear my stomach rumbling.

I went to the staircase leading to the second floor and called softly, "Lilly, are you there?"

I was now wondering if maybe she was having a nap. She couldn't be in the shower that long. I didn't dare wake her, so I called softly again, but probably her door was closed, so she couldn't hear me. I consoled myself that her husband would be here momentarily and he would wake her.

I sat down at the kitchen table and read *The Canadian Jewish News* that was lying there. Next to it was a slice of bread. While reading, I kept eying the bread. "To eat or not to eat," I asked myself in a dramatic voice.

"We will not eat before 7:30, after all the singing and the blessings," I argued with myself. "Knowing Lilly, she won't begrudge me a slice of bread."

It was a bit dry, so I toasted it. I felt awkward about taking anything from the fridge to spread on the toast. Instead, I filled a soup bowl with a bit of the tantalizing smelling chicken soup.

"I am sure Lilly won't mind, especially when I did not break any kashrut rule," I convinced myself. Now I will be better able to survive the praying and the singing that precede every Shabbat meal.

Now what? I glanced at my watch and was surprised to see that it was 10 minutes past 7. "What is going on?"

My cell rang, and I jumped up, startled.

"Where are you?" my husband asked.

"Where are YOU? I am waiting for you in Lilly's kitchen," I said.

"No, I am waiting for YOU in Lilly's kitchen," he said.

It was almost like a table tennis game between us, back and forth, back and forth, till we decided to stop – and start from the beginning.

"I am at 235 Brookview Rd.," I said triumphantly.

"I am at 235 Brookdale Ave.," he said patiently. "And because Lilly and the rest of the guests are here with me, I know I am in the right place. Whose house are you in?"

"I don't know. I don't have anyone to ask, and frankly, I don't want to know. I am on my way."

Rushing to the hall, I grabbed my boots and my coat and was ready to leave when the door opened.

He was tall and pleasant-looking with a salt and pepper beard, and wearing a black coat and hat.

We stood there looking at each other for a long moment.

"Good Shabbes." He smiled at me. "Are you one of the guests? Where is Arlene? Are you coming or going?"

The door opened again, and a pretty woman rushed in. She glanced at both of us and said, "I went to talk to Leah, my next door neighbour. I see you brought a guest?" She looked at her husband.

"I thought you invited another guest." He sounded puzzled. Now they both looked at me.

At that moment, I had one wish, and one wish only. That the floor would open up and swallow me.

How could I explain the situation without sounding stupid, strange and unbelievable when I found it hard to believe myself?

A thought crossed my mind, and I asked, "Do you know Lilly Epstein?"

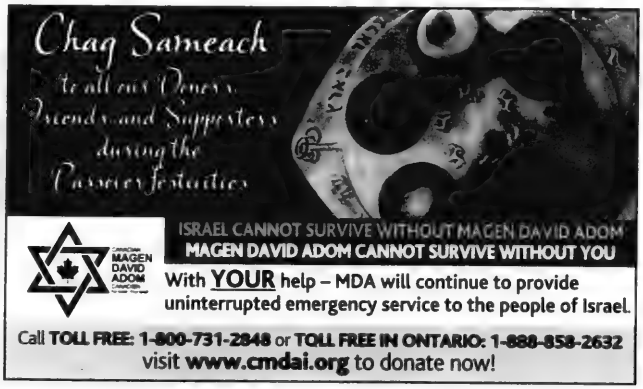
"Of course. Lilly and Aaron belong to our shul," the woman said.

What a relief. Now my story sounded more believable, and they burst out laughing at the end of it. I just smiled weakly – I still felt embarrassed and very uncomfortable.

"Thank you for your hospitality." I shook their hands, and as I was leaving, I had the chutzpah to give them advice: "Lock your door, even when you just go to your neighbour's, Leah."

I did not feel like going to Lilly's house anymore, as you can imagine, but could not leave my husband hostage there. Lucky for me, I arrived a bit late, so they accepted my short explanation and we went on with the songs and the blessings.

It was a Shabbat dinner to remember. I started it at 235 Brookview Rd. and ended it at 235 Brookdale Ave. in Toronto.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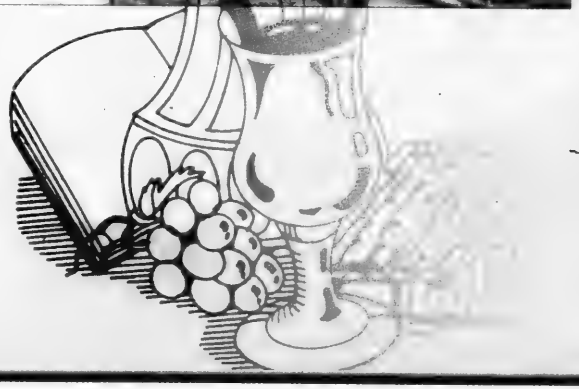

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The Kaddish Club

By PEARL ADLER SABAN

Shabbos morning.

The shul kitchen.

A small gathering of men stand around a counter that holds

a plate of schmaltz herring, a box of crackers, and a small stack of plastic shot glasses.

One man reaches into the refrigerator to remove from a lower shelf

a bottle of aged Glenfiddich, a tall shapely bottle of vodka, and a well-used bottle of Crown Royal.

Another man takes a head count, then takes orders and pours the amber or clear liquids into the disposable mini cups.

Another man offers a loud l'chaim. Yet another adds his own brachah: "To simchahs, tov and shalom". And punctuating that brachah is an added, hearty "And parnossah" by yet another man.

This Kiddush Club exists –

in spite of the fact that the OU frowns on this and countless other boys' clubs; in spite of the fact that the OU decreed and HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that kiddush clubs be banished.

For the quarter of an hour that these men gather and shmooze, they are brothers –

Spirited souls whose hearts might be lively at this hour of the morning, or whose heads might be heavy with thoughts that they need to share.

The Kiddush Club. A haven of sorts. A gathering of minds and laughter.

Tell me please:

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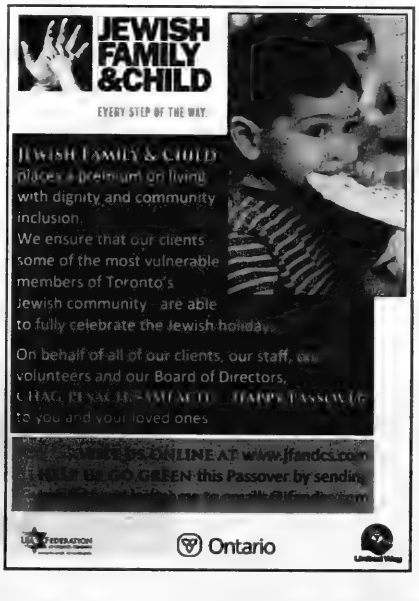
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Passover Greetings

The Tallit

Self-portrait by Aba Bayefsky

By SUSIE PETERSIEL BERG

Cream coloured and rough
as the hands of the mother who wove it
for her boy to wear before Torah,
to *daven* with his father,
to smudge schoolboy lead and mud into its corners,
it scratched under his clothes when they sent him to safety.
He peeled it off in the new world
married his bride beneath it
wrapped their first son in it
himself.
No last generation,
the next one kept the *tallit*
refused to bury it beneath a ground already full of souls.
The day that first son stood before Torah
the father wore a new *tallit*
the son wore his grandfather's
davened with his father
smudged pencil and sandlot earth into its corners.
That first son
married his bride beneath the grandfather's *tallit*
asked his father to wrap each new child in the softening folds
smudged now with ink and tears and sweet wine.
His father died
and was wrapped in his own *tallit*;
the son kept the one that had travelled so far,
keened Kaddish graveside
ears ringing as dirt hammered wood
his own children touched their father's shoulders
added their fingerprints to the rough weave.
The day his first child stood before Torah
the father wore a new *tallit*
the daughter wore her great-grandfather's
kissed the worn cloth
added the barest trace of lipgloss

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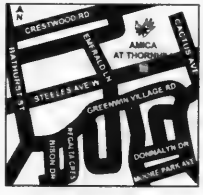

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An Ode to Meema Chava

By ROSE ROMBERG

A diminutive soft-spoken lady.
Gentle as the whisper in your ear.
Small features, sallow complexion
Never applied makeup.

She worked in a sweatshop
Through self-sacrifice paid
for a Schiff's kart to bring
Papa to America.

Three l-o-n-g years later
Papa was able to bring Momma
and her five little girls to be
united with Papa in joyous celebration.

Meema Chava was childless.
In silence, she yearned for
her own. In 1925, she inherited five little maidens, her nieces.
Papa & Mama's brood.
Then two more were born,
adding to her joy!
She shared in our lives
without reservation –
our twin mother

How she fussed at our forth-
coming weddings,
Each of us were showered lavishly.
Each with a chest of silver cutlery.
She was content.

Time after time I remember…
My beloved Meema Chava.
Her visits to the doctor's office
Purple swollen varicose
like tiny streamlets running
along her legs.
Only her physician knew
of her sharp pain, as he
injected the needle.
Never a whimper from her lips.

Her silence was like the read-
ing of the "Amidah."
Suffering was her life
Death, was the spring-lock
that released her from pain.

I miss her golden presence
even after these many decades
Because of her, I, live!

A Link in the Chain

By D.M. TOPP

Retell the story down through the ages,
Recite the wisdom of the sages;
Overeat like it's part of the plan,
Sing a song about a lamb

Sit around the seder plate,
With family 'til the hour is late.
It makes me think about who I am
And where I fit into cosmic plan.
I'm thinking that for hundreds of years
Fellow Jews with hopes, with loves, with fears
Have sat like us on this very date
in front of the very same seder plate.

I imagine snippets they might have said,
Conversations echoing in my own head,
Ancestors real as if sitting here,
Gone before me now many a year.

Living in hard times they didn't deserve
When water and wishes were all they could serve,
But still the memory and meaning were kept;
The indelible spirit never slept.
This night will be repeated again,
For I am a link in an unbroken chain;
Generations to come may think of me
As a living part of their ancestry.

I can see our people's will to survive
In spite of those who don't want us alive;
So with pride I recite each familiar word,
A part of our history, always to be heard.

Because of Your Kindness

By ESTHER M. GESSER

Because of Your kindness
I sing!
You have remembered
The assurance to Your servant
For which I hoped.

Best wishes for a Happy & Healthy Passover!

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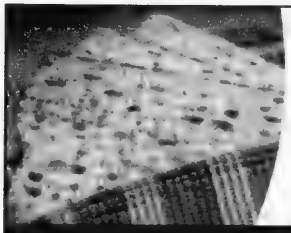
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[Photo CJC archives]

Passover, everyone's favourite holiday

By ELEANOR KUNIGIS MOIDEL

The sparkling white damask tablecloth is freshly ironed, a traditional cloth. The only clue that it had been used before is the small wine stain that didn't come out during the last wash. It, along with everything that sits on the table, is reminiscent of earlier Passovers.

The table is set for 12 people. Along with the gleaming Passover dishes are sterling silver flatware; knives, forks and spoons that are only used during the eight day holiday each year. The matzah cover, embroidered in Lithuania by the now gnarled hands of the great-grandmother, covers the three matzahs.

The crystal *maror* dish with accompanying spoon is waiting to be filled with homemade horseradish. The *afikomen* bag, handpainted in kindergarten by the youngest grandchild proudly covers the matzah, to be found later after *zeyda* hides it.

Crystal wine goblets stand guard at each setting. Each year at least one of the goblets gets broken, only to be replaced before the coming Pesach. And, in the middle of the table humbly sits Elijah's cup, fashioned in silver with Hebrew engraving. It's very old. It has several dents in it, but that doesn't matter because it survived.

It survived the pogrom where many Jews were killed. It survived the ghetto where it was hidden for three years. It survived the turbulent ocean crossing to Canada. It is regarded as the most revered possession of the family.

It trembles as the wine is poured into it. It continues to tremble until the front door is opened to allow Elijah to enter, to join the family while they stare hoping that he will take a sip from the goblet.

> *Elijah's cup survived*

After he's taken the sip, the children all shout in unison, "We saw him. We saw him. He did take a sip of wine. We saw the level of the wine go down!" The adults smile, nodding in agreement.

The highlight of the night is to sing the songs which appear on the back pages of the Haggadah. The family loves the songs. Sometimes there's an argument about a song as to which melody to sing. The solution is to sing both or all. Why not? Such joy, such nostalgia, such dreaming. Dreams of pace, dreams of shalom, dreams of celebrating the holiday next year. Next year, all together. Next year in warm Jerusalem. Next year in cool, rainy Toronto. As long as the holiday can be celebrated in peace; here and in Israel. *B'shana habaa b'Yirushalayim.*

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Chag Sameach

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Passover Greetings

A Still, Small Voice

By JENNIFER (JINKS) HOFFMANN

And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke the rock in pieces before the Lord: but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake: but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire: but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire, a still, small voice. From Melakhim: First Book of Kings. 19:11-13

Oh God,
all the religions of all the world
teach of the value of silence and of emptiness.
Meditate daily, we are told,
and you will come to your inner nothingness,
where you will find God.
Oh God, I meditate with fervent desire
and my nothingness
will have nothing to do with me.
Grocery lists, tasks accomplished
or those yet to be,
thoughts of cheerful or dire nature
occupy all the available space
when I sit seeking You.

Dearest One
can I find Your still, small voice
in my everyday life?
When a thought arises
to visit my mother-in-law
or an ailing friend,
is that Your still, small voice?
When I curb my tongue
and do not vent my exasperation
on the hapless grocery clerk,
am I hearing Your still, small voice?
When I give a large tip
to a weary looking waitress,
am I responding
to Your still, small voice?
When I hold my irritation
and instead kiss my beloved,
do I heed Your still, small voice?
Oh God
is it sufficient
to hear Your voice
in the still, small moments
of my ordinary life?

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Letter from a Labour Camp

By JOSEPH PERETZ

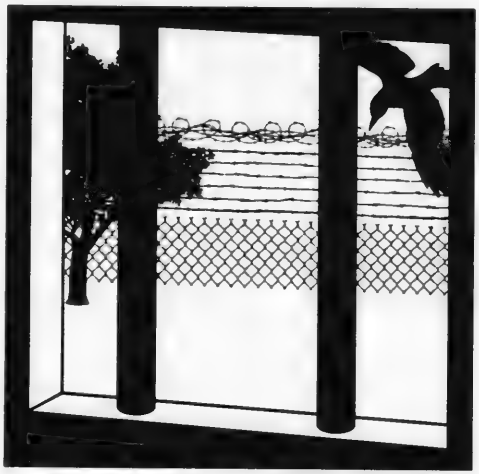

Illustration by Trevor Miller

Sitting on his bunk bed facing the window, pensive, his demeanour is gloomy. He looks out, the water cascading down below the panes. A fine spring rain obscures the sunlight, trying to pierce the grey clouds. Tall, skinny and young, his hair dishevelled, he sighs.

With a tired motion, his right hand travels absent-mindedly through his hair, as if his fingers could dispel his sombre thoughts. A few steps from the wooden barrack wall is the barbed wire he had assisted in putting up since his arrival. A fly walks across the window, its buzz irritating him. He blows to chase it away.

The trees are still bark in the first days of spring. In the distance, the field waits, empty, for the sun to help produce fruit. His gaze envelops this desolate view beyond the barbed wire. He looks at the poles to which the wires are attached to form his prison, the limits of his freedom.

These young trees were dislodged from the woods to be planted here, captive like the prisoners in this camp. He compared them to himself, torn from their kin, excluded from life, from civilization. Why? The answer eludes him.

For months and months he attempts to understand, seeks to know, but it is in vain. The only answer he can come up with is that he suffers because he is what he is. Yes, that must be it. That is the sin he committed. He gets up, leans against his bed, takes a package of tobacco from his pocket, a cigarette paper and automatically rolls a cigarette. Licks the paper, lights up and extinguishes the match with a blow of smoke after having deeply inhaled. The light in his eyes softened a bit, his looks become more vivid. Lucky to still have this to calm his nerves, which dominate him.

What is he thinking of? Could it be his elder parents from whom he has no more news? Of his sister and brother? Is it of his wife he thinks? Who knows if he is married. He looks so young. His eyes moisten, a tear rolls down his cheek. He quickly wipes it off as if he is ashamed and looks at his cigarette with an accusing glance. Then he smiles faintly, looking at the smoke rising from it in a gracious pirouette. One would think that in this design he sees the face of a loved one, a girlfriend maybe, who smiles at him across the barbed wire. A spark of happiness lights up his eyes and ever the dreamer, he looks into the distance, as if he recalls life as it used to be. The freedom, the happiness.

It has stopped raining and through the spreading clouds the sun emits its warm rays. In a tree facing the window, he observes a bird building its nest. He comes and goes, each time holding a straw in its beak, flies around there and lands on a branch he has chosen as his abode for the following summer. With artistic architecture he weaves one straw into another so that each twig contributes to the formation of the nest that will house his family during the coming season. The young man observes this procedure with keen interest. I wonder what ideas cross his mind. Maybe he is daydreaming of the nest he will build for himself once freedom is restored. Probably these are the thoughts that fill his days and nights.

He looks at the bird with envy. How good it is to be free, to encounter no obstacles. No limitations, not to be locked up, no longer to see the cursed barbed wire to be free and live like a human being together with his family, to taste the bliss of marital life. This must be the dream of my imprisoned friend.

A strident whistle blow interrupts my musing.

Suddenly I see my friend rise, exit the barrack at a slow pace. I also get up and follow him. It is time for roll call.

Written in:
Juden Lager "Les Mazures"
(near Charleville)
July 1943.
Translated from French

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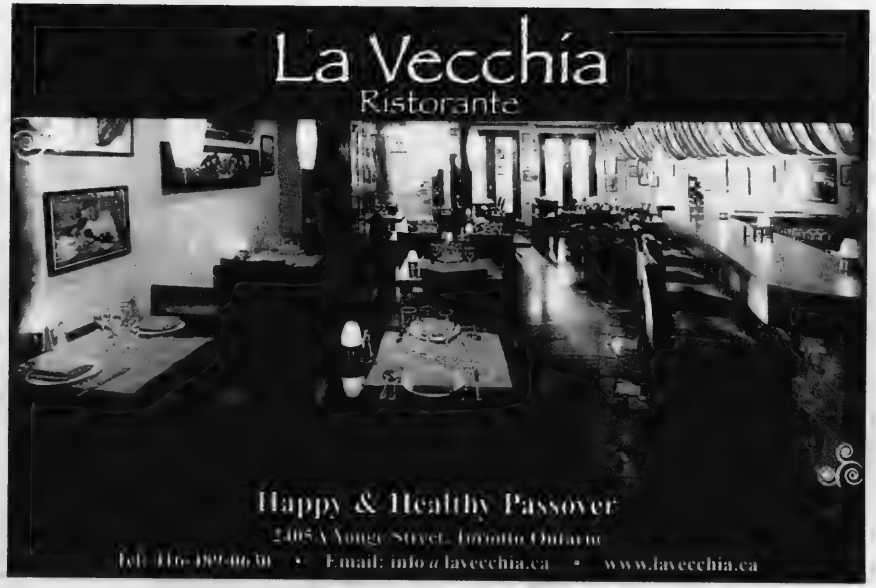
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Fires of Hatred

By ANTHONY DAYTON

Hot breath,
Fires of hatred —
Your hatred —
Roaring ever closer.
Fire tongue
Lashing ever nearer.

Your millennia-long
Burning hatred
Dampened momentarily by
Holocaust Tears,
When even you
Shamed to hate…
At least overtly.
Crocodile tears,
At best.

And so it
Simmered,
That hatred.
And it
Smoldered,
That hatred.
For half a century,
Within the beast
That is you.

Half a century!
How it must have
Galled,
When Jews climbed
From the ghetto,
When they crawled
From the frozen
European mud,

When they rose
From the rivers
Of Auschwitz blood.

How it must have
Incensed
When they came
Again to life,
When they began
Again to thrive,
When their culture
Once again took root,
Bloomed in soil
Made fertile,
Made holy,
By the sacrifice
Of Jew and Christian both,
When it seemed
We were as one.
Almost.

And all the while,
You watched
In silence livid
You fumed
And all the while
Biding your time.
And now you sense
Your time has come.
Time to unleash
Paroxysm of hate,
Time to spew
Your ancient venom,
Time to incite
The ancient blood,
Your killers,
Your paranoid abhorrence.

Torching synagogues
Is sport again!
Isolating Jews from the world,
What wondrous joy!
A little stoning
While they walk along,
Such satisfying bliss!
And after all,
You waited long for this.
Fan your fires, then,
And once again
Bring destruction
Of all that's good,
And once again,
Bring the desolation
Of the Jews,
But not just the Jew,
You'll again destroy
The other innocents too
From other nations,
And other lands,
It's all as one to you.

There is no cure
For your disease,
For your hellish,
Burning hatred.
There is only
To prepare,
To wait
Where, on the lonely plain
Of Har Megiddo,
There, we know you'll come
Again.

Leslie & Anna Dan

Wish their relatives & friends
a peaceful, happy and healthy Passover

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Passover Greetings

My Love

By YONATAN CURRY

I'm in love.

She's a bit older than me, but often seems younger, perhaps in part as a result of her adventurous youth. At other times she displays a wisdom far beyond her years.

Her life has not been easy. She has lived in many countries. Ever mindful of her past she has had to fight for all she has. Through it all she has maintained her sense of self worth and dignity.

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Though she has no children of her own she is a mother figure to many and is always ready to welcome strangers into her home where they are treated like family.

Culturally we're miles apart, yet her favourite music and simple foods have become my own.

Like most she has her moods; but with a practical disposition brought on by many years of deprivation she is slow to anger. However, her wrath is an awesome thing to behold when aroused.

I feel comfortable when I am with her. Each time I am welcomed with open arms. There is always something new to discover as she slowly reveals herself to me at each meeting.

Happy just to be in her presence, I yearn to know her, to touch and feel her, smell and taste her.

When I'm absent I think about her often. The remembrance of her colours my thoughts and the many actions of my waking days.

A better person for having met her, I would do anything in my power to help her.

Wise beyond her years, yet young at heart, she has captured mine.

Forever, Israel will be my love.

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Passover Greetings

Wednesday in April

By DAVID SAUNDERS

It was a Wednesday in April. The morning brought rain and 12:00 to 1:00 was overcast. Then the sun came out, and the temperature went from that of an early spring one to a mid-summer one the way it does in Toronto from time to time.

He returned from the funeral of their good friend and handled it the way he handled all deaths, by hiding himself and being alone. He changed his clothes, those he'd put on to be a pallbearer, suit and tie and white shirt, and put on his jeans, a yellow shirt he'd bought not two months before, one of his many cashmere V-neck sweaters, and told his wife, also grieving, that he was going for a walk, wanted to be alone and didn't want to talk. She'd heard that routine before and try as she might, always felt hurt by it, but talked to herself and got over it.

He put on his navy trench coat, double-breasted, since by late afternoon when he announced his walk, one could predict cool air would return, and it did.

After investigating local bookshops he stopped at a book, magazine, newpaper and confectionery store, what years ago would have been called a cigar store where he picked up a bag of trail mix of nuts and raisins. He figured out how to open it without spilling the contents and munched as he walked. He settled on a long bench in a nearby churchyard where he polished off the mix, scrunched up the bag and with the good aim of a pretty good, but not great athlete, got the two points for tossing it in the receptacle a few feet away.

He returned to the bench, looked down to notice black threads the breeze had caught, blowing when they should've held down a black button. He didn't remember losing the button, and didn't have an extra. It didn't matter, it was at the bottom. He also noticed the salt stain at the hem of his coat, the pearl grey patch that must've attached itself when he brushed by his or his wife's car on a winter day. He knew he should have stayed with khaki when he purchased the coat but they didn't have his size and he needed it then. It couldn't wait.

The funeral was a Jewish service and the man on the bench was a Jew. At graveside, he realized he was the only man there who did not know the Kaddish words. He never learned them or if he did he forgot them when his apostasy commenced or soon afterwards. He felt ashamed. He should not have left his religion behind him; it had much in it and may have even given him something good.

He reflected on his reasons for leaving behind his religion. He'd not told anyone the reasons in decades though he must have told his parents them once at least many decades ago – he'd had to have explained himself to them way back after his Bar Mitzvah. The reasons were two men who scared him.

He was a timid boy, easily frightened, for reasons that may have had to do with his family upbringing or just his nature. He had two Hebrew teachers, both with numbers on their arms, one a Pole, one a German.

The Pole was short, had carrot hair, white skin, eyes that stabbed the air, blue eyes they were; he yelled and shouted at his students and yelled and shouted at the timid boy. More than once he grabbed him by the ear and dragged him up the aisle for no reason other than his own inflammability, for the timid boy would not have done anything so serious as to warrant that punishment. The Pole did the same to Fred, the timid boy's friend, and to Carl and others. The ear drag hurt them all but terrified the boy. He shook in the class for as long as the class lasted, two hours give or take.

The German was stern, wore rimless glasses, and while he never touched the boy, or Fred or Carl, all came to an abrupt attention when he was near. They'd heard bad things about Germans and though this teacher was a German Jew, he was still German, and the youngsters thought they should be fearful, and were.

So after his Bar Mitzvah, the frightened boy told his parents he would not go to classes and would not go to shul, not ever again, and kept to his word. His parents realized how frightened he was of the Pole with carrot hair and of the other man with rimless glasses, and that is why the man did not know the Kaddish words, or if he knew them put them right out of his mind, forever.

Now without faith, without belonging, without even the Kaddish words he was sorrowful, and thought he could change things...it's never too late, they say...but he knew he didn't want to.

He did not comprehend prayer, he thought people prayed when they lost hope, but he also knew that grasping at straws in prayer when all hope is gone is the only rational thing to do. He wondered if his dead friend had prayed. He wondered if at the end of his days he would pray. He didn't know the answer to either.

He sat silent. He had a gift for quiet. He had the trick of quiet, of letting the world flow beneath his eyes.

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The Legacy

By ESTHER M. GESSER

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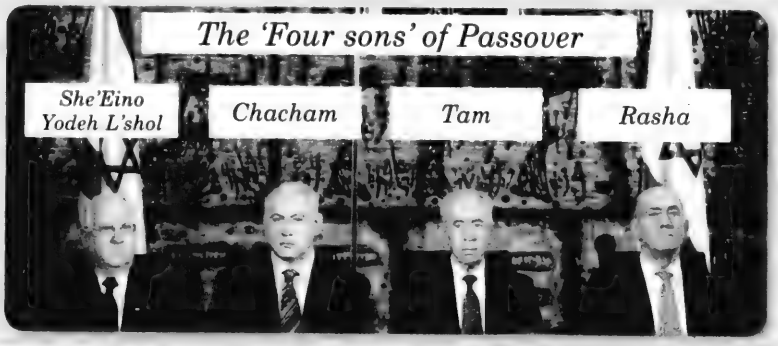
The ark of Your commandments
The legacy of my fathers;
I am blessed
Because I can believe.



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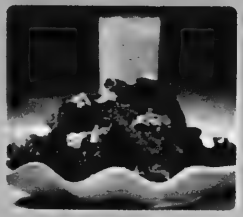

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Passover Greetings

Gratitude to the Just

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Passover Greetings

The Clergy

By STAN WEISBERG

The camp guards
Went home
And made love
To their wives
And kissed
Their children

On the Sabbath
Proud in their
Uniforms
They went to their
Churches and prayed to
Their Gods

And the
Guards confessed
To their clergy
Of the horrors
They had
Witnessed

And they told
Their clergy
Of the gassings
And of the ovens
And many clergy
Were horrified

These clergy
Told the guards
To obey
Their God's
Commandment
"Thou Shall Not Murder"

And these clerics
Disappeared
Forever
Into the
Camps of
Death

But other clerics
Told the guards
That they were at war
And could ignore
The commandment
"Thou Shall Not Murder"

And these clerics
Also told
The guards
That they
Were all good
Christians

And that
The Jews Gypsies
Jehovah Witnesses
Communists and
Polish people
They had executed

Were not

And these clerics
Assured the guards
That when they
Died they would
All go to
Heaven

And that
The Jews Gypsies
Jehovah Witnesses
Communists and
Polish people that
They had murdered

Would not

But these clerics
And their
Guards
Have all
Gone to
Hell

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The leave-taking

By BRUCE D. JACOBS
DAVIDOVITCH

Jacov Abramowicz leaned into a howling Scandinavian Nor'wester. He kicked impatiently at the granite pebbles lining the beach. Whitecaps slapped the shoreline, their distant crests indiscernible against a slate grey Baltic sky. Just inland a dune landscape paralleled the seascape, a glacial remnant of the last ice age.

'Thus it is, thus it ever was,' he considered. Late October on the northern Polish lowlands. Fertile birch woods and neatly rectangular wheat fields flourished further inland during the glory of spring and summer. But now, the land was scoured by winds from the northwest or pummelled by frigid weather generated to the northeast, born of the Arctic pack ice on the Barents Sea.

"Jacov, this year's harvest was insufficient. Hashem has seen fit to shorten the growing season," his wizened father, Shmuley, reflected.

"Some potatoes and turnips, beets and carrots. We'll have to slaughter a few chickens. I was hoping to get some fish from the monger, but he avoids our 'settlement.' And the *goyim*, those *swinia*, throw rocks at me if I launch our unseaworthy rowboat and drop a line."

"Papa," replied Jacov sympathetically, "I read in a dated copy of the Warsaw *Unzer Yugend*, that in places like Ireland, young men are leaving their plots of land and moving to places like America and Canada, even Australia. 'Better small fish than an empty dish,' as the saying goes," Jacov said philosophically.

Shmuley looked fondly at Jakov, understanding fully where this middle son of seven children was going with this unceremonious conversation.

"Look around this village, *mein kindila*," he responded. "It is a pockmark on a well-worn face. On the outskirts of Mikuszewo, a nothing town on the wrong side of the *Wisla* estuary. A *shtetl* with no future. Even the *yeshiva* struggles to survive."

"Halfway between Gdansk and Biblay. *Viershnick*. Nowheresville. Two hundred kilometres from civilization either way in Berlin or Warsaw," he chuckled.

"At times in history we're Poles. Then Russians. We could easily, God forbid, become Lithuanians or Germans. Nothing is for certain anymore. Especially with the recent news of pogroms in Bialystok, Kishinev, Kiev and Odessa." It was a sobering litany.

"In my grandfather's time we were Swedes!" They both chortled at the thought.

Father and son stood on the marginally fertile delta, where their river met the Baltic. More clouds billowed westward, elbowed by the late autumn weather front which stretched from the fjords of Norway to the Ural Mountains. The air was rife with particulate matter, churned out from the industrial shipyards and smokestacks of Gdansk. Even in the summer the prevailing winds brought, from the other direction, the rank odour of the chemical plants across the *Mewia Lacha* (the Seagull Banks), in Kaliningrad.

"*Tata*," Jacov broke their reverie with one of his many questions. He was a restless, inquisitive young man. "How long has our family been here scratching for food like poultry in the barnyard?" It was a hard question and could have been taken as a great affront to his father, but Shmuley replied patiently and without anger.

"Son, I hear your implied criticism. I'm not insulted, but these are our tender roots. This is my inheritance. A few scrubby acres from my father Moishe, from his father Yussel."

Jacov didn't mind the history lesson that was coming. In fact, it filled him even more with dreams.

"Barbarians traversed this land," Shmuley continued, relishing the opportunity to talk with his son. "Ships sailed the Wistla, probably Viking. Maybe Slavic or Germanic.

"I know you think me a poor schmuck, barely providing. I've done my best to be a good father and husband and Jew."

Jacov was always amazed at his father's humility. There was no hint of anger, grief or guilt. As open as the palm of an outstretched hand.

"No, no. You are the ideal father. It's just that when I look at a summer sky and the horizon is endless, I swear I can see north to the Pole or west to the Atlantic. And I think...there has to be more..."

In the distance, a steamship, likely filled with coal or iron ore for the smelters in the large coastal cities, inched its way across the expanse of churning sea.

"*Tata*," Jacov continued, encouraged by the way the conversation was going... "I read in some old papers..."

"*Oiy*, you and those old papers!" Shmuley interjected. "Continue..." he bowed graciously to Jacov.

Continued on page B27

Continued from page B26

"Yes, there was this monk from the 1860s in Brno, Czechoslo..."

"Monk?" shrugged his father.

Jacov continued unabashed. "...a few years ago some academic scientists came back to some of his ideas about 'Heredity.' Have you heard of the concept?"

Shmuley stared, simulating a blank look and then said, "Jacov, *Rav* Glickstein says we must be cautious applying the axioms of modern science to the ancient reality of Torah and Judaism."

For the first time Jacov became irritated, waving his arms, seeking the opportunity to speak.

"*Tata*, it is a plausible theory... it's 1906 and this kind of thinking..." he trailed off under the open but serious gaze of his father.

"*Rav* Glickstein says this kind of thinking needs deep discussion from the rabbis in the Warsaw congregations. You're referring to genetics, yes? I also read that old newspaper," he chortled.

Pier 21 in Halifax.

"So you understand, or at least you know what I'm speaking of. Genetics, *Tata*. Why else would Sara and Mendel have blond curly locks while the five of us have straight dark brown hair?" Jacov was excited that he now had some common ground for discussion.

"*Zaide* Abramowicz had flaming orange hair and Aunt Esther had the blue-green eyes of a Dane!" exclaimed Jacov.

Nearby, a large, scruffy dog yelped at the seagulls as they landed on the beach, scrounging for marine life left high and dry by the tide.

"That one has been chased out of its home by our neighbours. Untrainable they say. Now it's living *vildechai*...like wildlife. At night it howls at the moon," his father lamented. "Sounds like a Siberian wolf, but look; it has a tail like a German Weimariner and a massive head like a Saint Bernard...but a beard like a Schnauzer. I suppose you'll argue that supports your 'genetics theory,' my son?"

Shmuley made it sound as if he was yielding on a point of *Talmudic* debate.

Jacov looked admiringly at his father. He was not a rich man, nor an educated one. Yet he had raised seven offspring and survived life's hardships with humility, at the cost of losing three infants and a first wife to childbirth.

"I have something to tell you," Shmuley stated in a confidential tone, somewhat comically as there was no one else around for miles except the hound and the gulls.

"Aha, *Tata*, so you're not just standing here enjoying the tropical panorama spread before us," chided Jacov.

"No wise-guy, my Mr. Man-In-The-Middle," Shmuley responded affectionately. Suddenly, his father's tone changed.

"You won't remember because you were very young, but one *Pesach* seder about 15 years ago, my eldest brother, Baruch, brought a gentile woman to your grandfather's home. A Finn from across the sea. A beautiful, tall *shiksa* he had met while in the Merchant Marine."

The wind had died down and it was so still you could hear the last of the poplar leaves fluttering to the ground. Jacov listened intently.

"It was a tragedy for all but an insult of the most heinous kind to my father. An embarrassment to all present. But that was the headstrong way Baruch did things. To the horror of all present, he announced his intention to marry and move away to Helsinki." Shmuley's voice grew painfully soft.

Jacov looked down at the stones speechless, listening to his father's uneasy breathing. The breeze picked up, fluttering his *tzitzis* and tugging at their kippot.

"They were both prideful men, your grandfather and my brother. No negotiation and no diplomacy. Tradition and modernity. Like two alpha male bull stags locking antlers in the forest."

Somewhat impatient now, Jacov asked, "*Tata*, what does this have to do with me? I barely remember Uncle Baruch except for his argumentative nature. And the horizon I seek is not across the Baltic!"

"Yes, son, I recognize that, but please, let me continue."

"Certainly *Tata*." Jacov backed down a notch.

"It ended badly, as it was destined to. The confrontation was awful. Angry lips, once loosened, spewed words like lava from a breach in a volcano. Neither would back down. It was a conflagration! It ended with your uncle storming out professing his undying love for the Helsinki girl and his distaste for his family and background."

Shmuley staggered slightly, remembering the terrible night years ago. Jacov steadied him and waited for his father to go on.

"Awful, primitive stuff. My father yelling in public declaration: 'By this rent of cloth you are dead to the family,' tearing a piece of the material from the collar of his jacket.

"And now its been all these years without even a word from my brother...and my father, bless his memory, is long gone. It seems as if it was all for nothing," he said, his voice trailing off sorrowfully.

Waiting a respectful moment, Jacov began to speak in earnest.

"*Tata*, I need to leave Poland. I want to go to America. Be a scientist. This shoreline is like a fence to keep us in." He spread his arms to indicate the physical limitations of his existence.

"There are big changes happening in this new century and I want to be part of them.

"I need to know I have your blessing. I don't want to be like your father or brother in your eyes." Jacov stared directly into his father's eyes.

Both stood, eyes shining with tears, holding back but not crying. Man-to-man they stood at a precipice of decision. His father nodded.

"There is so much beyond our life here. This generation is so different from the previous one. I can't say no, Jacov. That would be unkind of me. And your older brothers, should they stay, will need to make a living from this land. I understood from the beginning when you spoke of the sons of Ireland and other countries and why they were leaving," he smiled coyly at Jacov.

"Ahhh, *Tata*, you are a learned man!"

"Well, let's call it experienced," Shmuley responded. "I'm not yet ready to lead the congregation," he mused.

Arm in arm they trod slowly back to their home. Later, by the light of an oil lamp, his father brought out his favourite book, the old *Machzor*; the High Holiday Prayer Book. Whether Rosh Hashanah or Pesach, he often turned to it to find comfort.

Part of Jacov's wanderlust was the questioning of all around him, but that would be an unfair judgement of all his father held important.

"Son," his father said, as if reading Jacov's thoughts, "This book of prayers, old and stained with tears," he quoted from memory.

"To bear all their sorrow and degradation,"... It was too poignant, too sad.

Jacov's quandries were not the woes of the ancients crying out for a 'protecting shield.' The promise of a new life thrilled him, but he was a respectful son and had clearly absorbed the message of his father's story about his uncle.

Not long thereafter the family saw Jacov off on his journey. On foot to Mikuszewo, by wagon to Gdansk, several trains to Amsterdam, finally by ship crossing to Halifax, not unlike 100,000 others from a thousand different points of embarkation.

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The Ingathering

By PHYLLIS ZELCER

Hearts aflow with golden hope,
They came...
Ragged remnants of history's flames...
Sad, stubborn survivors
Of Pharoah's chains,
Babylonian uprootings,
Greek armies,
Roman exiles,
Spanish bonfires,
European ghettos,
Cossack pogroms,
Freight trains to cruel ovens,
Popes' silences,
"Free" World immigration quotas.
Golden they came,
To green the desert
To reclaim
Again The Land
Bequeathed forever
To them, to us, to all
"The People of the Book."
The Book which predicted
"The Ingathering of the Exiles."

Shiva

By ROBERTA SWETLOW

I kindle
the shiva candle;
no matter how hard
I shake it, the match flares
high and hot, struggling
against death.

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Hands

By MAURICE KRYSTAL

It was in Gdansk that I discovered the *Yad*. It is a ritualistic pointer in the shape of a small hand that Jews use when they read the text in the Torah. The purpose is to prevent the reader from actually touching the sacred parchment. It is usually made of silver, about a foot long, and has a chain that allows it to be hung on the Torah handles.

I had just finished a tour of the 13th century Malbork Castle, the largest castle in the world made solely of bricks, and saw a large crowd milling about in the nearby square. It was some sort of flea market, with dozens of booths selling old furniture, paintings, clocks and books. Near the end of one row was a stall with some flags. I was surprised to see some bearing the Nazi swastika.

I walked hesitantly towards the stand. Two men and a woman were behind the two tables. The men wore black leather jackets and pants. Their heads were shaved and gleamed in the bright sunlight. The woman wore a yellow Solidarity T-shirt and a black leather skirt with high black boots. As a Jew I was revolted and yet I felt as if a magnet were pulling me towards them.

I saw on one table Nazi medals, daggers, breastplates, army badges and helmets neatly arranged. On the other table there were revolvers, rifles and ammunition. My Polish was limited but I understood most of the information written on the cards placed next to the various objects for sale.

The men eyed me as they smoked their cigarettes. I saw a tattoo on the neck of one of the men. It was a jagged double SS. I could feel my heartbeat increase in my chest. Suddenly the woman pushed the arranged rifles into a pile, lifted a large cardboard box from the floor and placed it on the newly cleared space. The box was labeled in Polish with a red felt marker that said "Jew Stuff."

I struggled to control my pace and breathing as I made my way towards her and the box. I watched her reach into the cardboard box and take out a silver spice box and a small silver chalice that were probably part of a Havdalah set. Her fingers, and even her thumbs, were covered in rings bearing Nazi insignia. The box contained armbands, cloth Stars of David, as well as mezuzot and bits of leather that looked like phylacteries. And then I saw the small silver hand of the *Yad* pointing heavenward.

"How much?" I asked in Polish as I pointed to the box.

She smirked and continued to remove objects from the box and place them near the rifles. One of the men threw down his cigarette and moved towards me.

"Everything in silver is 200 Zlotys. Everything else is 50."

Two hundred Zlotys was about $85 US. I held the *Yad* in my hand. It was surprisingly heavy and it looked old. I had no idea if was genuine. I had been warned that tourists were often scammed.

As if he read my mind, he grinned.

"Farmers in the area find this stuff in their fields and sell it to us."

The *Yad* was badly tarnished, and the chain was broken and tied into a knot to hold the remaining links in place. Yet in its dishevelment it remained majestic. I knew I had to pay the ransom to get it out of this place.

"You take American money?" I asked.

"Sure," he said switching to a heavy accented English.

He took the *Yad* from me and hefted it in one hand.

"Got to be about three pounds of silver," he said looking at me with narrowing dark eyes. "You like Jewish silver?" He grinned and added, "A hundred and twenty American dollars is a real steal!"

I wasn't going to argue with his math. I hated him but I didn't want to jeopardize this rescue mission. I swallowed hard, paid the man and put the *Yad* in my inner jacket pocket, close to my heart.

***

I returned to Montreal the day before my father's *yahrzeit*, the anniversary of his death, and lit a candle in his memory. As I stared at the flickering flame and the nearby *Yad* on the dining room table I realized it was 15 years since I said goodbye to him at the Jewish General Hospital.

Continued on page B31

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Continued from page B30

I had held his hand as his breathing became more laboured. After dozens of strokes in a few months, most of the left side of his body had become paralyzed. So I held his smooth and soft right hand. When I squeezed he would weakly respond. As I sat with him in the darkened room I remembered his hands being so different.

I remembered being young and my little hand felt small in his large calloused grip as we went together to shul. I felt safe. I recalled him teaching me to assist in carpentry. He would cut with the saw while I blew away the sawdust so he could follow the pencil line. Every once in awhile I squeezed some drops of oil on the blade. Then, before the job was almost done, he allowed me to grip the blade handle, while he covered my hand with his, and together we would saw the last inch of wood.

He loved to draw and paint and he would put a pencil in my hand and I would mimic his motions, and that was how he taught me art. He was self-taught and I learned later his paintings were classified as naive or innocent art, but I proudly hung them on my walls when he passed away.

***

I had asked the art dealer who was going to clean and repair the *Yad* to try to find the history behind this piece. From two small markings on the base he was able to discover that an early 17th century silversmith in the city of Cracow created it. As I held it I fantasized about the thousands of other hands that held this instrument the past four centuries.

They must have been the rich and poor, merchants and scholars, capitalists and socialists, the very pious and the secular. So different yet they were all readers of the Torah. I imagined the panic that must have ensued as the Nazis invaded Poland in '39. How did this *Yad* find its way to some farmer's field near Gdansk?

***

I must have fallen asleep. The hospital room was dark and I became conscious I was still holding my father's hand. I squeezed gently but there was no response. Maybe he had fallen asleep, but then I realized his hand was chilled. I turned on the light at the head of his bed and saw his eyes were wide open. I touched his cheek and felt the coldness. I kissed his forehead before going to the nurses' station.

***

On my father's next *yahrzeit* I took the *Yad* to my father's old shul and gave it as a gift in his name. The rabbi seemed pleased and smiled when I told him its history and how it was rescued. That night, in a dream, I felt my father's hand squeeze mine.

The Holy Corner

By ESTHER M. GESSER

There is a holy corner
In my house
Where my Sabbath candles stand
Flanked by flowers;
There I meet
My Beloved and my Friend.

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God's mercy

By APRIL LAUFER

His face was smooth. There was not even a measure of stubble. Having taken his razor carefully, slowly attending to the corners of his chin, the sides of his face, he had spent several minutes in his morning routine. Feeling the weight of his razor in his fingers, watching in the mirror as he scraped the foam off his skin. The face that looked back at him made him sigh. He saw only his sadness; there was fear in that face. It made him look older than his 59 years.

As he left the house that morning his head bent forward as if in a perpetual nod; it was clear that he had no self consciousness, no desire to pretend his height. The corners of his mouth were drawn downward in a frown that suggested some long sorrow. On his head, a cap that covered his forehead and exaggerated the appearance that his eyelids sat heavily over his eyes.

He was angry. "How could He let people suffer like this?" he asked. It was a question that he could not let go of. It did not make sense. So much suffering, so much pain, so much agony. So much. Surely no one deserved to suffer. Even if perhaps a person had committed some egregious sin, surely suffering did not make anything right, did not change what had been. And what if there was no guilt, no blame, no sin? He argued all these things, with himself.

He had been working out his feelings now for months. He had tried to look for another alternative but no matter how many times and no matter how many different ways he looked at the situation, there was only a single answer.

He had made his decision. He understood what it was that he had to do. He had first and only to justify it to himself.

To anyone who was willing to listen, he told his sad story. His wife, the best wife in the world, the heart of kindness, and generosity, the spirit of an *eyshet hayil*, the one who could wake up in the morning and say thank God, and *abei gesundst*, let things be well, this wife, who could smile, she was finished, *gemucht*. She was dying. Slowly.

Such suffering.

"I do not have her courage, her fortitude," he shook his head. "I do not know how she can still smile and welcome the day. It isn't right. It does not make sense that such suffering exists." His wife! What did she ever do to suffer so?

Nobody argued with him. Nobody said that he was wrong to feel the things he felt. Nobody contradicted him. Nobody suggested to him that he should pray harder.

And of course, that question. The one that would not be answered. "What about the one million children? Where was God? Suffering isn't right. Even if the parents, maybe the adults had done something; not the children."

What answer could there be?

God was sleeping?

Hiding?

Taking a break?

"Not this type of suffering," he said, shaking his head slowly, closing his eyes as he said it, his face registering his despair.

And really what was he talking about? Did God have to justify the suffering of his wife? He could not believe that his God, the God to whom he had prayed these past many years, in fact all his life from before his Bar Mitzvah until now, that God, the one who is merciful…

Merciful. That gave him pause. God as merciful.

Had his younger cousin not sneered at that comment when they were together last Pesach? He had been angry with him then. Not at the comment but at the laid-back way the young man had thrown the comment out, as if it was an exclamation point; as if there were no counter-argument.

"God as merciful. Right, that explains all the wars and the killing that the Jews did." He had been angry with that comment, the glibness of it. At the time he had wanted to answer the mocking tone of his cousin with some wisdom of his own. The young man's words seemed to hang in the air and sadly, at least for him, they seemed to diminish the evening's rituals.

The table had been set in a picture perfect Passover tableau — the shining glassware, the dishes, the silver cutlery, the *shmura matzah*, the bottles of wine. Why had this cousin come if he didn't believe?

But then he looked around the table and wondered who did believe. Who of his guests cared? Oh yes, the older guests, the older cousins and aunts, and grandparents. He didn't pause to wonder if they believed.

Continued on page B33

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Passover Greetings

Continued from page B32

But he wondered about the younger guests, the younger ones who came out of obligation, of filial responsibility or perhaps, just because they got to see their cousins on this occasion. Oh, and maybe for the food. There was always plenty of food.

He could still feel the anger that he had felt last Pesach, anger toward the young man with his easy dismissal of the ritual and the meaning of it. Didn't it have to have meaning beyond the social? Didn't his prayers have to have meaning beyond the mouthing of them, didn't his prayers mean something?

As he remembered the emotions that had risen up inside him from some place that wasn't his own, some historical time line that he thought he had committed himself to perpetuating, as he remembered those feelings he wanted to be that person again. The one who had always prayed to *Hashem*, the one who believed.

He could picture the crowd at the Passover table. All family. His family. All so different. And he remembered how content he had been and then the shock he had felt by the abruptness of the young cousin's comments. What he had really wanted to do was talk to him. To tell him that we can not take the world for granted. To tell him that things were not perfect, that man was not perfect but that to be here, to be able to sit in freedom and to remember that there was a time when Jews were only slaves, were only allowed to work under the gaze of taskmasters. What he had really wanted to say is don't be so glib. Don't think that you know all the answers. Don't think that God performs his acts of mercy according to some limited human's understanding.

He had wished that he had been sitting next to the cousin. Then he could have spoken to him quietly, confidentially. Not that he would have said anything confidential. He would have talked about life's miracles, and wonders. He would have spoken of the wonders of the Jewish state, of Jewish life in the modern century, of the accomplishments of Jews in the world, their participation in the world. Yes, there were still those who hated the Jews, but there would always be those.

He would have quietly spoken about mercies in life that we little human beings could not possibly understand. Can mere human beings possibly fathom how great and wondrous the world really is?

We, he would have said, we who think we know so much about the universe. We are but a speck.

And would his young cousin have listened? And would he really have said any of those things?

And now as he puzzled over his anger, and despaired at his own doubts, he wondered what he was supposed to do.

And again he tried to imagine the conversation that he had ruminated over. His cousin that had sneered at God's wonders: then, at that time, he had had a response, at least in his mind.

If you reject this God who brought our ancestors out of Egypt, don't you see that you would not be sitting here at this table this night? Don't you see that you would not be able to drink the wine and spill those drops in memory of that long ago time? No, it has not been perfect. And it was true that Egyptians suffered the plagues. And were washed away in the Red Sea. You say this is not merciful? That is not merciful? And the hundreds of years of slavery under Egyptian taskmasters? And the death of Jewish children in the Nile? Of that you do not act incensed? No of course, one evil does not make another palatable. Not for you who were not suffering, not for you who were not there. Not for you. But please listen to everything. It is so easy to focus on one aspect and demand only justice and mercy. But where in this entire universe of mankind does such a thing exist? Only justice? Only mercy?

And that is why these attributes are God's. That is why we must strive in, however an imperfect way, we must strive. Do not condemn this God of mercy because he has not been perfect in your sight or in mine.

It is because of that time that we are able to sit here this night and you are able to ask your questions. You have the right to ask questions even of God. But if you ask, then you must listen. Not in some filtered way, hearing only what you believe to be true but to listen to everything. To understand the narrative but also understand the questions, understand the discussion. Why do we care whether Rabbi Jose Hagalil agrees with Rabbi Eliezer or Rabbi Akiba? Why discuss the meaning of the crossing of the Red Sea? Not to dwell on the harm done to the Egyptians but to understand the greatness of the miracle of the Jews leaving Egypt.

What he had wanted to say is not everything is perfect.

But we are sitting here this night not because of the food or rote repetition of the Passover story, but because we are free and because we are Jews we are given another opportunity to become engaged in our faith. This night it is possible to suspend our cynical views of the world and believe in miracles. Not because we Jews are better or our God is better, perfect in His mercy, but because it is our faith that has sustained us. It is our faith that that has brought us here tonight.

He had wanted to be able to say all of that and instead he had found himself embarrassed to respond to the young man. Now he wondered if there was some truth to the words that had been hurled into the air?

Who really believed? Could he still believe? Tears came to his eyes, unbidden, again.

He hated those tears. The ones he would not allow in front of his wife.

Did God see his tears? And if He did why didn't he answer them?

But then God had not answered the tears of the one million? Or of their mothers and fathers and grandparents and and and...

What was happening to him? Was he, too, as cynical as his younger cousin? Perhaps he was even more of an *apicorus*. The younger cousin had been mocking in his comments, but perhaps had never believed. But he had. He had always believed in God. And now, because of his own pain, his own personal sorrow, he could not see God's mercy.

God's mercy.

He wept into his handkerchief. Standing in line at the bank. He wept.

He did not care who saw him.

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Sky Blue Eyes

By SUZANNE REISLER LITWIN

He has blue, blue eyes
The colour of the so very high sky, blue kind of eyes.

And a heart that can wrap around the world
So warm, so kind, so fine and so mine.

His hands are perfect and smooth, soft to touch, strong in hold, playful and skilled. Fitted perfectly to my mold.

A gentleman, a kind man, a good man, a man's man, the best Father man of all the man, I know.

His sweet smelling manly musk, dry cleaned and swooned, with such pride of the pack, a delicious man, in fact.

Lover of flowers, arts, beauty, our people, the chief of our homes, our lives that we all shared. He cared so much.

Come celebrate with me, he said, dance on my head, around, around until I'm unabound. Let's play a game, if you dare, it was fun, it had flair.

And so....

Quiet is now, and the time has been stilled. Peace encompasses the earth that is so near. You are one with the world, my darling dear.

Did I mention the blue, the very blue eyes? Just look up and you will see them very high, high, high into the sky.

Bar Mitzvah Memories

By JUDITH WEINRYB

"It couldn't have been a more perfect affair. Don't you agree, honey?" Doris Adler said as she washed down a piece of black forest cake with a mug of hot, Irish coffee. She looked up from her plate at her husband David with a look of intense satisfaction. Her son Noah's bar mitzvah was, as far as she was concerned, a colossal success. Everyone seemed to agree, even Uncle Sol from Detroit who usually complained about everything. Her 10 months of party planning had paid off, and much to her delight, her synagogue had opened its newly redesigned ballroom just in time.

Noah, on the other hand, was not nearly as excited about the affair as his mother. Disinterested in both karaoke and line dancing, he found himself sitting alone at the head table, thinking about his late grandfather, affectionately known to him as Zaidy Sam. He recalled the walks they used to take through Kensington Market, along College Street and then up Major Street to his house, where they would enjoy a cup of tea and rugelach in the living room with Bubbie Sara.

They used to share their thoughts on just about everything. Sometimes Zaidy would discuss intricate concepts in the Talmud that flew way over Noah's head, yet it had made no difference to him that he could not understand them. The fact that Zaidy shared his pearls of wisdom with him was all that really mattered. Sadly, his grandfather had died just six months after Bubbie Sara of what must have been a broken heart, so he could not be present today.

After reflecting on his memories, Noah felt that he needed a break from the party and decided to go for a stroll. Leaving the ballroom, he walked through the glass-enclosed atrium garden towards the newly dedicated Freedman Memorial Chapel. He paused to admire the tree of life engraved with the names of families that had belonged to the synagogue over the years, then continued down the hall until he reached the entrance to the Epstein Family Judaica Museum. Finding the door unlocked, Noah decided to take a peek inside.

Turning on the lights, he was struck by the silence in the room. He noticed faded black and white photographs, carefully framed and hung in even rows along the bright, white walls and wondered what could possibly interest him in these seemingly ancient relics from the past. His grandfather had been a member of the congregation when he had arrived in Toronto from England as a child in the 1930s. Perhaps, thought Noah, he might find him in some of the photographs. He began to examine them, hoping to see a familiar face in the shots of the brotherhood meetings and the annual picnic at Christie Pitts Park.

As he moved from photograph to photograph, Noah found himself looking at group portraits. The more he studied them, the more the subjects began to resemble one another, standing as they did in formal poses, sometimes smiling, at other times appearing quite serious. Were they unhappy, he wondered, or did the photographer just tell them not to smile? It was hard to tell.

Noah had just spent the entire morning being photographed with his parents and aunts and uncles, encouraging him to smile over and over again. He recalled how the photographer had struggled to get everyone into the right position when his baby brother Jonathan ran screaming into the first row and nearly knocked Aunt Hilda off her chair. Jonathan would likely be reminded of that moment for years to come. Still, it had been a welcome break for Noah as he had grown quite tired of having his picture taken.

"I know how you feel," Noah said quietly to a boy in one of the photographs, as though he could hear his words.

Seconds later, he heard a voice whisper "I believe that you do." Startled, he turned towards a door that was slightly opened just behind him.

"Is anyone there?" Noah asked.

"I'm over here, behind the door," the voice responded. "Were you sent to help me carry the herring jars? I'm so glad you're here. They are really quite heavy."

As Noah walked through the door, he noticed that the air in the room was musty like in a damp basement, a startling change from the cool, filtered air in the museum. It was dark except for a dim light provided by a small kerosene lamp overhead.

Suddenly, a boy about his age emerged from behind some shelves. He seemed pleased to see Noah and handed him a jar. Dressed in a plain white shirt and brown corduroy pants, he had a wool cap on his head like something a klezmer musician might wear. It was obvious to Noah that he had stumbled upon a rehearsal for the upcoming play about the history of the synagogue and recalled seeing the poster for it in the main lobby earlier.

"Come," the boy called out as he sped across the floor. "Bring the herring and grab a couple of loaves from the bread basket next to you." As he spoke, he was running up a narrow staircase that led to a heavy looking iron door at the top. "Hurry. There is no time to waste. Rabbi Turner is waiting to make *Kiddush*."

As the door opened, Noah was dazzled by the brightness of the light streaming towards him and could hardly see where he was going. He soon found himself in a long, narrow room with large windows in the centre that welcomed the sunshine that flooded inside.

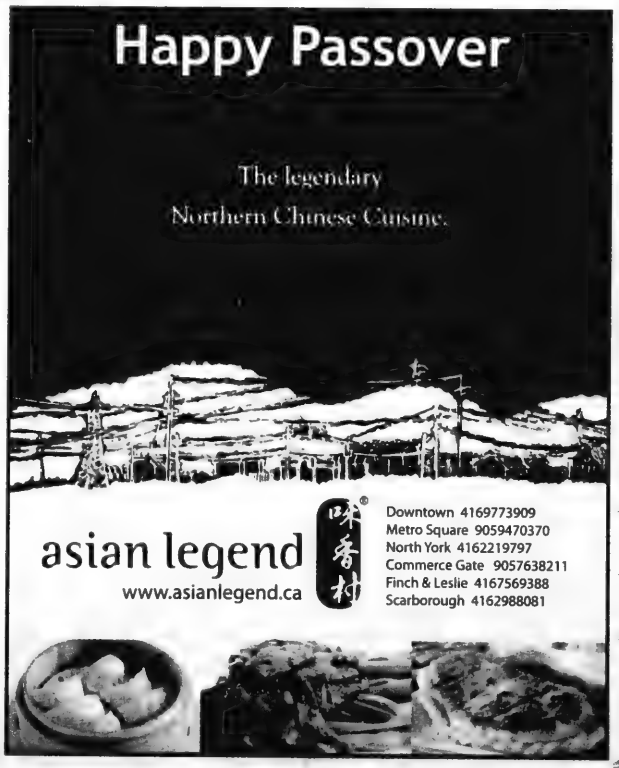
Noah took a good look around. In the centre of the room he saw a long table covered by a white lace tablecloth and adorned with baskets of daisies and petunias. A large covered pot with a ladle and wooden bowls were placed in the centre, and a pitcher of water and a bottle of wine sat at either end. In a far corner, some men were studying texts that lay open on a small wooden desk.

"Shmuel," one of them called out impatiently to the boy, "have you seen Mrs. Cohen? She is supposed to bring a sponge cake and should have been here by now." Just then, a matronly woman hurried into the room carrying a tray filled with cookies and a plain lemon-coloured cake.

"So sorry, I'm late," she muttered as she placed the tray on the table. She was followed into the room by a younger woman wearing a blue cotton dress and a large straw hat, covered with the same assortment of flowers that were on the table. She was holding on tightly to the hand of a curly-haired redheaded girl, who was jumping up and down and appeared to be ready to take off the second the woman let go.

"Freidl, gather the children from the garden," she commanded the girl, who began running towards a door leading outside. "Rabbi Turner would like to make *Kiddush* and we want to serve the cholent while it is still hot." She spoke with authority, Noah noticed, in a British accent that gave her an almost regal air. Turning to Shmuel, she smiled at him and said in a gentler tone, "I'm so proud of you, my dear son. How I wish your father could be here with us today. He would be so very proud too." She kissed him on the cheek and patted him lovingly on the head before taking her place next to Mrs. Cohen at the table.

Continued on page B36



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Continued on page B35

At that precise moment, a tall bearded gentleman entered the room, accompanied by what appeared to be an entourage of followers. They were involved in an animated discussion.

"So you see," the gentleman was saying emphatically, "man's free will is a gift from HaShem, a gift we must cherish and never abuse. This week's parshah clearly demonstrates this to us." As he sat down near the table, he shifted his focus from his talmudic argument to the events at hand, redirecting his attention to the bar mitzvah boy and the guests who were waiting for the *Kiddush* to be performed.

"All right then, Shmuel," he began slowly, placing his hand firmly on his shoulder. "We will now join together to celebrate the immensely joyous occasion of your entrance into manhood." He cleared his throat and continued. "The members of the Londoner Shul welcome you and your family to our small but caring spiritual home."

Looking at Shmuel's mother's beaming face, he added "Soon, Mrs. Adler, your husband will be coming from England to join you. We hope and pray that your entire family will be blessed with a good life here in the friendly community of Toronto."

Noah was astonished to hear his family name, but decided that this was just a coincidence. After all, Adler was not an uncommon name in the Anglo-Jewish community.

After Rabbi Turner recited *Kiddush*, Mrs. Cohen distributed glasses of wine to everyone. She then uncovered the pot on the table, and began scooping cholent into bowls. Soon the Rabbi began to sing, and within seconds, the others joined in. "Siman Tov and Mazel Tov and Mazel Tov and Siman Tov," reverberated in the room as the voices grew louder and louder. The men were leaping about, their arms intertwined as they circled Shmuel and lifted him exuberantly up from the floor on a chair. Noah stared at the scene, amazed at how much energy there was around him. Then he felt a hand tapping him on the shoulder.

"Some cholent?" Mrs. Cohen asked. Noah declined politely, as he was still quite full from dinner, then asked "I was wondering, Mrs. Cohen, do you enjoy being in the play? It really does look like fun."

Mrs. Cohen stared at him as though she did not know what to say. Noah imagined she had not heard his question because of the boisterous singing. As he turned back to watch the festivities, he realized that he was so entranced by them that he had forgotten about his own bar mitzvah celebration. Glancing at his watch, he decided that it was time to return there and quietly slipped out the door so he would not disturb the rehearsal. After going back downstairs to the cellar and returning to the Judaica Museum, Noah noticed a glass-enclosed display case containing a burgundy velvet-covered siddur standing near the main entrance. It was opened to the first page. Leaning over to look at it, he read the inscription.

It said, "Presented to Shmuel Adler in honour of his Bar Mitzvah by Rabbi Moshe Turner on May 31, 1932." Astonished, he looked back toward the entrance to the cellar. There was now only a wall where the door had been, with a single portrait in the centre. Incredulous, he ran over to have a closer look. His heart was racing. He could not believe his eyes.

In front of him was a painting of Rabbi Turner smiling and looking directly into his eyes as if to say "I welcome you into our community as I did your grandfather many years ago."

Of course he did not actually speak to him, but Noah could hear his words nonetheless.

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My 'Fetter Symche Binem' from Zychlin

By WOLF BRONET

I had many uncles in Warsaw, Poland, where I was born in March 1924. There was Uncle Label, Ellil, Leshiek, Yankel and many others from both sides of the family, but there was no one like my Fetter Symche Binem from Zychlin. He was as colourful as any character in my life, and I have seen them all.

Fetter Symche Binem was a brother to my mother, Ruchel Laya Makower. She had four more brothers, but all four immigrated to the United States. Actually, she was the first one to emigrate to the US because her fiancée from Zychlin, who already resided in America, sent her a ticket, but her martens, my grandparents, Mendel Yosef Makower and my bubbeh Iskeh Ash decided not to send their only daughter to America because there were rumours that in America, some individuals were selling the girls for white slavery. Instead they sent her brother, Uncle Abe, on the ticket that was actually meant for my mother.

From 1880 to 1900, all the other brothers except Symche Binem went to the United States. In the meantime, my mother, Ruchel Laya, married Moshe Bronet from Warsaw. They lived at 21 Franciskansha, Apartment 77. We had two rooms on the third floor in the second courtyard. There was a huge kitchen and a double parlour, which consisted of a dining room and bedroom. We had running water, gas, electricity and toilet facilities within this house.

We were poor, I was the youngest of six children. There were many times that I would leave for school without any food in my stomach. I would wait until my sister Adele, who was a Warsaw university student, would bring me something to eat. I was always glad to see her. On other occasions, she would come to see my teacher because I was constantly getting into trouble. She was able to communicate with my teacher better than my parents. I was always so proud of her. There were very few Jewish girls who attended university in those days. She always brought home with her some goodies.

> "My uncle resembled Tevia"

Fetter Symche Binem made trips twice a week from Zychlin, which was approximately 140 kilometres from Warsaw. My uncle's main purpose was to buy merchandise for storekeepers in his shtetl. He received a commission from them when he brought them these goods. I used to assist him with the *dooshke* (horse and buggy), making sure nobody stole the wares while he was negotiating with merchants. For a youngster between nine and 12 years of age, it was quite an accomplishment. To me, this was a holiday. I became "street smart" and knew all the places on Nalewki Gesia and Franciskansha. Uncle Symche Binem bought me lunch at a restaurant, feeding me goodies throughout our daily excursions.

My uncle must have been about 40 years old. He very much resembled Tevia from *Fiddler on the Roof*. Sporting a long *capotteh* with *tzitzis* hanging out, he was constantly in a hurry, rushing to catch the train at the Central Station in Warsaw at the last minute. Huffing and puffing like the locomotive, he broke into a sweat just as the train began to pull away. Luckily, I was there to help him load the parcels. Since he never had time to buy tickets in advance of departure, he chose to hide in the bathroom or bribe the conductor of the train.

On his second trip, which was generally on Fridays, he shipped eggs or chickens to Warsaw. With his luck, when eggs were brought to the market, the price dropped and the merchants wanted chickens, so he ended up losing money. When he brought chickens, the prices were also down and he lost money again. We wonder how he was able to remain in business.

His brothers in America sent him $50 US every month to support his parents and family. His monthly allowance from his brothers in the United States helped subsidize his losses.

Let me tell you about his wife "Cocia" Auntie Esther. My Aunt Esther always acted as the matchmaker within our family.

There were many children of all ages in our family, from first and second marriages. Yankel, Ruchel, Moshe, Favish, Iske, Chaikeh, Blumeh and as I recall there was always a baby swinging in a cradle. I always enjoyed rocking the baby when visiting Zychlin. There was also Wolf and Chaikeh, Sam and Blumeh, Henry and Ruchel, etc.

Sometimes Uncle Symche Binem stayed overnight for Shabbat at our home. He would take me to the *mikveh*, a ritual bath with a little pool of hot running water where men would dip several times to wash away their sins.

When we returned home, before going to sleep, he used to hang up his *killeh bendel* (jock strap) on the chair beside his bed. As a child, I used to visit the theatre that showed silent western movies with Tom Mix, Gene Autrey, William Desmon and Roy Rogers. They wore gun holsters, which looked like my uncle's *killeh bendel*. I used to put it on and pretend that I was a cowboy.

On several occasions, he would take me to Zychlin for a few days during the summer months when there was no school. I accompanied the older children to the farm to purchase the eggs and chickens so that Uncle could bring them to the market in Warsaw. It was a lot fun.

Friday nights in Zychlin, the house was spic and span. The children were all dressed up in their Shabbat attire. Uncle Symche Binem wore his shining black *capoteh*. The floors were sprinkled with sawdust and many Shabbat candles were lit, creating a festive atmosphere. Bubbeh Iskeh, Zaideh Mendel Yosef, Auntie Esther and the children all waited anxiously for Fetter Symche Binem to come from the *shtibel* (a tiny synagogue). Nobody was allowed to touch anything until Uncle would make *Kiddush*.

The story was that Bubbeh Iskeh, before she retired for the night, had hidden a couple of bottles of beer under her pillow along with our five raw eggs, which she consumed as a nightcap.

I will never forget my "Fetter Symche Binem" from Zychlin.

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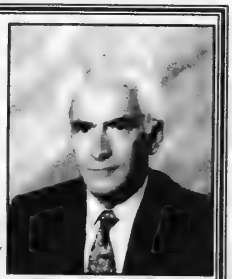
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Passover Greetings

In simple terms

By ELEANOR KUNIGIS MOIDEL

During the time of shtetl life in Eastern Europe, the Jewish people lived in constant fear of yet another pogrom, of yet another blood libel, of yet another kidnapping of youngsters to serve in the Russian army.

And then Hitler came. He wanted to annihilate the Jews from the face of the earth because they were the root of all evil. They are what caused Germany to lose World War I. They had to be eradicated so that the world would not have to suffer their takeover of the world economy. They were accused of aiding and abetting all the money lenders. It was their fault that Germany didn't have enough food to feed their citizens. The Jews were to be blamed for every ill that befell Germany.

Luckily, Hitler didn't fully succeed. In 1948 the Jews finally had a nation that was theirs. So what were the anti-Semites to do? Waging war on Israel became the enemies' *modus operendi*. And of course Israel was to be blamed for everything that had gone wrong in the Middle East.

At first the surrounding nations didn't openly say that they wanted Israel wiped off the map, that the Israeli inhabitants should be thrown into the sea. That came later. Israel prevailed. The Israelis had to fight constant wars. When that didn't accomplish the diabolical plan of Israel's enemies, the citizens of Israel were then subjected to missile attacks, unprovoked bombings of schools, buses and houses, as well as slander.

When it became apparent that Israel would not surrender, the anti-Semites developed a new slogan. We are not against Jews, we are against Israelis, we are against Zionists and Zionism.

While the anti-Semites were spewing forth these volatile orations, Jewish cemetery monuments were overturned, often smeared with swastikas and hate messages. Schools and synagogues were vandalized, cars in Jewish neighbourhoods were overturned. These occurrences took place all over Europe, North and South America, Australia and South Africa, wherever Jews live in Jewish communities. These Jews do not live in Israel. They are not Israelis. Yet the anti-Semites continue to slander and malign the Jews with their hate messages while saying they are not against Jews, just Israel and its inhabitants.

And when Israel is the first to come to the rescue of people whose lives have been shattered by natural disasters, as in Haiti, the media tries very hard to keep the good deeds quiet. Why? Are they afraid of anti-Semitic backlash or is the media anti-Semitic as well? When Rwanda needed help, Israel was one of the first to respond. When Darfur needed and continues to need assistance, Israel was and is there.

One would think that Israel would be worn down by now, would be reluctant to come to anyone's assistance. The opposite seems to be true. People can count on Israel to be there when the need arises. But who is there for Israel when its children are attacked and bombed and burned alive? What is wrong with Israel? Why don't they keep a lower profile?

The answer is there for all to see. The Israelis follow the teachings of their parents, who learned it from their parents. It is incumbent for each individual to help another. In the case of disasters, we must come to the aid of the victims. In personal relationships with friends and neighbours, we have to remember to help where we can. What do the haters of Israel follow? What are their laws? What is their rhetoric? What do they believe in?

Israel doesn't even consider themselves heroes in coming to Haiti to help in the way that they did. They do what has been ingrained in every Jew since birth. You have to help another human being. Sometimes this lesson is not even overt. It's just there. We know that we have to be part of the worldwide human community.

Oh how the liars and haters and deniers of this world abhor us, Jews and Israelis alike. Every time our response is positive and helpful, our enemies undergo migraine headaches, high blood pressure, racing pulse, heart fibrillations and signs of stroke. They now have to think up new lies, new smears and new vendettas against Israel and Zionism. And, oh yes, against all Jews, even those that don't live in Israel.

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Simon

By RACHEL PIUTI

Most people, if asked about Simon, would say that he was an honest, God-fearing man. If you would have asked Simon if it was true, he would have said yes. He sincerely believed himself to be an honest, God-fearing man.

"I wake up in the morning, pour water over my hands and face, put on my tallis and tefillin and prayer shawl, turn to the east and say my morning prayers. At dusk I say my evening prayers. I dress in my best garments and go to the synagogue on the Sabbath and on all other Jewish holidays. I stop smoking on Friday before sundown and wait patiently for the first three stars to show in the sky before I light up again. I fast on Yom Kippur and abstain from eating meat on Tisha B'Av, the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple."

Simon is a middle-aged man of medium height and medium build. He is humble, speaks softly and is deferential to those whom he considers his betters. He bows deeply and smiles politely when given a tip for opening a door or rendering some other service. Simon is a night watchman – this is his official job – but he does many other tasks besides watching the factory at night. I see him sometimes sweeping the yard in the morning before I go to school, and he often greets me with a cheerful smile when I come back home.

Bayla, Simon's wife, is a very devout woman. When I drop in on them on a Saturday afternoon, as I often do, I find her sitting at the window immersed in her prayer book. They have eight children – four sons and four daughters. The youngest, a boy of nine, is my age; the oldest, a daughter, is in her early twenties. They all live in one room and a kitchen, with no running water.

One of Simon's jobs is to feed the three watchdogs a diet of raw meat. It is supposed to keep them mean and vicious. He is the only person to enter their isolated kennel. He sometimes takes me up to the little balcony from where I can watch, with beating heart, as they run around in circles and snarl at each other.

About 10:00 at night, when everybody is back at home, Simon closes the gates and lets the dogs out from the kennel to run free in the factory yard. Anybody venturing out, except for Simon, would have been torn to pieces.

Ours is a leather factory and there is a lot of leather to protect from thieves. Most of the time the leather stays safe in the factory and there are no break-ins. But once in a while disaster strikes! One morning the gates stood open, the locks were broken, the dogs lay poisoned. Display rooms that were full of leather only the day before now stand empty. My father, his face ashen and voice shaky, talks to policemen and shows them around.

A few gloomy but busy days pass. There are consultations with serious looking men in grey suits. One morning Simon comes to our door, hat in hand, with only the skull cap on his balding head. He bows deferentially.

"I have something to tell you," he says to my father: "A man came to see me early this morning. He claims to know where the leather is and that the people would return it for a certain amount of money. They are willing to negotiate."

I see my father turn pale, his eyes dark with helpless rage. It is clear to him now; he is in the hands of a gang of thieves, and Simon is one of them. He is devastated and angry at the same time. He would like to fire Simon on the spot, but how can he? Simon has been with him for more than 20 years. He knows all the ins and outs of the factory. He could do more harm from the outside than when he earns his livelihood here. Besides, how could he send away a family with eight children? Simon is with him for life.

He will negotiate and salvage some of his losses.

"How much do they want?" Father asks Simon.

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Leah's B/M

By MYRNA NEURINGER LEVY

Dear Family and Friends,

Now that we're home, the laundry done, the jet lag overcome, I've had time to reflect, and I can report on our family trip to Israel for Leah's bat mitzvah. It certainly was an amazing experience.

One of my souvenirs is a tiny bottle, holding perhaps a tablespoon of olive oil. The oil was pressed from olives grown on Neot Kiduim, a Biblical nature preserve mid-way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Leah's bat mitzvah was there and we were given the bottle as a memento before we left.

I decided that the oil represents a miracle. As you know, we arrived in Israel shortly after Chanukah ended – Chanukah which celebrates the miracle of a small quantity of oil lasting for eight days. My miracle is that we survived travelling for two weeks with 15 family members.

What potential there was for disaster. If family stories of two generations travelling on a road trip are legend, imagine what it is like travelling with three generations in a bus. Add to it the emotional component of a bat mitzvah celebration and the stress increases. Our group consisted of seven elders like us, our children and their children. Sean, our son-in-law comes from a highly assimilated family. He never had a bar mitzvah, nor did his brother and uncle. Sean's brother married a non-Jewish woman and her mother, who wanted to see the Holy Land, joined us as well.

Eating kosher or non-kosher wasn't a problem for most of the travelers, but there were other dietary concerns. Among us were two vegetarians, a child who required gluten-free food and one with a nut allergy. Fortunately there is a vast variety of food choices in Israel, especially at breakfast.

Now I don't want to leave the impression that this was a trip filled with trial and tribulation. Not at all. There was much to enjoy and laugh about. On the first morning of our tour, a bright yellow bus pulled into the driveway of our hotel in Tel Aviv. Resting on the ledge inside the window was a sign, "Leah's B/M." After an initial double take we decided that B/M meant Bat Mitzvah and sure enough we saw many buses and vans with B/M signs as we criss-crossed Israel.

I'm not sure what Sean and his family expected to see in Israel, aside from ancient sites. It was a first trip for all of them, while Lisa, our daughter, Jake and I had been there many times. I know that they were impressed by Tel Aviv and the modernity of the hotels along the sea front. When the bus turned onto the toll road to drive north, Jake pointed out that it was built by the same company that built our Highway 407. Sean's brother's stopped looking at his BlackBerry. He continued to look out the window as we passed the buildings lining the highway, noting the high-tech companies they house. Davida, our Israeli guide, informed us that some kibbutzim are moving away from their agricultural based economy to high tech.

My first indication of how difficult it was going to be travelling with Sean's family came when Davida announced that we were going to stop for lunch at a place where we could get either falafel or shwarma. After explaining what shwarma is, she assured us that the meat would be kosher, I overheard Sean's mother say to her sister, "Kosher? We don't need to eat kosher. Why should we pay more to eat kosher?"

After stopping at enchanting Caesaria, and driving through beautiful Haifa, we arrived at Kibbutz Nof Ginossar on the Kinneret for the night. When we gathered for dinner we knew where our family group was going to sit in the dining room -there was another "Leah's B/M" sign on the table.

The Feldman Family B/M was seated at the table next to us. While chatting with them we discovered that they came from a suburb near Chicago. Our son-in-law was born in Chicago; his mother's family still lives there. They could play Jewish Geography.

The next day after a long day of touring north to Metulla, the Golan, the Dan Nature Preserve we returned to the Kibbutz. As we were getting off the bus Sean's mother said to her sister, "I have half a cheese sandwich I want to throw away, but I don't know where. The kibbutz is kosher." I assured her that any garbage receptacle would do.

Our journey continued. Awesome sights such as the caves of Rosh Hanikrah and the restored Citadel of Acco kept everyone enthralled. Finally we arrived in Jerusalem. I told Lisa that we were going to the Kotel before dinner. She agreed that Sean and the children would join us. The others,

Continued on page B41

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of the Town of Richmond Hill
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Happy Passover!

Have a joyous time with your family, friends and loved ones.

Karen Mock
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Thornhill Federal Liberal Candidate

Continued from page B40

however, stayed behind, preferring to relax. After all, Sean's aunt remarked, only religious people go there Friday night. Besides, she continued, going to the Kotel was on our itinerary for Sunday.

The Kotel square was filled with masses of people, the ultra-Orthodox, Birthright groups, tourists like us, soldiers on leave for Shabbat. We saw the Feldman family from Chicago again and a Christian group that also stayed at the kibbutz when we were there. Although Sean rejected the fervor of the religious, he admitted that going was "an experience." Our grandson, who announces that he doesn't believe in any religion at every opportunity, said that while he couldn't see how a wall could have religious significance, it could be seen as important as an historical site.

Serendipitous meetings continued. While browsing in the Christian market, our daughter and family discovered that the owner of one souvenir shop comes to Toronto every August to set up a stall in the International Market of the EX. He invited us all to visit him next summer and he'll give us a special discount. The world is very small indeed.

Finally, the day arrived for Leah's bat mitzvah. Our yellow bus with the "Leah's B/M" sign drove us to Neot Keduim. The day was warm and sunny; we first walked along the paths, seeing how olives were pressed into oil during Biblical times and then learning how grapes were pressed into wine.

At last we arrived at the chapel for the Shacharit service. After changing out of her track pants and Ugg boots to a black skirt and top Leah was transformed. From a casually dressed, inquisitive thirteen year old, shlepping around, she became a mature, poised young teenager when she put on her kippah and tallit. Wearing a tallit was her choice and Jake and I had happily taken her to choose one, as we had taken her brother two and a half years before.

Except for the non-Jews, all of us had a role in the service, which was intimate and moving. Naturally, I "shepped nachos" watching Leah chant her Torah portion with such confidence. My pleasure deepened when Lisa and Sean were called to the Torah for an Aliyah, for it was Lisa who chanted the blessing. At the same time, there was a tinge of sadness as well because Leah is our youngest grandchild. As I did so many years ago at her mother's bat mitzvah, I had to recognize that there are no more babies in the family.

During lunch, Sean's aunt told Lisa how touched she was to be given a part in the service. Later that night when we were back in the hotel, Jake told me that Sean's uncle admitted that he sometimes regrets that he never had a bar mitzvah.

We left Jerusalem, our yellow bus driving us south towards Eilat. The "Leah's B/M" sign had mysteriously disappeared. Along the way, the younger generations rode camels, climbed the Snake Path up to Masada, swam in the Dead Sea and rapelled down the side of the Rimon Crater. The grandparent generation either watched and worried or took easier means of getting there, such as the cable car up to Masada.

There was time for rest, relaxation and shopping in Eilat, as well as a trip to Petra, in Jordan. Once again, we were overwhelmed by the engineering capabilities of the ancient people.

It was time to return to Tel Aviv, have a last look at the city and drive to the airport. Most of the group was staying an extra night or two. As we kissed goodbye, Sean's mother kept exclaiming how amazing it was that we were all still talking to each other. I nodded in agreement, my tongue sore from biting it so hard. "And," she added, "I never expected Israel would be so varied and so beautiful."

Then I understood. We were all wrong that first day; B/M actually stands for "Bonding Mission."

Hope you are all well; keep in touch.

חג כשר ושמח

James Pasternak

School trustee for York Centre

wishes the community a very Happy Passover

Your voice in the community

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On behalf of the **Ontario Liberal Caucus** *best wishes to the community on the*

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to all of the residents of Ward 24 – Willowdale, the City of Toronto and surrounding communities

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Hon. Peter Kent
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Cilla and I wish you and your family a Happy and Peaceful Passover

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Affirmation

By JUDIE ORON

A few years ago I decided to start a new Movement. Whenever the opportunity arose, I planned to look people in the eye and say with enormous enthusiasm, "My Heavens! YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT!"

You have to understand – I was living in Israel at the time. People there rarely say that you're right about anything. Why would they? They're *sabras* – they're supposed to be prickly.

I started with my ninth grade class. These kids are way down at the bottom of the pecking order. They're never told that they're right about anything. They've got to get older, bigger, louder and much more intimidating, and even then, how often does it happen?

Stefan was trying to explain why he hadn't done his homework. I'd been sitting in class, waiting for almost any reasonable opportunity to do the affirmation thing. It was time these kids got some positive reinforcement, especially Stefan, who was still new in the country. Linguistically, his absorption was going pretty well, but his clothes were from another, not-exactly-vintage era and his hair was still being cut using the old bowl-on-the-head method. Not surprisingly, he was rarely blessed with an upbeat look or a high five from any of the other kids.

Stefan was one of my pet projects, right up there with abolishing the television tax. I'd vowed to myself that by the end of the year I'd find a way to get this kid to bloom.

The day it all started he was explaining that he'd been doing his homework at the sea shore when a remote-controlled shark – the Municipality's latest recruit in their effort to clean up the beaches – careened onto his blanket and ate his essay, thinking, probably, that it was trash.

"It was only a few minutes before class started, teach," he shrugged earnestly. "Who had time to rewrite the essay?"

"Well, of *course* you didn't! You are absolutely right, Stefan!" I thundered, clapping him on the back.

The class greeted this remark with such complete silence that my headmistress came in to see if there was anything wrong. "No, everything's just fine," I mumbled, hoping that would suffice. Well, wouldn't you know it? That was the day she decided to observe the class.

Observation or not, I wasn't going to give up so easily. I could see that the other kids had gotten over their shock and were giving Stefan an enthusiastic thumbs up. That total drip had managed to put one over on the teacher. Wow! Things like that didn't happen very often.

My headmistress looked confused but I was elated. My project was well on its way.

"Nobody's speaking. What lesson is this – meditation?" the headmistress asked sarcastically.

"Creative writing," I answered. "Stefan was about to finish telling us his wonderful story about a mechanical shark."

Stefan looked a bit taken aback but quickly recovered and began to elaborate on his story – minus the homework issue, of course. My headmistress was a viper when it came to unfulfilled homework assignments.

In short order, the beaches of Tel Aviv had thereafter become as spotless as – well, I don't know any spotless beaches to compare it to – and it was all due to the army of mechanical sea creatures who, apart from frightening little babies out of their diapers, had chewed up every scrap of paper and empty soda can in sight.

Well, who could have predicted that Stefan had a talent for sci-fi? The headmistress was impressed. I was impressed. But more importantly, the other kids were in awe. In the course of one lesson, Stefan became to them the most interesting person in class. A story by Stefan thereafter became a staple. Woe to the teacher whose lesson plan didn't allow for one of his outrageous tales.

By the end of the year, Stefan had bloomed and I could go back to fighting the television tax people. Of course, it didn't hurt that he'd grown five inches, acquired a tattered but elegant denim jacket and co-ordinated the look by dying his hair to match.

Reinforced by my success, I decided to try the new Movement out on my divorce group. At first, I was afraid that my coven of disgruntled females would be a tougher crowd to reinforce, but much to my surprise it went over brilliantly. Spurned by their spouses, left financially bereft and struggling with offspring in various stages of trauma, my affirmations were just what was needed to soothe these women's shattered souls.

In fact, judging by the results of a recent census, it seemed that the entire population was starved for a bit of affirmation. And that brings me to the results of the last election.

Now, you'd asked – how did someone like me get voted into the Knesset? It turns out that you can go a long way simply by telling people that they're right. It's even more infectious than H1N1! And it certainly doesn't hurt that divorced women comprise the largest and fastest-growing electoral segment in the country (YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT! There *is* something wrong with that last statistic. But as long as it's working in my favour I plan to keep using it).

This is the place to say that I very much appreciate your vote for my party AFN, standing for Affirmation of course. But I do resent the comments of those who wrote in to complain that the country has become much more boring now that people are routinely agreeing with each other.

I urge you to be patient – I'm working on it.

Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy Passover
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Tel: 416-467-7275 Fax: 416-467-8550
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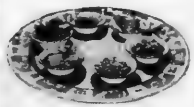
Happy Passover

Wishing you a Happy and Healthy Passover



Erin Shapero
Councillor, Ward 2
Thornhill
Town of Markham
eshapero@markham.ca

Promise Land

By MIRIAM PRESZOW WEINER

At the age of twenty
He made his first trip to the Promise Land
Such a glorious moment in time
The wonders he discovered were biblical and sublime

He climbed up to Masada
Gazed upon the sea below
He watched the sunrise in the sky
And felt its loving glow
He floated in the Dead Sea
Took a mud bath at the spa
Sunbathed at the lowest spot on earth
His mind was filled with awe
He marched into the army camps
And trained for three days long
He learned how they protect the land
And keep the country strong

He laughed he danced he sang
He prayed at the Wailing Wall
There was so much to discover
He wanted to see it all
He learned about his heritage
And what was yet to be
And with his own gentle hands
He planted a brand new tree

In loving memory of his Zaida Fischel
The land of Israel his Zaida often spoke about
The Promise Land
His Zaida did not see
Now Zaida Fischel smiles on us
From heavens golden sky
A gentle dove wings through the land
His loving soul flies way up high

Honourable
Maurizio Bevilacqua, MP
Vaughan

Wishing everyone in the community a healthy, happy and peaceful Passover.

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M.P., York Centre

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Councillor
Michael Feldman
wishes all his constituents in Ward 10, York Centre and all residents in the City of Toronto a Healthy & Happy Passover

The Hon.
Joe
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P.C., M.P.
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May your Pesach be filled with health, happiness and peace.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti and Members of Council wish you and your family a happy and healthy **Passover.**

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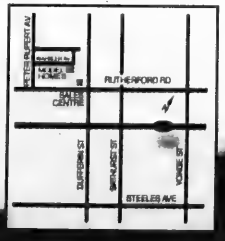

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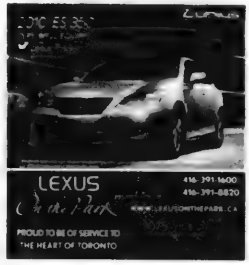

This Week

National

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Bringing Yiddish to young Jews. *Page 33*

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Still missing at the seder

A mock seder table reminding the world that Gilad Schalit is still a captive of Hamas in Gaza was set up outside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's house in Jerusalem before the beginning of the Passover holiday. Schalit was kidnapped by Hamas in June 2006.

[FLASH90 photo]

CELEBRATING FRIENDSHIP

To mark 60 years of friendship, Israel and Canada have jointly issued a commemorative stamp. *Please see related story on page 22.*

Ezrin leaving CIJA

Compiled by CJN Staff

Hershell Ezrin is resigning his position as chief executive officer of the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy (CIJA).

Ezrin, 64, CIJA's founding CEO, announced last week that he will vacate his position on June 30.

Hershell Ezrin

"I am enormously proud of what the CIJA team has achieved in putting Canadian Jewish advocacy on a new footing, based on measured results. But after seven years, I think this is a logical moment in the evolution of the organization to pass on the reins of leadership."

Steven Cummings, chair of the CIJA board, called Ezrin's announcement "understandable but disappointing to all of us who have had the pleasure of working with him over the past seven years. He has brought a unique mix of political understanding, strategic awareness and media savvy to the advancement of our issues. Hershell Ezrin has been an exemplary ambassador for the Jewish community with the broader Canadian public."

Brent Belzberg, past CIJA co-chair, said, "I want to thank Hershell Ezrin for bringing our community's advocacy to the level of sophistication that it currently enjoys. Our effectiveness stands today as a model commanding respect and emulation by Jewish community organizations in other countries."

CIJA was established seven years ago following a review by a group of senior business and community leaders, called the Israel Emergency Cabinet, who wanted to make the Jewish community's advocacy more effective.

Continued on page 21

Shabbat Chol Hamoed
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UN body propagates blood libel against Israel – please see page 36

The News in Brief

Canada

Mayor To Run Again

EDMONTON — Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel said last week that he's running for a third three-year term as mayor. Mandel, a former city councillor, has been mayor since 2004, when he beat an incumbent looking for a fourth term, and is the first Jew to hold the post in Edmonton. Mandel, 64, won re-election in 2007 with 66 per cent of the vote. The election will be held Oct. 18.

Team Forfeits Game

MONTREAL — A midget league hockey team in the Montreal suburb of Dollard-des-Ormeaux had to forfeit a key game because it conflicted with the first night of Passover. At least 10 of the 15 players on the Dollard-des-Ormeaux Midget B Civics are Jewish and were unwilling to miss the first seder, the Montreal *Gazette* reported. Team manager Eva-Lynn Gross appealed to the municipality and the Lac St. Louis hockey league. "They should work around stuff like this," she told the *Gazette*. But league executive director Sylvain McSween said that there "are 700 hockey matches in less than three weeks, and we can't have any changes... One special case leads to another and another. There's nothing we can do." The league wouldn't let the team switch places with another squad that offered its spot so the Civics' game wouldn't conflict with the first seder.

Ex-Ring Champ Dies

MONTREAL — Jerry Shears, a Jewish former Canadian lightweight boxing champion who spent years crusading for protective headgear in the amateur ring, died March 21 at Montreal's St. Anne's Veterans Hospital at age 84 . The son of pro boxer Joe Schulman, Shears also became a well-known insurance broker. He never fought professionally, but was founder and for years served as president of the Canadian Amateur Boxing Association.

World

Divestment Vetoed

SAN FRANCISCO — The student government president at the University of California, Berkeley, vetoed a bill urging divestment from two firms doing business with Israel. Will Smelko vetoed the measure March 24. The bill, which passed by a 16-4 vote, singled out United Technologies and General Electric for supplying Israel with technology used to perpetrate "war crimes" and was widely condemned by Jewish campus groups. Smelko said that while students don't want "to fund weapons, war crimes or human rights violations, this veto has to do with... building peace and goodwill in a way that avoids the shortcomings of the bill [such as a]... selective, one-sided focus on a specific country that lacks important historical context." He added that it was seen "as a symbolic attack on a specific community of our fellow students."

Community Rallied To Help Deli Owners

CALGARY — More than 20 volunteers from Calgary's Jewish community helped keep the city's only kosher deli alive when its co-owners took ill at the same time late last year.

Denise and Ivan Kavin

Denise Kavin, 58, ran the Haifa Deli alone for 14 days in late December when her husband, Ivan, 60, had open-heart surgery. Denise then ended up in hospital after she came down with bronchial asthma and infected lungs. Ivan came out of hospital and tried to run the deli alone, but the couple ended up in hospital once again.

At that point, members of Congregation House of Jacob-Mikveh Israel volunteered to help the Kavins, who have been running the deli since 2005.

The couple were both back at work in early February.

"[The volunteers] are a group of angels," Denise told the *Calgary Herald*. "How do you thank them all?"

Shoah List For Sale

NEW YORK — The only privately held original copy of Oskar Schindler's Shoah-era list of Jews he saved is on sale for $2.2 million. A historical document sales specialist in upstate New York is selling the list on behalf of an anonymous seller on a "first come, first serve" basis on the website MomentsInTime.com. The 13-page list, dated April 18, 1945, contains 801 names. It was made famous in the Oscar-winning film *Schindler's List*. There are four other surviving copies: one each in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the German federal archives, and two at Yad Vashem.

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Thursday, April 8 | 7:30 P.M.

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The Canadian Jewish news

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New kashrut agency gains Toronto foothold

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

Many large and vibrant Jewish communities have more than one kashrut agency: the hamlet of Monsey, N.Y., has six, and Los Angeles has three or four, as does Montreal. New York City has more than 20, but even Detroit has four.

For 30 years, Toronto had only one, the venerable Kashruth Council of Canada, which is often identified with its COR hechsher, which is short for Council of Orthodox Rabbis.

Two years ago, Rabbi Moshe Bensalmon and Rabbi Amram Assayag decided to change that. After 20 years as a COR mashgiach (kosher supervisor), Rabbi Bensalmon wanted to continue working hands-on in kashrut while offering both consumers and food producers a reputable alternative. With Rabbi Assayag as its rabbinic supervisor, Badatz Toronto was launched in April 2008.

Badatz Toronto currently has two restaurants under its supervision, as well as three caterers, one banquet facility and nine food companies.

Rabbi Amram Assayag

The organization's name, Badatz, is an acronym for Beit Din Tzedek, a name already used by several kashrut agencies around the world, the best-known being Jerusalem's Edah HaChareidis, perhaps the world's most widely respected supervisory agency.

"There's been a need for a second organization [in Toronto] for many years," said Moti Bensalmon, Rabbi Bensalmon's son and administrator of the fledgling kashrut organization.

When the Kashruth Council began operating, there were 20,000 Jews in the Toronto area. By 2008, that number had grown to almost 200,000. "It's long overdue," Moti Bensalmon said.

Both Rabbi Bensalmon and Rabbi Assayag are well known in the community at large and in the field of kashrut.

Rabbi Bensalmon was a familiar face for years to kosher shoppers at the Clark-Hilda Sobeys in Thornhill. Rabbi Assayag, in addition to his many years on the COR's Vaad Hakashrut, remains spiritual leader of Kehilat Abir Yaakob (at the Sephardic Kehila Centre), as well as head of the Sephardic Rabbinate of Ontario.

Despite its Sephardi connections, the new kashrut agency aims to serve the entire Jewish community.

Moti Bensalmon says one of the organization's goals was "to offer business owners an alternative" to the high price of maintaining a kosher establishment.

As a smaller organization with less administrative overhead, Badatz Toronto can "pass along those savings to people who want to sell or manufacture kosher products," he said.

But lower prices doesn't mean lower standards. Bensalmon believes that having more than one kashrut organization will actually "raise the bar" of kosher standards. "Wherever there's competition, standards of kashrut always increase."

The new organization requires that each company under its supervision employ a *mashgiach temidi*, a kosher supervisor who is always on the premises. This "working mashgiach," in addition to safeguarding the premises' kosher status, can also help the establishment in other ways, in the kitchen or elsewhere.

Continued on page 6

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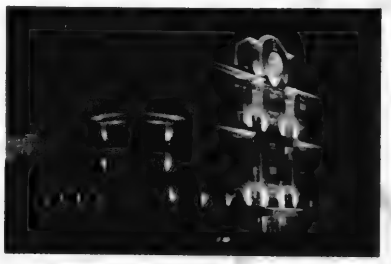

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U.S. harms peace hopes

March was a terrible month for Israeli-U.S. relations. Casual Mideast observers, serious students of the ongoing conflict and even staunch opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have been taken aback by the vehemence and the duration of the Obama administration's recent criticism of Israel.

From the editor's desk...

As of this writing, nearly three weeks after the baleful Biden embarrassment in Jerusalem on March 9, the level of friction between the two countries' governments remains very high.

We had hoped and perhaps even assumed that Netanyahu's visit to Washington, D.C., and the hastily arranged visit with the president would calm the roiling diplomatic waters. Our hopes were dashed. Our assumptions proved false.

Netanyahu encamped with President Barack Obama for a long period of time, late into the evening last week. But they arrived at no mutual agreement, let alone happy conclusion. The words used to describe their meeting were decidedly clinical and cool. Spokespeople for the two leaders assiduously avoided any adjectives that could depict even a slight measure of warmth between the two men. Neither party offered to sing, "For he's a jolly good fellow."

The American reaction to the "Biden moment" was way over the top.

The U.S. vice-president suggested Israeli behaviour was endangering American troops. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hectored Netanyahu for almost one hour on the phone and concluded her public rebuke with a set of four sweeping demands of Israel that included: cancellation of the building plan for Ramat Shlomo in east Jerusalem, release of Palestinian prisoners, more easing of travel restrictions in the West Bank, and a declaration of Israeli willingness to discuss final-status issues in the proximity talks.

Netanyahu and his staff, as well as some cabinet ministers, struggled in vain last week in Washington to placate the president regarding these demands.

Israeli political columnist Aluf Benn described the prime minister's departure from Washington in bleak terms. "The prime minister leaves America disgraced, isolated and altogether weaker than when he came."

Benn painted a dark, gloomy image of the situation. It is hard to argue with him.

There are at least two reasons why it is appropriate to describe the administration's reaction to the "Biden moment" as being and continuing to be way over the top.

1. Netanyahu immediately, effusively and quite generously apologized to his guest. In comparable situations, the apology is accepted and the matter set aside. That did not happen here.

2. The substance of the housing announcement was old news. The report that so exorcised Biden was about a municipal, clerical, administrative procedure that is typical of every city hall in the democratic world. City hall committees deliberate and then publish the minutes of their deliberations. The Ramat Shlomo minutes were published, a reporter wrote about it in the paper, Biden saw it and reacted, consulted with the president, and then re-reacted with greater fury and umbrage. More tellingly, the Obama administration had already agreed and publicly allowed that Israel would not be required to stop housing projects in east Jerusalem.

U.S. President Barack Obama

In this singular "inconvenient truth" lies the most troubling aspect of the administration's clearly calculated aggressive reaction to Israel.

What faith can Israel now place in U.S. understandings, commitments and promises to the Jewish state? When one adds this broken promise to the earlier declaration by the Obama administration that it is not bound by contents of the letter from president George W. Bush to Ariel Sharon regarding the relationship of the June '67 borders to a final peace agreement, it will be very difficult for this and subsequent Israeli governments to trust American ones.

For reasons about which we can only speculate, Obama seized on the housing announcement snafu, ignored Netanyahu's apology, directed his secretary of state to berate Netanyahu and push Israel into a very public corner.

Obama has significantly retarded the peace process between the two sides. His early insistence on a settlement freeze provided Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas with a pretext for stopping direct negotiations. Israeli construction in the West Bank had never before prevented the PA leader from directly negotiating with Israel's leaders, including Sharon. It also provided Abbas with a promontory onto which he climbed and from which now he gleefully watches Israel's public degradation.

Since Obama became president, Abbas has not walked near, let alone sat down at, a table to negotiate directly with Israel. He had only recently agreed, grudgingly, to engage in indirect negotiations – proximity talks – with Israel. But he quickly retreated from that agreement once he saw the extent of America's pillorying of Netanyahu.

Abbas is laughing.

And of course, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas and Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah are laughing too. ***MBD***

SeeJN

SEDER STUDENTS

Some 200 immigrants from Ethiopia attended a model seder on March 25 at the Jewish Agency For Israel's absorption centre in Mevasseret Zion, outside Jerusalem, in preparation for their first Passover in Israel. So far in 2010, the Jewish Agency has brought 1,000 Ethiopians to Israel.

[Jewish Agency for Israel photo]

Greater Toronto Area

Center for Peace seeks Canadian presence

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Arie Raif is a former diplomat who can shmooze with the best of them. He knows how to promote a story all on his own, but last week, he had help from a pair of disparate sources.

Early in the week, Canada's minister of state for sport, Gary Lunn, announced support for international sports initiatives that included a grant to the Peres Center for Peace. Raif is head of the Canadian arm of the Peres Center.

Then later in the week, Shimon Peres himself, the president of Israel, told delegates from 53 member states attending the XXXIV Ordinary UEFA Congress in Tel Aviv, that "football [soccer] is a major contribution to peace" and the "game is a way to overcome gaps and prejudices. Football is the bridge between Israeli and Palestinian children and between the peoples in these difficult times."

All music to Raif's ears, no doubt.

The former consular official is busy trying to put together the Canadian wing of the Israel-based peace group, starting with a Canadian board consisting of prominent philanthropists, academics and politicians.

The board of the U.S. wing of the organization boasts high-profile figures such as former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger, James Baker and Warren Christopher, along with former president Jimmy Carter. The organization's international board of governors includes two well-known Canadians, Paul Desmarais Jr., chair of Power Corporation, and Charles Sirois, CEO of Telesystem, a private equity corporation.

The Peres Center, Raif said, "is building peace by taking a charitable, humanitarian approach to issues."

At the heart of the centre's efforts are 27 joint Israeli and Palestinian soccer teams that bring together youth from both communities to play exhibition tournaments. The games span the gamut from the elite level – Spanish league champions Real Madrid played an exhibition in Ramat Gan three years ago versus a team of Israeli and Arab stars – to high school kids from disadvantaged communities getting together for games and practice. The Canadian government grant, which totalled nearly $100,000, went to the Peres Center's twinned peace soccer school for girls, said Vanessa Schneider, director of communications for the minister.

Although sports are an important vehicle for the Peres Center to promote its mission, it doesn't limit itself to athletic endeavours.

As its website indicates, "The Peres Center focuses on common Arab and Israeli social, economic, developmental, cultural and educational interests, with an emphasis on nurturing Palestinian-Israeli relations. The Peres Center designs and facilitates tangible peace building projects that address these interests, utilizing cross-border, regional and international partnerships to bring these initiatives to fruition."

One area outside the soccer pitch that the centre pushes is "developing water treatment and crop management technology," Raif said. "We give the technology to Palestinian farmers to treat water and develop crop management."

It has also sponsored a "space camp" for Israeli and Palestinian youth in which a group of young people travelled to Turkey to study the history of space exploration and experience some time in a simulator that mimicked a space mission.

Jewish and Muslim children play soccer together in opportunities provided by the Peres Center for Peace.

"It's people to people, it's building co-operation and it's nurturing a culture of peace with the region's youth," he said. "We have to eradicate the stigma each party has in the eyes of the other."

Raif believes the ethos of the Peres Center speaks directly to Canadians. "If there is a model of coexistence and reconciliation, Canada is it."

For the Peres Center, sports provides a number of benefits in improving relations between Israelis and Palestinians. It creates dialogue, it is inclusive and fosters coexistence, teamwork and respect. It builds skills in conflict management and it brings a sense of normalcy to people in a conflict situation.

In announcing $504,159 in new funding – in addition to $1.6 million already spent – for a number of international sport and development initiatives, the federal government said that it "recognized that sport helps build sustainable communities, supports social inclusion, engages youth at risk and contributes to a global culture of peace."

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'There is certainly room for two in the market'

Continued from page 3

Raising the bar is essential, Bensalmon said, pointing to a 2006 incident in Monsey when a kosher butcher was caught selling non-kosher chicken to trusting consumers. Since then, Bensalmon said, many major kashrut organizations have started to adopt the *mashgiach temidi* standard, regardless of whether a business' owner is observant.

Bensalmon believes a kashrut agency should be kosher through and through: consistent and transparent not only in its scrutiny of ingredients, but also in terms of its business practices and dealings with companies and individuals.

Badatz Toronto offers a comprehensive training program to give a company's employees, not just the mashgiach, the knowledge required to produce kosher food. And soon Badatz Toronto's website (http://www.badatz.ca/) will also offer clear policies for business owners and their employees.

Given Rabbi Bensalmon's experience as a longtime mashgiach, his son said Badatz Toronto is also focusing on enshrining improved rights for mashgichim. Historically, he said, they've often been treated with disrespect by the food industry.

After two years of carving out a kashrut alternative in Toronto, Bensalmon said he's pleased with what he's seen so far.

"There's a certain element of apprehension ... when something new comes along. People question it. They're suspicious."

But in the end, he said, "there certainly is room for two in the market," and what may look like competition is a good thing for companies, consumers and overall kosher standards.

So good, in fact, that he said he'd even see it as a positive development if another organization here – Lubavitch, for example – decided to enter the kashrut business. "We would welcome it."

The Kashruth Council declined to comment for this story.

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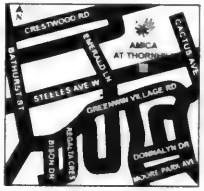

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Cuban Jews inaugurate a sefer Torah

Compiled by CJN Staff

The smell of delicious kosher food is not a very common one in Havana. But bringing the Cuban Jewish community together there is a common practice of the Canadian Friends of Cuban Jewry (CFCJ).

In February, a new sefer Torah was donated to the Cuban Jewish community via a CFCJ member. The event began with CFCJ representative Rabbi Naftali Spielman telling the community about the importance of each letter of the Torah. He explained that if one single letter is missing, it renders the Torah unkosher. So, too, the Jewish people are compared to the letters of the Torah, he said. Each Jew counts to complete the Jewish nation.

With that in mind, the CFCJ aims to look after Cuban Jews by bringing them food, clothing and medication, and holding communal activities and gatherings.

The traditional recitations, at the conclusion of a sefer Torah, were proudly chanted by all, as Rabbi Daniel Illulian of Beverly Hills, Calif., led the prayers with much enthusiasm.

At one point the joy and ecstasy of community members dancing with the Torah was so great that they poured out into the street. At the conclusion of the event, the CFCJ gave each Cuban Jew a bag of kosher food. Also, while they were in Cuba, CFCJ emissaries visited many homes providing humanitarian aid and words of inspiration.

Correction

In the obituary on Izzy Kaplan, "Bookstore owner helped people in Israel and at home" (March 25), the date of Kaplan's death was incorrect. The owner of Israel's Judaica died on March 14. *The CJN* regrets the error.

OPEN LETTER FROM YORK UNIVERSITY

York University has been accused of harbouring and tolerating racist and specifically anti-Semitic behaviour. On the contrary, we condemn those who use the cover of free expression or academic freedom to promote anti-Semitism or any racist agendas.

We reject as an assault on our integrity and on the integrity of the members of the York community, the allegations that we deal with different groups within the student body differentially.

The University is a forum for the free exchange of ideas. The free exchange of ideas does not include intimidation and racial discrimination. Nor will we bow to those who demand that we narrow the boundaries of academic freedom. We oppose those who abuse the rights of others.

The York community must be one where its members do not arrive on campus to study or to work in fear of physical assault. The University has taken steps to deal with those who abuse the University's commitment to the free exchange of ideas and breach the standards of student behaviour. These steps include increased security, greater power to intercede, and consistent enforcement of policies.

We are not so foolish to believe that we have driven anti-Semitism or any other form of racism from our midst. We know that there will be incidents that will require our vigilance. But we have demonstrated that we have the will to act.

For many who come to our university, York is the first exposure to the world beyond their ethnic communities. York accepts the responsibility of teaching its students how to be citizens in a contemporary, diverse, Canadian society. Our goal is to equip our students with the tools they need in a less than perfect world. And we do so in a way that prepares them to participate responsibly in a global exchange of ideas.

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Riding Obama's tilted bandwagon

In its deliberations last weekend in Libya, the Arab League once again put forward its best peace-making effort by repeatedly censuring and threatening Israel. The league's secretary general, Amr Moussa, set the tone by sounding a dire alarm and implying that something other than negotiations might soon be in order.

"We must prepare for the possibility that the peace process will be a complete failure," Moussa said. "*This is the time to stand up to Israel.* (Our emphasis) We must find alternative options, because the situation appears to have reached a turning point."

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas sang high harmony to Moussa's low tune.

As reported by the *Jerusalem Post*, Abbas promised there would be no peace agreement with Israel unless the Jewish state "ends the occupation of Palestinian land, first and foremost east Jerusalem." The situation in Jerusalem was dangerous, Abbas said, and could ignite the entire Middle East. His final point of emphasis was that the PA would not resume peace talks with Israel, including indirect talks, until Israel stops construction in the settlements.

Not wishing to miss a free ride when it was offered them, the Arab leaders heartily jumped upon the American administration's bandwagon, now heavily loaded and tilted from last month's hyper-criticism of Israel.

Thus, Amr Moussa urged his fellow league members to "stand up to Israel" in the manner displayed by U.S. President Barack Obama last month with his very public show of pique and anger at Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Thus, Abbas repeated his more than year-long refusal to negotiate either directly or indirectly with Israel "until Israel stops construction in the settlements," a pre-condition he, adapted from Obama's very own peace-making formula.

Joining the anti-Israel chorus was the specially invited guest, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the prime minister of Turkey.

"Jerusalem is the apple of the eye of each and every Muslim ... and we cannot at all accept any *Israeli violation in Jerusalem or in Muslim sites*," Erdogan said. (Our emphasis) Thus the Turkish prime minister's merely echoed the U.S. president's condemnation of Israel's decision to continue to build houses in east Jerusalem.

It is hard to know how far the anti-Israel fallout will spin from Obama's severe hectoring of Netanyahu. The implicit threats from the Arab League are simply the most recent result. They are of a piece with the fact that since the signing of the now discredited Oslo accords, the Obama administration is the first American administration under which there have been no peace talks of any kind between Israel and the PA.

Abbas refuses to talk Netanyahu. Netanyahu at every opportunity urges Abbas to resume talks. And Obama pressures Netanyahu.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Two Tory MPs asked external affairs minister Joe Clark to discuss the plight of Soviet Jews with the highest level of the Soviet government during an upcoming week-long trip to the USSR with seven other Tory MPs. The request came from Edmonton MP David Kilgour, chair of the parliamentary group for Soviet Jewry, and Toronto MP Bill Attewell.

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Greetings from the Prime Minister

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to Jewish Canadians as you observe Passover.

Commemorating the Exodus from Egypt and liberation of the Children of Israel, Pesach is a celebration of emancipation. Throughout the centuries, the Jewish people have drawn strength and inspiration from this momentous event.

Canada is blessed with a strong and devout Jewish community. As you celebrate the sacred traditions of Passover, you may be heartened by the wonderful spiritual legacy you have bestowed on generations of Jewish Canadians. Your adherence to faith and traditions as a community strengthens our society.

On behalf of the government of Canada and my wife, Laureen, please accept my heartfelt wishes for a happy and peaceful Pesach. Chag Samayach!

Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

* * *

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Week?

I was happy to read that Jewish university students felt that Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) "was much milder this year, with fewer anti-Semitic incidents and smaller crowds," despite an IAW spokesperson stating that IAW events were well attended ("IAW fizzles on Canadian campuses," March 18). Instead of having separate anti- and pro-Israel events, I think we are missing an opportunity for Jewish and Muslim students to dialogue on campus and off.

On March 16, just two days after the end of IAW, I had the privilege of sitting in a room with more than 200 Muslim students at McMaster University and listening to Tariq Ramadan, a well-known Muslim scholar, lecture on the rights and responsibilities of living as Muslims in Canada. The event was open to the public and sponsored by Hamilton's Cordoba House, whose mandate is to be an intellectual Muslim voice through dialogue, understanding and research. Ramadan's message reminded me so much of how I was taught "*Torah im derech eretz*," live your religious life, but also obey the laws of the land. I said so during the question period. I said it was time that Muslim and Jewish students learned about and from each other. My comments were answered with loud applause and requests for contact information from the Cordoba House organizers and several of the students.

Perhaps next year we will celebrate Jewish-Muslim Dialogue Week or Israeli-Palestinian Peace Week on Canadian campuses.

Judith Weinroth
Toronto

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Israel boycott campaign will fail

While repudiating the underlying premises of the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) campaign's vile efforts to isolate and delegitimize Israel, Sheldon Kirshner then refers to recent and ongoing BDS activities and the threat they pose ("Israel targeted by boycott campaign," Kirshner file, March 18). What Kirshner fails to note is that the common thread that links all local BDS activities – including this year's annual Israeli Apartheid Week campus hate-fest – is their abject failure.

The Arab states failed in their decades-long effort to isolate and weaken Israel through economic sanctions. So, too, the ongoing BDS campaign to delegitimize Israel, by the strange coalition established by Palestinians but now dominated, in Kirshner's words, by "European and North American left-wingers with anarchist and Marxist backgrounds," will ultimately fail because of its own evil intent.

David H. Goldberg
Toronto

* * *

Wrong to teach one point of view

After reading the article "School libraries cautioned about book" (March 11), I agree with York Region's school board who suggested that "facilitated discussions" be provided to balance the perspective of the controversial book, *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*. If the quotes from the book in the article are accurate, there is no doubt the book is one-sided and paints a prejudiced picture of Jews and the State of Israel. For example, a Palestinian said of Israelis, "Innocent? No Israeli is innocent Why should we let them live in peace? They don't deserve it."

I am a 15-year-old Orthodox student at a private day school, and I have grown up experiencing anti-Semitism. I believe that the purpose of schools is to educate students so they are knowledgeable and learn to respect all people, provided they are fair and just. I have also grown to believe that there is no place, especially in public schools, to teach just one point of view. *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* is biased and educates children to be prejudiced when it comes to the Israeli-Arab conflict. A more balanced point of view is found in the book *The Case for Peace* by Alan Dershowitz.

Orah Rosenberg
Thornhill, Ont.

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Israel ready to compromise for peace

The following are excerpts from the address by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee conference in Washington on March 23.

As the world faces monumental challenges, I know that Israel and America will face them together. We stand together because we are fired by the same ideals and inspired by the same dream – the dream of achieving security, prosperity and peace…

Time and again, the Israeli army was forced to repel attacks of much larger enemies determined to destroy us. When Egypt and Jordan recognized that we could not be defeated in battle, they embraced the path of peace.

Yet, there are those who continue the assault against the Jewish state and who openly call for our destruction. They seek to achieve this goal through terrorism, missile attacks and, most recently, by developing atomic weapons…

The future of the Jewish state can never depend on the goodwill of even the greatest of men. Israel must always reserve the right to defend itself.

Today, an unprecedented threat to humanity looms large. A radical Iranian regime armed with nuclear weapons could bring an end to the era of nuclear peace the world has enjoyed for the last 65 years. Such a regime could provide nuclear weapons to terrorists and might even be tempted to use them. Our world would never be the same.

Iran's brazen bid to develop nuclear weapons is first and foremost a threat to Israel, but it is also a grave threat to the region and to the world. Israel expects the international community to act swiftly and decisively to thwart this danger.

But we will always reserve the right to self-defence. We must also defend ourselves against lies and vilifications.

Throughout history, the slanders against the Jewish people always preceded the physical assaults against us and were used to justify these assaults. The Jews were called the well-poisoners of mankind, the fomenters of instability, the source of all evil under the sun. Unfortunately, these libellous attacks against the Jewish people also did not end with the creation of Israel.

For a time, overt anti-Semitism was held in check by the shame and shock of the Holocaust. But only for a time. In recent decades the hatred of the Jews has re-emerged with increasing force, but with an insidious twist. It is not merely directed at the Jewish People, but increasingly, at the Jewish state. In its most pernicious form, it argues that if only Israel did not exist, many of the world's problems would go away.

Does this mean that Israel is above criticism? Of course not…

But Israel should be judged by the same standards applied to all nations, and allegations against Israel must be grounded in fact.

One allegation that is not is the attempt to describe the Jews as foreign colonialists in their own homeland, one of the great lies of modern times.

In my office, I have a signet ring that was loaned to me by Israel's Department of Antiquities. The ring was found next to the Western Wall, but it dates back some 2,800 years, 200 years after King David turned Jerusalem into our capital city.

The ring is a seal of a Jewish official, and inscribed on it in Hebrew is his name Netanyahu Ben-Yoash…

The connection between the Jewish People and the Land of Israel cannot be denied. The connection between the Jewish People and Jerusalem cannot be denied. The Jewish People were building Jerusalem 3,000 year ago and the Jewish People are building Jerusalem today.

Jerusalem is not a settlement. It is our capital.

In Jerusalem, my government has maintained the policies of all Israeli governments since 1967, including those led by Golda Meir, Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin.

Today, nearly a quarter of a million Jews, almost half the city's Jewish population, live in neighbourhoods that are just beyond the 1949 armistice lines. All these neighbourhoods are within a five-minute drive from the Knesset. They are an integral and inextricable part of modern Jerusalem.

Everyone knows that these neighbourhoods will be part of Israel in any peace settlement. Therefore, building in them in no way precludes the possibility of a two-state solution…

It's only under Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem that religious freedom for all faiths has been guaranteed. While we cherish our homeland, we also recognize that Palestinians live there as well.

We don't want to govern them. We don't want to rule them. We want them as neighbours, living in security, dignity and peace.

Yet Israel is unjustly accused of not wanting peace with the Palestinians. Nothing could be further from the truth. My government has consistently shown its commitment to peace in both word and deed.

From Day 1, we called on the Palestinian Authority to begin peace negotiations without delay. I make that same call today: President (Mahmoud) Abbas, come and negotiate peace.

Leaders who truly want peace should sit down face-to-face.

Of course, the United States can help the parties solve their problems, but it cannot solve the problems for the parties.

Peace cannot be imposed from the outside. It can only come through direct negotiations in which we develop mutual trust. Last year, I spoke of a vision of peace in which a demilitarized Palestinian state recognizes the Jewish state.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the AIPAC conference in Washington last month. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Just as the Palestinians expect Israel to recognize a Palestinian state, we expect the Palestinians to recognize the Jewish state.

My government has removed hundreds of roadblocks, barriers and checkpoints, facilitating Palestinian movement. As a result, we have helped spur a fantastic boom in the Palestinian economy…

And we announced an unprecedented moratorium on new Israeli construction in Judea and Samaria.

This is what my government has done for peace. What has the Palestinian Authority done for peace?

Well, they have placed preconditions on peace talks, waged a relentless international campaign to undermine Israel's legitimacy, and promoted the notorious Goldstone report that falsely accuses Israel of war crimes…

I want to thank President [Barack] Obama and the United States Congress for their efforts to thwart this libel, and I ask for your continued support.

Regrettably, the Palestinian Authority has also continued incitement against Israel. A few days ago, a public square near Ramallah was named after a terrorist who murdered 37 Israeli civilians, including 13 children. The Palestinian Authority did nothing to prevent it.

Peace requires reciprocity. It cannot be a one-way street in which only Israel makes concessions.

Israel stands ready to make the compromises necessary for peace. But we expect the Palestinians to compromise as well.

But one thing I will never compromise on is our security…

A peace agreement with the Palestinians must include effective security arrangements on the ground. Israel must make sure that what happened in Lebanon and Gaza doesn't happen again in the West Bank.

Israel's main security problem with Lebanon is not its border with Lebanon. It is Lebanon's border with Syria, through which Iran and Syria smuggle tens of thousands of weapons to Hezbollah.

Israel's main security problem with Gaza is not its border with Gaza. It's Gaza's border with Egypt, under which nearly 1,000 tunnels have been dug to smuggle weapons.

Experience has shown that only an Israeli presence on the ground can prevent weapons smuggling.

This is why a peace agreement with the Palestinians must include an Israeli presence on the eastern border of a future Palestinian state.

If peace with the Palestinians proves its durability over time, we can review security arrangements.

We are prepared to take risks for peace, but we will not be reckless with the lives of our people and the life of the one and only Jewish state.

The people of Israel want a future in which our children no longer experience the horrors of war.

We want a future in which Israel realizes its full potential as a global centre of technology, anchored in its values and living in peace with all its neighbours…

I am confident that in pursuing these goals, we have the enduring friendship of the United States of America, the greatest nation on earth. The American people have always shown their courage, their generosity and their decency.

From one president to the next, from one Congress to the next, America's commitment to Israel's security has been unwavering.

In the last year, President Obama and the U.S. Congress have given meaning to that commitment by providing Israel with military assistance, by enabling joint military exercises and by working on joint missile defence.

So, too, Israel has been a staunch and steadfast ally of the United States. As Vice-President [Joe] Biden said, America has no better friend in the community of nations than Israel. For decades, Israel served as a bulwark against Soviet expansionism. Today it is helping America stem the tide of militant Islam. Israel shares with America everything we know about fighting a new kind of enemy.

We share intelligence. We co-operate in countless other ways that I am not at liberty to divulge. This co-operation is important for Israel and is helping save American lives. Our soldiers and your soldiers fight against fanatic enemies that loathe our common values…

This fanaticism's hatred of western civilization predates Israel's establishment by over 1,000 years.

Militant Islam does not hate the West because of Israel. It hates Israel because of the West – because it sees Israel as an outpost of freedom and democracy that prevents them from overrunning the Middle East. That is why when Israel stands against its enemies, it stands against America's enemies.

President Harry Truman, the first leader to recognize Israel, said this: "I have faith in Israel and I believe that it has a glorious future – not just as another sovereign nation, but as an embodiment of the great ideals of our civilization."

We are gathered here today because we believe in those common ideals.

And because of those ideals, I am certain that Israel and America will always stand together.

Opinions

It's hard to be a Reform Zionist

First it was the attacks on the Women of the Wall that stirred us to action. The Toronto Board of Rabbis issued a statement in their support, and I was pleased to add my name to it. Even mainstream Orthodoxy has come to realize that it's no longer possible to deny women their religious rights.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

Then it was the proposed change in Israeli legislation about Jewish status. Although it's supposed to serve the interests of some disenfranchised citizens from the former Soviet Union, it's likely to make things even worse for all who are unwilling or unable to submit to the dictates of the Israeli rabbinic establishment.

Again, non-Orthodox Jews in the Diaspora protested because Jews by choice – converted by Reform, Conservative and even Orthodox rabbis – may now not be recognized as Jews in the Jewish state. Things are bad now, but the changes will make them worse.

All such protests are, therefore, legitimate. But they've a bad effect on the Diaspora's commitment to Israel. If women are persuaded that they cannot pray at Judaism's holiest place as equals, and if the growing number of Jews by choice (along with their offspring and relatives) are said to be discriminated against, why would they want to have anything to do with Israel?

Ironically, ostensible efforts to keep Israel Jewish have come to bar a growing number of Jews from wanting to live there or support it. This in turn may result in helping Israel to become a kind of Jewish version of a Taliban state in which the haredim dominate.

Zionists are thus in a bind. If they accept the growing dominance of the haredim in Israel, they're colluding with the possible demise of Israel as a Jewish democratic state. If they protest too loudly, they're putting off their potential constituents from commitment and support. The only way out of the dilemma, it seems, is to act with characteristic Jewish schizophrenia: fight those who seek to undermine Israel from within while urging potential victims to ignore restrictions and keep on supporting it.

As a Reform Zionist, my schizophrenia is especially acute. Accepting that an ever-growing number of Jews in the Diaspora will marry out, the Reform and to some extent the Conservative movements are doing what they can to make conversion accessible. They also seek to integrate intermarried families into their congregations. This, of course, is grist for the mill to the reactionaries in Israel.

It's difficult enough to be Jewish, but to be Zionist and Reform is particularly hard.

The seder as a model for Jewish education

Here we are, well into Pesach 5770, once again amazed at the brilliance of the rabbis in establishing a teaching tool as effective as the seder. One might think that Pesach is the very best example of "Jewish continuity," that motto of organized communities around the globe. In fact, though, Pesach and its seders are an illustration of why "Jewish continuity" is the wrong banner for ongoing and meaningful Jewish life. I know I've ranted on this theme before, but permit me to use this wonderful holiday to illustrate my point.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

The rabbis of the first few centuries of the Common Era recognized the enormity of the task ahead of them. After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (70 CE), they had to find a way to replace Temple sacrifice with prayer – to use their language, to replace the service of the Temple with the service of the heart. Whatever they created had to be authentic in relation to the past, relevant to the present and sustainable into the future.

In the case of Pesach, the Torah was very clear that both the message and the spirit of the primal "Pesach of Egypt" had to be transmitted over the centuries by means of the "Pesach of Generations." (See Exodus, Chapter 12.) But a significant part of the Torah's commandments regarding Pesach centre around the paschal lamb offering, reminiscent of the roasted lamb eaten that strange night in Egypt. How was that sacrifice to be re-engineered in a post-Temple era?

As we know, the rabbis knew Greek culture, appreciated certain aspects of Hellenism, and incorporated many Greek words into their own language. (See Saul Lieberman's classic *Greek in Jewish Palestine/Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* if you have any doubts.) They definitely knew of the evening banquet customs of Greek gentlemen. If you would like a description of such parties, read Plato's *Symposium*. You will find a description of a dinner party and the discussions at that banquet, which have nothing to do with the seder as we know it. The rabbis, however, did see a form and structure that they could use, if adapted properly to their educational needs. They transformed a dinner party form that the general populace recognized, and that perhaps some even attended, into a new Pesach ritual that took the authentic, ancient messages of Pesach and communicated in new forms that were relevant to the Jews of the time.

In doing so, they gave us all a certain degree of licence to continue being creative in interpretation and communication for centuries to come. It's no accident that what appears near the end of the seder is the afikoman, a linguistic loan from *epikomion*, which is Greek for after-dinner entertainment. And similarly, it's by design that the rabbis transformed a Greek custom that, at times, degenerated into a simple dessert ending of the seder meal, albeit one that kept the children awake long enough to take in the entire educational event. The experiential parts of the seder that complement the textual recitation are an ancient rabbinic precursor to everything we now know about multiple intelligences and our different capacities for learning.

Brilliant as this all is, the real message to us is one of rejecting mere continuity (a luxury the rabbis didn't have) and opting for creative growth and constant adaptation. This is how the rabbis built in future sustainability. They gave us a protocol in Pesach and in many other domains of our spiritual life for deep respect for ancient messages and just as much honour to the need for relevance to the current generation of Jews. If we follow their example in creativity, we will ensure a proud and courageous future for Jews and Judaism. Have a meaningful Pesach! Moadim lesimchah!

Maternal kashrut *masoret* gives way on Pesach

Because my grandmother never allowed garlic in her kitchen on Pesach, my mother taught my sister and me that it was forbidden on the holiday. She explained to us, as Bubbe had undoubtedly explained to her, that because in the eastern Europe home of her childhood, garlic was dried above the fire where cooking was done all year, it was presumed to have come into contact with foodstuff and so was not permitted on Passover.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

One year, budding chefs that we were, my sister and I rebelled. Our garlic isn't dried over the fireplace or in the hearth, we argued. (Our New York home had neither.) Our garlic came to us in narrow glass jars, already ground into a fine powder. Not only that, but its label proclaimed it fit for Passover consumption. So why could we not use it to flavour our Pesach dishes?

Our logic was impeccable, our campaign impassioned. It took a few years, but eventually my mother yielded. Our holiday cuisine improved, became more complex and savoury, as we availed ourselves not only of garlic, but of whatever spices came in appropriately marked bottles. There were other foods my grandmother had banned from her Pesach kitchen, but many of them were available in North America with a Passover seal of approval. They, too, found a place in our kitchen. The authorities in charge of such things seemed to have a wider Passover palate than Bubbe. It was truly a new world.

Years later, researching food traditions of eastern European Jewish homes, particularly regarding Passover, I came to understand that my bubbe's kitchen traditions were not simply her own invention, shaped by the configuration of her home and her family's taste. Rather, they were a part of the tradition of her shtetl, which allowed certain foodstuffs and forbade others on Passover.

Eastern Europe, it turns out, was a patchwork of such traditions, with variations of what one may and may not eat varying by micro-region, by affiliation with particular rebbes, and sometimes by clan. The minute shadings operated region by region, sometimes shtetl by shtetl.

What to bring into one's home, what and how to cook, was a *masoret,* a tradition of kashrut learned at the hearth, passed down among generations of women, grandmother and mother to daughter and granddaughter. When in doubt, there were local authorities to consult, but by and large, women knew their stuff, and they trained their female progeny *in situ.*

Today, in Canada and in the United States, that home-based tradition has been largely supplanted by the centralization of authorities on kashrut, who affix labels for all to see . Look on the web – you can find lists of what's cool and what's not for Passover kitchens.

By the time my sister and I were growing up, these two sources of food knowledge were operating side by side – competing, in a sense, for loyalties. Confronted with Bubbe's tradition, on the one hand, and the centralized, homogenized North American lists, on the other, we opted for the lists and jettisoned the maternal *masoret.* We were not unique in this. By now, the idea of centralized authority has largely prevailed, creating a uniformity among immigrants and their progeny who may have inherited different ancestral traditions.

There is, of course, a gain in this. Foods my Bubbe never heard of might be on the right list (although, over time, some foods she permitted have been forbidden). The diverse origins of Canadian and American Jews meld into a few strong bodies of tradition. It also helps to equalizes Jews by choice, who have no inherited maternal kashrut to tap into.

But there's also a loss, notably the authority of mothers and grandmothers in what was traditionally their domain. In retrospect, my sister and I should have clung to Bubbe's traditions instead of so eagerly embracing the modern. The imposition of official bodies of authority over the maternal *masoret* minimizes the authority of women as keepers of the kosher hearth. It also erases history.

When our maternal traditions dictated our kitchen habits, as you ate, you tasted where you came from.

The Kirshner File

Obama is doling out tough love

Israel's strategic relationship with the United States, rocked by an impolitic Israeli announcement during U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's visit to Israel, remains strained.

The incident that severely buffeted Israel's relations with its single most important ally began last month when the Israeli interior ministry approved the construction of 1,600 housing units in eastern Jerusalem's Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood without bothering to inform Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The announcement precipitated a political storm, prompting an embarrassed Biden to condemn it and a chastened Netanyahu to apologize for the timing. At President Barack Obama's behest, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton sharply criticized Israel, while his close adviser, David Axelrod, accused Israel of undermining the prospects for restarting talks with the Palestinians. As the row escalated, Israel's ambassador to Washington called it the worst crisis in Israeli-American relations in three decades

Washington's stinging rebuke of Israel was triggered by the troubling suspicion that Netanyahu's right-of-centre government might not be sincerely committed to peace, or a two-state solution, with the Palestinian Authority, which envisages eastern Jerusalem as the capital of a future Palestinian nation. To the Obama administration, the peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a prerequisite for stabilizing the region, containing Iran and its allies – Hezbollah and Hamas – and improving the United States' standing in the Arab and Muslim worlds.

By last week, Israel and the United States appeared to have made some headway in patching up their quarrel after Netanyahu's decision to announce confidence-building measures relating to the Palestinians, Obama's characterization of Israel as "one of our closest allies," Clinton's declaration that U.S. support for Israel is"rock solid, unwavering, enduring and forever," and George Mitchell's return to Israel. Mitchell, the U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, hopes to launch "proximity," or indirect negotiations, between Israel and the Palestinian Authority as soon as possible, though such talks are still far off.

Capping off his efforts to defuse the tension, Obama met with Netanyahu on March 23 at the White House. But they failed to resolve their differences. Indeed, a White House press spokesperson said that Israeli building activity in eastern Jerusalem is "destructive" to the peace process. And there were fears in Israel that Washington may try to impose a solution.

What seems crystal clear is that, almost a month after the damaging Ramat Shlomo blowup, Israel and the United States continue to sharply disagree on the status of eastern Jerusalem

Regarding Jerusalem as its "indivisible and undivided" capital, though not even its friends recognize it, Israel considers the eastern half – populated mainly by Palestinian Arabs, annexed in 1967 and enlarged by land expropriations from the West Bank – as an integral component of the city. "As far as we are concerned, building in Jerusalem is like building in Tel Aviv," said Netanyahu on March 21 in a reiteration of his policy.

The United States believes that the ultimate fate of eastern Jerusalem should be settled through negotiations. Agreeing with a formula advanced by former U.S. president Bill Clinton, the Obama administration holds that Jewish and Arab neighbourhoods in the disputed eastern sector should respectively be controlled by Israel and the Palestinians once a peace treaty is signed. In addition, the two sides cannot agree whether Jewish neighbourhoods in eastern Jerusalem built after the Six Day War are "settlements."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talks to U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, D.C., last week. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Last week, Netanyahu asserted yet again that they are an organic part of Jerusalem. But since some of these neighbourhoods were constructed on land originally in the West Bank, the United States and Israel are not on the same page.

Clinton, in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee on March 22, warned that Israel's policy of building apartments in eastern Jerusalem and settlements in the West Bank are hurting U.S. efforts to get talks going. Beyond this contentious issue, Clinton warned that the status quo in the Middle East is "unsustainable," which is nothing new. George Shultz, the U.S. secretary of state under Ronald Reagan, used similar language in the 1980s to describe the volatile situation in the region. Clinton also put Israel on notice that she would speak out against Israeli decisions viewed as inimical to peace.

Clinton did not deliver her pointed critique in a vacuum. A survey released by the Rasmussen Reports polling company recently found that 49 per cent of Americans are of the opinion that Israel should be forced to cease all settlement building. Only 22 per cent of respondents disagreed with that notion.

And in what may be seen as an implicit warning aimed at Israel, Gen. David Petraeus, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, said that the Arab-Israeli dispute [presents] "distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests" in the Mideast.

The Obama administration's policy is backed by the Quartet, which consists of the United States, Russia, the United Nations and the European Union.

Two weeks ago, the Quartet called upon Israel to freeze "all settlement activities," condemned Israel's approval of the Ramat Shlomo project and urged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to renew peace talks to achieve a two-state solution within 24 months.

Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, rejected that timetable as artificial and unrealistic. Judging by Lieberman's assessment, Israel and the United States may well clash again in the future.

Yet, as Michael Oren, Israel's envoy in Washington, has written, Israel and the United States "enjoy a deep and multi-layered friendship, but even the closest allies can sometimes disagree."

In 1953, the Eisenhower administration suspended economic aid to Israel in protest over a hydroelectric plant on the Jordan River. After the 1956 Sinai War, the United States coerced Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula. The Kennedy administration upset Israel by flirting with the "right of return" concept for Palestinian refugees and by insisting that Israel's nuclear facilities should be inspected by outside powers.

When the Six Day War broke out, the Johnson administration stirred apprehension in Israel by stating that the United States was neutral. The Nixon administration announced that changes in the 1967 borders "should not reflect the weight of conquest."

In 1975, the Ford administration embarked on a "reassessment" of U.S. policy and refused to sign new arms agreements with Israel. The Reagan administration condemned Israel's destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactor and suspended the delivery of F-16 jets to Israel during the first Lebanon War. The Carter administration urged Israel to withdraw to the pre-1967 lines. The first Bush administration froze $10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel.

Despite these jarring incidents, Israel has managed to deepen its bilateral ties with the United States, given their range of shared values and interests.

The same might be said of Israel's relationship with Obama. Though it has frayed of late, the United States is deeply committed to Israel's survival as a Jewish state and has provided Israel with strong political, military and economic backing. The barbed remark by Israeli Sports and Culture Minister Limor Livnat last November that Israel has "fallen into the hands of a horrible American administration" is simply inaccurate and untrue.

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Students foster identity through written word

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Adira Winegust believes in the power of the written word.

Especially when expressing her Jewish identity.

"I would love to be part of the next generation of Jewish writers," said Winegust, a second-year arts and science student at McMaster University. "Showing Jewish identity through anywhere is good, but writing and arts is a really creative way… Writing tends to be an outlet and therapy for a lot of people."

This is one of the reasons that she submitted her work to an Internet publication called Milim, a Jewish literary magazine started by the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students (CFJS).

"I wrote a poem and sent it off to them. I love writing, and I thought this would be a unique opportunity," she said, adding that her poem, called *Blessing*, explores the feeling of being on the men's side of her synagogue with her father.

The magazine itself, which includes poetry, stories, artwork and photography, was launched as an outlet for students such as Winegust, who express themselves through the creative arts.

Josh Kelikovitz, the editor-in-chief of the Internet literary magazine Milim

Josh Kelikovitz, the chair of Jewish Identity for CFJS, got the idea for a literary magazine last fall. Right now, Milim is in its first phase – its website was launched several months ago and editors are currently accepting submissions. The ultimate goal is to eventually produce a physical publication.

"I've always had an interest in Jewish literature and Jewish arts," said Kelikovitz, who is the magazine's editor-in-chief. "I think it [Milim offers] a broader way for people to express what it means to be a Canadian Jewish student."

Kelikovitz would like to update the website with new submissions every three weeks or so, he said, adding that any submissions must contain Jewish content.

For Kelikovitz, the magazine is a way to reach students nationwide who may not be part of Hillel or their local Jewish student associations.

"[Milim is] a way to engage new segments of Jewish students that may not have been engaged by previous programming… Art and literature can open up doors to students," he said. "This is another way for people to get involved."

Writer Adira Winegust

Samantha Banks, the president of CFJS, agrees.

"I believe it's a good forum because it taps into an aspect of Judaism which isn't always addressed," she said of the magazine. "There are a lot of students in the fine arts industry that maybe haven't found an outlet to connect to Judaism. This allows them to take the art that they foster and love, and put it into a publication that can be viewed and valued by students all across Canada."

Allison Vanek, Milim's poetry and fiction editor and a third-year English and drama student at Queen's University, sees the publication as a way for students to connect through their work.

"It reaches not just one campus, not just one city, but across all campuses, across all cities," she said. "We're trying to bring people together from different areas who may not have had the ability to share experiences with each other… [and] share their ideas and their work."

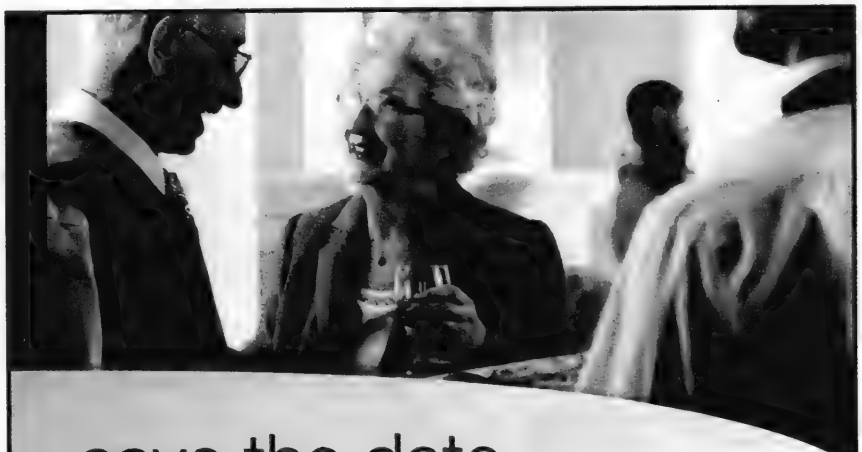
As an English major, Vanek understands the importance of the written word.

"I believe that no matter what your identity is, the written word is the way to go to express it," she said. "I think it's really important that there are still literary publications that can be accessed."

When reviewing submissions, Vanek looks for content that other students can connect to, she said.

"That can be any kind of style or subject, as long as it's something that has some kind of human connection," she said.

For more information or to submit work, visit www.milim.ca. Editors prefer work by students or recent graduates.



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Yom Ha'atzmaut - Israel Independence Day
Monday, April 19 at 1:30pm • RSVP by April 14
Celebrate Israel's 62nd birthday with Israeli folk music and dancing. Enjoy Middle Eastern snacks, drinks, door prizes and tours of our newly renovated residence.

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Class Acts

Senior kindergarten students at the Toronto Heschel School learned about the story of Exodus through dance and music. Pictured, back row from left, are Ethan Varkul and Jordan Gottesman-Kaplun, and, front row from left, are Avichai Gobrin, Maya Grosman and Jaden Kerenyi.

Associated Hebrew Schools junior kindergarten students Emily Cohen, left, and Lexi Cammy enjoy eating matzah at their model seder table.

Or Haemet Sephardic School Grade 7/8 students – from left, Rivka Abramov, Yarden Mamane and Rachel Chapkis – make charoset for the school's annual model seder.

Senior kindergarten students at the Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus, Eitan Schneer and Andrea Goldstein, show off their papier-mâché seder plates.

Pesach Studies

Before heading off to enjoy seders with their parents, Jewish day school students in Toronto learned their lessons about the holiday.

United Synagogue Day School Beth Tikvah campus nursery students – from left, Adam Ospalak, Evan Krakower, Lacey Auld, Macayla Silver, Talia Arieli and Zack Marks – learned about the seder plate by acting out the roles each item performs in the seder.

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Comment

Regaining some perspective on Jerusalem

Can Israel be covered journalistically with equanimity – that is, a sense of calmness and perspective? Or is it the country's fate often to be the object of disproportionate and emotionally charged attention?

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

If the torrent of media criticism of Israel's admittedly awful handling of the Ramot Shlomo affair was marked by anything, it was a general loss of perspective. Once again, settlements have become not just one of the key, knotty final-status issues, but "the" impediment to peace.

Speaking from Ramallah on March 20, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, condemned Israeli housing in east Jerusalem and said, "Let us be clear: all settlement activity is illegal anywhere in occupied territory, and this must stop."

This occasioned the BBC to report that from an observation point on the outskirts of Ramallah, Ban looked towards "the Israeli West Bank settlement of Givat Zeev, home to 11,000 Israelis."

That's right, the Israeli neighbourhood in northern Jerusalem, just over the Green Line, has now become a West Bank settlement. While one might have come to expect such characterization from major elements of the British and European media, the same could not have been said of the U.S. media.

Yet, in a March 24 front page *New York Times* story on the continuing tension between U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Helen Cooper and Mark Landler wrote that ties between the two leaders suffered "after [Netanyahu's] government's decision this month to approve new Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem."

Let's be clear: if Jewish housing in Jerusalem anywhere east of the Green Line (that is, the 1949 Armistice line with Jordan) is now to be termed a "settlement," it follows that the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, which is also over the Green Line, must also be considered a "settlement."

But would any fair-minded journalist write that? If not, why not?

Raising these questions shows the extent to which a rising tide of disapproval in the West of the Israeli government is leading to the obscuring of basic facts and common sense.

It's important to note that while there's a strong Israeli consensus against physically redividing Jerusalem – in its 3,000-year history it was only physically divided for 19 years of Jordanian rule, from 1949 to 1967 – Israel has shown remarkable willingness to compromise with the Palestinians on the city – twice in fact: once in 2000-01 at Camp David/Taba and again in 2007 under the Annapolis plan.

In both cases, the Palestinian leadership rejected compromise. The rejection had nothing to do with Jewish housing, which continuedduring both negotiations. Rather it had to do with the Palestinian rejection of Jewish legitimacy in any part of the city. Is it any wonder then that Israelis remain leery of the subject? Or that there is a small majority that supports building in Jewish neighbourhoods in the eastern part of the city that under any (possible) future compromise will almost certainly remain part of Israel?

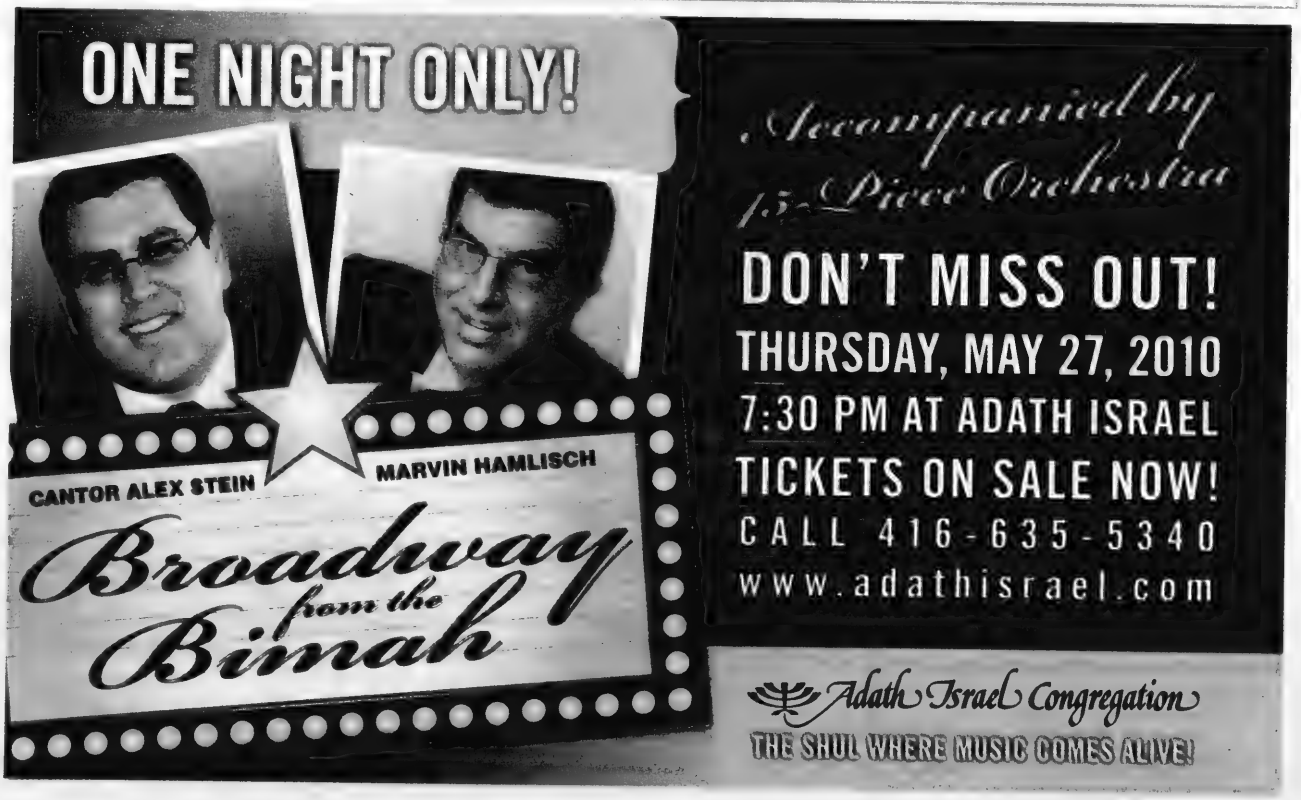
In an article in the March 23 *Jerusalem Post*, Avi Dichter, Kadima MK and former head of the Shin Bet, expressed a balanced Israeli view: "[T]he world must clearly understand that Jerusalem will not return to the pre-1967 borders," he wrote. Still, "[w]hile this is a clear and important strategic policy in the heart of [the] consensus in Israel, the government needs to be more tactically sensitive in its building plans for Jerusalem."

Even the influential *Economist* magazine (a publication not known for its sympathetic coverage of Israel) acknowledged the need for a sensible approach to the subject of the Green Line. In the midst of its criticism of Netanyahu in its March 18 editorial "Stop the bungling," it managed to calmly give cause for optimism.

One reason for "cautious hope," it wrote, "is that mainstream Israelis and Palestinians agree that an adjustment of the 1967 border, including equitable land swaps to compensate the Palestinians, is inevitable in any durable peace deal. If the border issue were resolved early in negotiations, much of the poison over the continuing building of Jewish settlements would be drawn, because the biggest of them would fall on the Israeli side of the new line, even along parts of east Jerusalem's rim."

If a British publication can recognize this possibility, perhaps not all reason has been lost.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.



Guest Voice

Staying true to your roots

By DANIELLE SCHEINMAN
Special to The CJN

Growing up in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood, attending Jewish day school and spending my summers at Jewish summer camps left me nothing short of sheltered.

I had few non-Jewish friends until university – and even then, the majority were the same friends I grew up with. I have always been part of a close-knit community where everyone celebrated the same holidays, ate the same bagels and cream cheese and hung out at UJA Federation of Greater Toronto-sponsored events. When my camping career came to an end, I chose to intern at a Jewish organization, as opposed to entering the ever-so-daunting "real world." I felt comfortable knowing everyone around me had something in common. Fridays were early closings because of Shabbat. Phrases such as "*B'hatzlachah*" and "*Toda rabah*" were considered to be part of normal office conversation.

After four years of university and obtaining a postgraduate certificate in public relations and corporate communications, I decided to take the leap. For the past two years, I have been working at a public relations agency in downtown Toronto where, as you probably guessed, I am the sole Jew.

I was nervous to enter an environment where I wasn't automatically connected to my colleagues by a common bond, but excited to break out of my shell and meet new professionals in my field – no matter their age, race or religion.

My Jewishness was quickly made apparent to my colleagues by the Magen David I proudly wore around my neck and the Hebrew/Yiddish words that unconsciously slipped out of my mouth. I said "Mazel tov" instead of "Congratulations" for a new client win and "*Oy gevalt*" instead of "Oh no" when my computer malfunctioned. I didn't hide the fact that I was Jewish – rather I embraced it and so did my colleagues.

They were curious and interested to learn about Jewish traditions, foods and holidays. One colleague wanted to get it straight, "Is Chanukah the holiday with the matzah or is that Passover?" and another co-worker was ever so intrigued by the leftover farfel I kept bringing for lunch. When we had our Christmas decorating challenge, I decorated my area with dreidels and menorahs (I won the multi-cultural award!), and when we picked a charity of our choice during the Christmas season, I consistently supported Jewish charities.

Despite being the only Jewish employee, I've remained proud and connected to my Jewish roots and have taught others about my religion in the process. I'm still teaching them that Bubbie's chicken soup really can cure the common cold, grocery-store bagels are not real bagels, and a rugelach is so much better than a doughnut from Tim Hortons.

The past two years have provided me with unique experiences that have allowed me to grow personally and professionally. Although there still might be a few differences between my current job and my past jobs, I'm fostering a sense of understanding and tolerance among my fellow colleagues – and in today's world, that can make all the difference.

Danielle Scheinman is currently employed at Argyle Communications.

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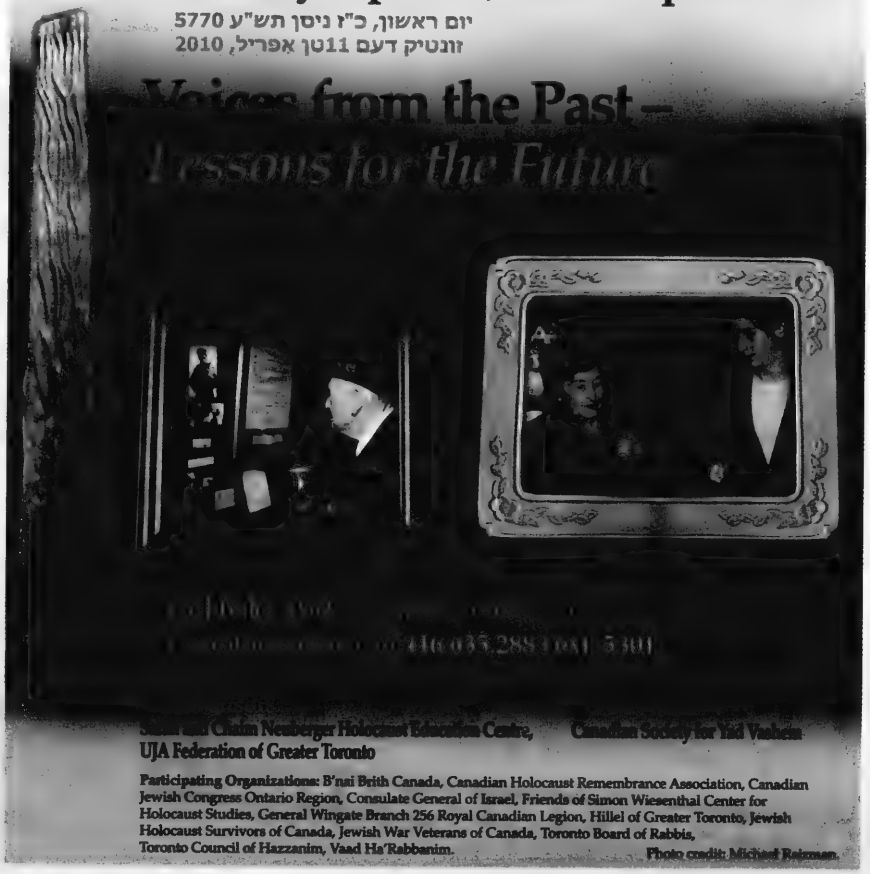

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Not all Sephardim eat rice on Pesach

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

One fundamental difference between the diet of Ashkenazim and Sephardim is well known and documented.

While the Torah specified five grains – wheat, oats, spelt, rye and barley – as comprising the five types of chametz, somewhere in Diaspora history, rabbis of certain communities chose to extend this list and categorize *kitniyot*, or legumes, such as rice, millet, beans, lentils, peas, corn, buckwheat and many others, as being unacceptable Pesach foods.

It wasn't because these are in any way chametz in and of themselves, but rather, since these all share some common characteristics with the five grains, they, too, are to be avoided in order to minimize confusion.

The common characteristics are that both grains and legumes can be ground into a fine flour from which one then can produce cereals, bread, rice cakes and other baked goods. All would be dropped from the menus of an Ashkenazi table on Pesach. This safeguard was, and is, universally the norm for all Ashkenazi Jews.

No such concern was voiced by leaders of the Sephardi community in the Diaspora, and, therefore, these legumes were and continue to be a part of their traditional and acceptable Pesach diet.

There is however another fundamental difference in customs that is not so well known or documented – the eating of rice on Pesach.

Apparently, this commodity, while almost a staple in Middle Eastern cuisine, and very much a part of the Pesach holiday menu, is not at all to be found on the tables of North African Sephardi homes.

For North African Sephardim, rice is a definite no-go area.

But why would this one particular legume be singled out by Sephardim of North African decent?

North African rabbis never banned rice. Certainly this custom is nowhere recorded, nor is it given official sanction.

It seems that the aversion to rice began quite logically.

Not being a domestic product, rice, a very sought-after delicacy, was imported into North Africa. The imported rice came in recycled burlap sacks that had more often than once contained flour. Hence, kosher for Pesach rice was unavailable.

So, it turns out that for very practical reasons, not all Sephardim eat rice on Pesach.

Counting on spiritual growth

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

It's somewhat ironic that on the second night of Pesach, with the holiday barely under way, Jews are already beginning to prepare themselves for yet another festival. Sfirat HaOmer, the period of counting the Omer, culminates seven weeks later with Shavuot. This time of year is a fascinating one, long associated with spiritual, even kabbalistic growth.

Just what is an "Omer?" According to the Torah, an offering consisting of an Omer (a specific measure) of barley was brought to the Temple on the second day of Passover. **[bit.ly/omer01]** Until that offering was made, no grain from the new year's crop was to be eaten. From that day onward, it was necessary to count 49 days until Shavuot, the Festival of the Wheat Harvest (Leviticus 23:15). **[bit.ly/omer02]**

After the destruction of the Temple, the practice of bringing barley was discontinued, but Jews continued to count during the Omer period. The kabbalists' interpretation of these 49 days was based on the various permutations (seven times seven) of the *sfirot*, or mystical emanations. These *sfirot* denote the ascent from the 49 "gates" of impurity of the Egyptian bondage to the purity of the Revelation at Sinai. Each day and week is given its own mystical attribute such as *chesed* (lovingkindness), *gevurah* (restraint) and *tiferet* (beauty). **[bit.ly/omer03]**

For example, the phrase for the fourth day of counting is *hod shel chesed* or endurance in lovingkindness. Aish.com poses these questions in relation to the day: "Is my love enduring? Do I give and withhold love according to my moods or is it constant regardless of the ups and downs of life? Exercise for the day: reassure a loved one of the constancy of your love." **[bit.ly/omer04]** You can read essays about the various permutations and how each of the 49 days has its own unique quality. **[bit.ly/omer05]**

For Rabbi Malka Drucker, counting the days infuses them with spiritual – and practical – significance. "When I count the Omer, my intention is to empty myself of the day's irritations, its problems, even its joys. I do this by becoming conscious of how the day has been spent, and this process helps me to think of the evening as a prelude for the morning." **[bit.ly/omer06]**

As for the count itself, there are rules about when to do it (after dark), how to do it (best while standing) and what to do if you miscount (it's complicated – read the website). **[bit.ly/omer15]** Rabbis have even pondered how to keep your count straight if you happen to cross the international date line and your personal count differs from everyone around you. **[bit.ly/omer07]**

Whether you're a world traveller or a just a typical commuter, downloading the Sfirat HaOmer app for iPhone or iPod Touch will help make sure you're counting the right day. **[bit.ly/omer08]** The Omer program for the Palm goes one better, with an alarm that will remind you to count daily. **[bit.ly/omer09]** And you can sign up at sites such as the Orthodox Union **[bit.ly/ omer16]** and Torah.org **[bit.ly/omer11]** to get a daily reminder via e-mail.

Or you can keep track the old-fashioned way. Just print an Omer calendar and stick it on the fridge. David Wallach has posted a handy one-page version **[bit.ly/omer12]**, and if you need help with Hebrew, there's a version transliterated into English. **[bit.ly/omer13]**

And in a case of old meets new, take a look at "The Homer Calendar." **[bit.ly/omer14]** Keeping track of the daily count can be a bit confusing, but if H'Omer Simpson can do it, with the help of the venerable Rabbi Hyman Krustofski, so can you. Just remember, if you forget to count the Omer for an entire day, you can continue to count on subsequent days, but you can no longer recite the blessing. D'oh!

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

The decline of Israeli Apartheid Week

In recent Canadian history, Canada has strived to be accepting of all races and creeds, and multiculturalism and tolerance are said to be of great importance to our culture.

In fact, multiculturalism was a major theme of the recent Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Events such as Israeli Apartheid Week are a threat to multiculturalism.

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff recently spoke about Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW), saying it "betrays the values of mutual respect that Canada has always promoted." He believes that IAW "should be condemned by all who value civil and respectful debate about the tragic conflict in the Middle East."

With politicians, both Liberal and Conservative, denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week, it has started to decline in popularity. It's unlikely that IAW will be abolished, but the demonstrations this year have been low key compared to other years.

That being said, there is still an Israeli Apartheid Week, which is not ideal, but this year's events were less radical, and there was less blatant anti-Semitism. IAW at certain Canadian universities, such as York University, has been known to be worse than at others. In the past, York students have been the victims of intimidation, and anti-Semitic graffiti has appeared on campus.

We are still a long way from Israeli Apartheid Week being banned from campuses, but it seems that we are heading in the right direction.

In Ottawa, at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, Israeli Apartheid Week was not a large-scale event. It was definitely there, but a student-run Jewish organization called the Israel Advocacy Committee (IAC) is active on campus.

Throughout the school year, the IAC's job is to promote Israel and shed a positive light on the Jewish homeland for students whose main information source on the subject may be the organizers of Israeli Apartheid Week.

The president of IAC in Ottawa is Laura Grosman. She helps to organize events including tabling – students volunteering to spend a day on the popular areas of campus promoting Israel.

It is through these types of events that anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic sentiment can be fought. In the past, we have lost the battle before it started, as we did not educate the masses. Many college and university students are impressionable, and are easily swayed by words such as "apartheid."

With groups such as the IAC around to promote Israel, it is possible to imagine that soon Israeli Apartheid Week will be even less effective and less prominent. We are heading to a time when a combination of student groups and active politicians will continue to protest IAW.

I am optimistic that students will soon know the simple pleasure of not having to deal with the ignorance and propaganda that are associated with Israeli Apartheid week.

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Education isn't just for kids

Shortly after my grandmother moved into Baycrest, I was asked to lead a Passover seder for the residents. I prepared intensely, gathering anecdotes and commentaries, planning songs and stories. The seder went off without a hitch. The residents sang, asked questions and enjoyed themselves, but it was my own internal debate that was the most educational part of the experience.

Class Act
By Daniel Held

During the seder I reflected. "Wow! What an incredible setting for education. The residents are engaged, interested and participating. They're not only a captive audience, but they're so excited by the interaction with a young person that they're enlivened by the seder. This really is an ideal setting for Jewish education."

Content with my validation of the experience I continued on. Shortly, however, I had a second thought. "These seniors aren't going to be teaching the lessons they learn tonight. They aren't raising children or running seders of their own. The learning will likely end here."

I trudged through the seder, concerned about the purpose. Could this be true? Was Jewish education in the context of a seniors residence a waste? Finally, a third internal monologue clarified my thoughts. "Jewish learning itself is enriching. Studying a text or singing a song adds value to our lives. Jewish education is not, and cannot, only be about the next generation. Rather, it must be about the learners themselves – inspiring them, engaging them and enriching their lives."

We often perceive education as a venture for the young. We invest heavily in schools and camps, Hillels and Birthright Israel. Of the estimated $4-billion venture that is our educational system in North America, how much is spent on the youngest third of our population?

Moreover, our evaluation tools highlight the elusive search for continuity. Study after study argues that day schools stave off intermarriage, that Birthright alumni are more likely to donate to Jewish causes, and that, upon their return in August, campers are more likely to light Shabbat candles. These markers of identity, while valuable in the search to count Jewish action, do little to demonstrate the intrinsic value of Jewish learning and living.

If we view Jewish education solely as a vehicle for ensuring a Jewish tomorrow, we deprive ourselves of *Torah lishma* – learning for learning's sake.

Synagogues take the brunt of this blow. Shuls are often seen as little more than venues for Hebrew school and bar and bat mitzvahs. When these youth education ventures are complete, how many families continue coming to shul? How many renew their membership?

Finally, let's consider holiday celebrations. Many years ago, a professor and mentor of mine introduced me to the term "pediatric Judaism." It's easy to transform the lighting of Chanukah candles, the reading of the megillah and the Passover seder into children's activities. As a teacher, I know how valuable these activities are for both children and parents. It's much harder – but I believe equally enriching – to frame these events as meaningful and fulfilling for adults.

In the Haggadah, we read about Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar the son of Azariah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon. Like my grandmother and her neighbours at Baycrest, they gathered to retell the story of Passover together. They didn't do it for their children or grandchildren. They didn't do it for the sake of continuity. They spent the night retelling the story of Passover because they believed that Jewish learning itself is an enriching endeavour – no matter what your age.

Learning from my seder participants at Baycrest, it's time to shift the paradigm of education from a focus on the continuity of the next generation to the enrichment and growth of the learner – at any age, level of learning or stage of life.

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Day affirms Canada's support of Israel

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Stockwell Day, president of the Treasury Board and minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, recently affirmed Canada's unwavering support for the State of Israel.

He was speaking at the 2009 Jewish National Fund (JNF) Negev Dinner, held at the Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel on March 22.

Nearly 500 people packed the hotel's ballroom to honour local philanthropist Sara Vered, a native Israeli who fought in Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

Day praised Vered's war service. "You did your duty, and you did it with remarkable courage," he said.

He told the audience that Vered was "one of the key people involved in the first trip that [former prime minister John] Diefenbaker took to Israel. He came home from that trip and his support for Israel never wavered."

Day said he was moved by all he had seen during his most recent trip to Israel. He gave his assurance that Canada is firmly behind Israel. "Any time Israel is threatened, for Canada neutrality will never be an option," he said.

Sara and her husband, the late Zeev Vered, came to Canada as students to attend McGill University. Soon afterward, they moved to Ottawa, where they founded several companies and raised three sons, who are all involved in the family businesses.

As the Vereds' businesses prospered, they became volunteers in the community and major philanthropists, contributing to organizations in the Jewish and general communities in Ottawa, as well as to Israel.

Miriam Ziv, ambassador of Israel to Canada and two former Israeli ambassadors – Alan Baker and David Sultan – attended the dinner. Baker and Sultan came from Israel to support their friend. Numerous local politicians, dignitaries and business leaders were there as well.

Sara Vered spoke poignantly of her life in Israel. "How thankful I am to my parents who left Europe to come to Palestine, hoping to build a new life," she said. She told of her childhood in Jerusalem, of being taken out of high school to work in a wireless station, returning to school to write the final exam, and then being sent to the front, where she served during the War of Independence.

"By jeep, I travelled to the Negev and fell in love with this magnificent country... I learned that each individual and each nation should have a vision – a vision that contributes to the welfare of humanity," she said.

With the funds raised by the dinner, the area around Ben-Gurion's Cabin in the Sara and Zeev Vered Pioneer Grounds will be landscaped. The cabin is a tourist attraction. The landscaping will include a path, benches and a variety of trees and shrubs symbolizing the former Israeli prime minister's vision of greening the desert.

Sara Vered with Stockwell Day
[Howard Kay photo]

A portion of the proceeds will also go to the Ran Kochva Lookout, developed by the JNF as a living memorial to Maj. Ran Kochva, a pilot killed in action during the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Located in Nabi Yosha Forest in the Naftali Mountains, the location where Kochva's helicopter crashed, the lookout has views of the waters of the Hula Agamon.

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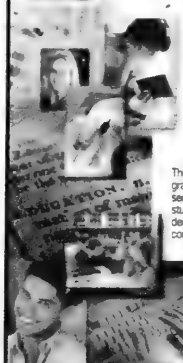
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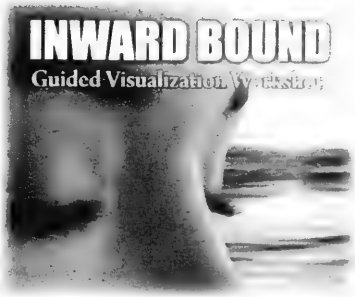
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Russian emigrée was a champion of Wallenberg

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The Russian emigrée Vera Parnes, an accomplished medical researcher in her native country, devoted her last 20 years to commemorating Raoul Wallenberg. She died March 24 following a brief illness. She was 91.

Obituary

Parnes left Moscow in 1991 and, after a brief time in San Francisco, settled in Montreal, where she founded the Canadian Friends of Raoul Wallenberg and the Raoul Wallenberg International Movement for Humanity (RWIMH).

During the era of perestroika (increasing social freedoms) under Soviet Prime Minister Mikhail Gorbachev, she opened a small museum in Moscow devoted to the Swedish diplomat Wallenberg, who is credited with saving tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest from Nazi deportation during World War II.

She then formed the Raoul Wallenberg Society, which organized cultural events and lectures, and appealed to Gorbachev to disclose records pertaining to Wallenberg's fate – to no avail.

Although alone and no longer young, Parnes decided to emigrate because of the political chaos that ensued after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In her new country, she was indefatigable in her efforts to establish the truth about what happened to Wallenberg who disappeared on Jan. 17, 1945, after being arrested by the Soviets. The Russians maintain that Wallenberg died of natural causes in a Soviet prison in July 1947.

One of her first projects was to erect a bust of Wallenberg in downtown Montreal in what is now Raoul Wallenberg Square. She organized at least one major event a year in Wallenberg's memory.

She also created *The Wallenberg Bulletin* and later a website providing the latest news on activities related to the Swedish hero.

In 2001, Parnes was instrumental, along with MPs Irwin Cotler, Sheila Copps and others, in having Parliament declare Jan. 17 Raoul Wallenberg Day. Wallenberg had been named Canada's first honorary citizen in 1985.

Verna Parnes

She worked internationally to encourage other countries to remember Wallenberg. One achievement was Budapest's naming him an honorary citizen.

Although Parnes was critical of Sweden for not doing more to investigate Wallenberg's whereabouts after the war, its monarch, King Carl XVI Gustaf, bestowed upon her the Royal Order of the Polar Star (First Class) in 2004.

Born in Moscow, she was a professor and researcher specializing in infectious diseases and cancer, and she did pioneering work in developing imaging devices for cancer diagnosis. She was married to the late Isaak Beilin, an agronomist and botanist.

Her biography also notes that during the Stalin era, she spoke out at her peril against anti-Semitism within the Academy of Medical Sciences and came to the defence of a colleague, the renowned immunologist Leo Silber.

Peter Rona, RWIMH's executive director, who worked with Parnes for 18 years, touched on her iron determination in his eulogy.

"Regardless how much you seemed to contribute, according to Vera, there was always more to do. She never let up, and she was never completely satisfied.

"Her typical answer would be: 'How do you compare anything to the efforts and accomplishments of Raoul Wallenberg?'"

Her work ethic, right to the end of her life, was astonishing. "At 90 years of age, [she was] up and working by her computer at 6 a.m., and sometimes still working at 9 p.m., using technology and e-mailing around the world."

Working for her was not always easy, but Rona's admiration only grew.

"She would boss me around, insisting that whatever she wanted accomplished, indeed gets accomplished... It always had to be done her way."

Like her mentor Wallenberg, Parnes showed that "one human being could make a difference," he said. "She touched and influenced hundreds, if not thousands, of lives with her fervent effort to keep the memory of Wallenberg alive."

Parnes is survived by a brother, Iakov Parnes, of Montreal and a nephew.

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Cotler counters conservative blogger who called him a 'Jewish Uncle Tom'

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Liberal MP Irwin Cotler has been described many ways – as a human rights crusader, former justice minister, member of the Order of Canada and even the "Alan Dershowitz of the North."

But Cotler said he was taken aback and offended at the end of December when Jewish conservative blogger Ezra Levant devoted an entire blog to characterizing Cotler as a "Jewish Uncle Tom" and the "Uncle Tom of the Liberal Party."

According to the Levant blog, Cotler has put up with a party "that... abide[s] anti-Semitism and... anti-Israel sentiment" and hasn't been "noisy [enough] when his own party was selling Israel down the river."

Irwin Cotler

Ezra Levant

Levant, who is Jewish, also wrote that at a purported dinner meeting in Toronto "in 2002 or 2003," supposedly attended by Cotler, Levant, Senator Jerry Grafstein and the late media mogul Izzy Asper, Cotler allegedly portrayed Liberal stalwarts Eddie Goldenberg and Herb Gray as "official" and "court" Jews (Levant's terms) who, as loyalists to then-prime minister Jean Chrétien, didn't come to Israel's defence when they should have, and thereby signalled Chrétien's government to carry on with its middling support of Israel.

Now, Cotler has become the very thing he criticized, Levant wrote.

Asked about the blog at a recent press conference, Cotler said he was ambivalent about responding at first because – as his aide Howard Liebman put it – "that's what Ezra would have wanted."

But Cotler said he was nonetheless tempted to respond, "not because of me, but because of the implication that falsely represented what I said about other people."

Cotler's recollection of the meeting described is that it never happened, or if it did, he was not there.

"I was not a part of that alleged meeting," Cotler said adamantly. "Ezra Levant is a free speech person and is certainly entitled to free speech, but while he is entitled to his opinion, he's not entitled to rewrite the facts, and that's basically what he has done."

Cotler added that Asper, who died in October 2003, had been "a very, very close friend." The meeting "never took place, No. 1, and the statement [Levant] attributed to me... at that meeting was never said by me.

"I never would say anything about Herb Gray," Cotler continued. "I just spoke at a dinner honouring him. Why would I ever say things exactly opposite of the truth about someone I have so publicly extolled?"

Levant puts forward the idea that, as a Liberal, Cotler is "loyal to his masters" or stays acquiescent in caucus. This "is grossly false," Cotler said.

Cotler pointed to an article in the *Jerusalem Report* published in 2004, shortly after he was named justice minister. Headlined "A troublemaker tamed?" the article described how Cotler – then a backbencher – was not shy to exhort his own government to blacklist Islamic terrorist groups, something it did less than three weeks later when it declared Islamic Jihad and Hamas illegal.

Cotler said he has also publicly "stood up" to criticize Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff.

"It's all a matter of public record," Cotler said, noting that the *Jerusalem Report* story had also pointed out that it had once been thought Cotler's willingness to be critical of his own party could cost him a seat at the cabinet table.

Perhaps, ventured Cotler, "part of it has to do with the fact that I am a Liberal," and Levant's "disposition towards Liberals is that we all should be an endangered species."

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Canadian diplomat's comments called 'odious'

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Comments last weekend by former Canadian diplomat Robert Fowler claiming that Canada's Middle East policy is based on narrow domestic political considerations have been slammed by the Canada-Israel Committee as "outrageous and odious."

Shimon Fogel, the CIC's chief executive officer, said in a statement:

"CIC views [Fowler's] comments… as both outrageous and odious."

He added, "Accusing the Jews of, in effect, controlling Canadian foreign policy heralds back to some of the most base anti-Semitic canards."

In a speech to the Liberal party in Montreal on Sunday, Fowler accused the Conservative government of pandering to Jewish voters and favouring Israel.

Fowler, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations and a foreign policy adviser to prime ministers Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and John Turner, delivered his remarks at a "thinkers" conference attended by Michael Ignatieff, the current Liberal party leader, and Paul Martin, one of his predecessors and Canada's former prime minister.

In a tough appraisal of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Mideast policy, Fowler said it panders to Jewish voters.

By doing so, the Conservatives "sell out our widely admired and long-established reputation for fairness and justice."

Faulting Canadian politicians for trying to "corner the ethnic vote," Fowler said Canada's reputation has been tarnished by Canadian governments that "have turned inward and adopted 'me-first' positions in foreign affairs."

Charging that Fowler is "wrong on the facts," Fogel said that while "both the current government and the Liberal one it succeeded undertook reviews of Canadian policy, they did so because officials had allowed it to drift away from a principled position.

"Canada should enjoy a special relationship with its only sister democracy in the region – a fact Fowler pointedly ignored. And, contrary to his assertion, the Harper government has committed some $300 million to the Palestinians – hardly a policy of a government that ignores stakeholders other than Israel.

"Finally, political parties' efforts to engage various communities does not constitute pandering. It is the essence of the democratic process. And, just because the two parties that command the support of a majority of Canadians adopt a position different than the one Fowler and his cronies would prefer does not make it any less legitimate."

Fowler, kidnapped and held for 130 days by Islamic militants when he was a United Nations' special envoy to Niger in 2008, urged Harper to accept the "iron-clad" connection between "continuing turmoil and volatility in the Middle East and the rise [and] growing strength of international terrorism."

He observed that both Liberal and Conservative politicians refuse to acknowledge that reality out of fear they will be labelled anti-Semites.

Fowler urged Canada to challenge Israel's settlement policy in "illegally occupied territories."

He said that Israel is building settlements there "in contravention of a myriad of international judgments."

Calls to the Department of Foreign Affairs for comment were not returned by *The CJN*'s deadline.

Hoops tournament set for April 4

Compiled by CJN Staff

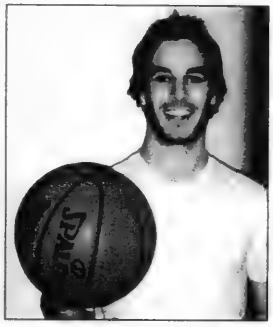
TORONTO — Hoops 4 Israel will kick off its fourth year of fundraising with its annual basketball tournament on April 4 at 10 a.m. at HoopDome in Downsview Park.

Thirty-two basketball teams will compete in the event, a charitable initiative to benefit Israeli youth.

"Hoops 4 Israel is a platform that advocates primarily for Ethiopian-Israeli at-risk youth," said tournament founder David Goodman. "However, with our growth comes more awareness of our brand. We now have an opportunity to bring awareness to other issues in our sphere, such as young adults with developmental challenges and autism, climate change awareness and sustainable living and Jewish community-building in Canada."

Held in conjunction with UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and Birthright Israel Alumni Community, the Hoops 4 Israel brand has expanded consistently, along with its roster of volunteers.

"I am thrilled to witness the overwhelming support from over 160 volunteers, past Birthright Israel participants and their desire to see the project grow and succeed," Goodman said. "When you see your peers returning year after year to volunteer, one can't help but feel optimistic about successfully sustaining the Hoops 4 Israel initiative for years to come."



David Goodman

Hoops 4 Israel generated $330,000 in charitable contributions at its first three tournaments. Since last year's event, Hoops 4 Israel increased its fundraising total to more than $400,000, thanks to donations and corporate sponsorships. It's the largest collective fundraising project among the 220,000 Birthright Israel alumni.

These donations have helped create programs and facilities that support at-risk youth in Kiryat Moshe and Bat Yam in Israel, where Hoops 4 Israel has funded an outdoor basketball court and an indoor gymnasium, as well as youth sports and cultural programs for Ethiopian immigrants having trouble adjusting to modern Israeli society.

Going beyond the actual tournament, the Hoops 4 Israel initiative has expanded with new side projects this year. The expansion includes partnering with David Lasday of Peace Players International, who works with Israeli and Palestinian children across Israel. Another new event is the Jam 4 Israel, a fundraising after-party to celebrate the success of Hoops 4 Israel and keep fundraising for the cause.

Earlier this year, the Hoops 4 Israel tournament model was taken to the campus of the University of Western Ontario, where students raised $2,500 at their own tournament. Goodman hopes to take the tournament to Montreal next year.

To donate, visit www.hoops4israel.com.

Ezrin leaving CIJA

Continued from page 1

Funded by Canadian federated communities, CIJA is mandated is to co-ordinate and enhance the advocacy activities of Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canada-Israel Committee, and to support other advocacy organizations including National Jewish Campus Life and the Canadian Friends for Israel.

Ezrin was recruited to head the organization after serving as chair and CEO of GPC International, a public affairs and strategic communications firm. A career diplomat who served as Canadian consul in New York and Los Angeles, he also worked with prime ministers Jean Chrétien and Pierre Trudeau in various roles.

Coast to Coast

Stamp marks Israel, Canada relations

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — Next month Canada Post and the Israel Philatelic Service are issuing an international rate commemorative stamp to celebrate the strong bilateral relationship between the two countries.

This is the first joint issue between the Israeli and Canadian postal administrations, and it will depict the maple leaf and the Star of David in red and blue respectively, each symbol comprised of people standing side by side.

The stamp will launch in Canada and in Israel on April 14 and will be available in a booklet of six stamps. There will be 660,000 stamps issued, each one worth $1.70 in Canada and 4.60 NIS in Israel.

Jim Phillips, director of stamp services at Canada Post, said this joint issue is "a form of diplomacy between postal administrations, providing great opportunities to share with and learn from one another.

"We've done a number of stamps celebrating Canada's diplomatic relations over the years, with China, the United States, Mexico, Japan and Ireland, but this is our first with Israel," he said.

The idea for the Canada-Israel stamp was initiated in a few letters from the public to Canada Post's corporate office for stamp submission. The office receives approximately 600 suggestions for stamps each year and selects between 20 and 25.

Executives from the Israel Philatelic Society flew to Canada last year to discuss the stamp's design, and both countries arrived at the boardroom table with a few options created by design firms in their respective countries.

The design by Toronto-based q30 design was the strongest by far, Phillips said.

"They've worked with us for years, have designed the faces of many stamps and are really a go-to company for us," he added.

The stamp design was intended to communicate the "rich topic of diplomacy between two nations," according to Glenda Rissman, a principal at q30 design.

"Canada's red figures and Israel's blue figures come together to meet in the middle of the stamp, and the meeting of the human figures symbolizes and celebrates the relationship between the two nations."

The company has designed 40 stamps for Canada Post in the past, with subject matter including the 50th anniversary of the Holocaust and the Queen's 80th birthday. The mandate for the Canada-Israel stamp was to depict 60 years of diplomatic relations without showing specific people.

"Illustrator Yarek Waszul has a graphic yet conceptual style that lends itself perfectly to this topic and the medium," says Karen Henricks, a designer at q30 design. "Through illustration we were able to convey diplomacy on a very tiny stamp."

Yaron Razon, director of the IPS, said that stamps are "paper ambassadors" that spread the message of their country on letters around the world.

"What could be a more symbolic and fitting way to express 60 years of co-operation and friendship between Israel and Canada than a joint stamp issue – the merging of each country's paper ambassadors?" he asked.

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ש'שאר י'נ'ש

גידי קורן וחברים

מה יהיה

יודעי דבר אומרים שמזה שלושים וחמש שנה לא היו יחסי ארה"ב - ישראל במקום נמוך כל כך . המצב החמיר מאוד עם הגיעי של סגן הנשיא ביידן לישראל להתחיל את תהליך המו"מ העקיף, ובעוד הוא בירושלים הודיע משרד הפנים על הרחבת הבנייה בחלק הערבי של הבירה. התגובות מאוד"ב היו חריפות ביותר, ביידן חזר הביתה מבריש וחטול. כך הצליחה ישראל לבייש עוד ידיד מובהק, ביבי יורק טיימס כתב תום פרידמן, מבחירי העיתונאים בעולם ומומחה גדול למזרח התיכון, ש"המכונית הישראלית מהוגה על ידי נהג שיכור". הוא הוסף ואמר ש"כשהבר ריאה את חברו נהג בשכרות- הוא חייב להגיד לו".

יד על הלב- לו אני אובאמה- הייתי אומר לנתניהו בארבע עיניים את המשפט הבא: "בנימין ידידי, יש לך שבוע לשנות את החלטות הממשלה שלך, ואם לא-תקציב התמיכה בישראל יקטן במיליארד דולאר בחודש הראשון, ובעוד מיליארד בכל חודש שיחלוף עד לאפס". בחוק הבריאות שהצליח אובאמה להעביר הוא הראה את צבעיו האמיתיים ואת יכולתו לתחוך כשצריך.

אם זה לא יקרה, ואריה"ב לא תנקוט באמצעים קיצוניים- זו תהיה הוכחה ניצחת לכיחה האמיתי של ישראל באריה"ב. שלא יהיה לאף אחד ספק- אובאמה צריך שקית הקאה בכל פעם שהוא חושב על נתניהו, ליברמן ואלי ישי. אם הוא לא יעשה את מה שההגיון אומר- דהיינו הפסקת המדיניות הימנית הישראלית- יהיה זה סימן ברור שהוא מאמין שבכח הלובי הישראלי להשפיע לרעתו בשנת בחירות מכרעת לבית הנבחרים.

במשאל שעריכה מינה צמח השבוע אמרו רוב הישראלים שממשלת נתניהו אינה מייצגת אותם. סליחה חברים-טעות בידכם-היא מייצגת אתכם כיאות- ככה הצבעתם בבחירות, ואת זה תאכלו. לו רציתם ממשלה שתעשה שלום עם הפלשתינים- הייתם בוחרים את ציפי לבני ולא את ליברמן וחבר מרעיו. אין לבוא ולו בטענה קטנה לנתניהו וליברמן-הם עושים בדיוק את מה שהם הבטיחו לבוחריהם, או כמו שהיטיב לומר זאת השר סילבן שלום:"מה חשבו, שבחרנו לבצע את המצע של קדימה?"

לשון אחרת, כדברי ג'ורג' וושינגטון:"לכל מדינה יש את הממשלה שהיא ראויה לה". לישראל יש עכשיו את הממשלה שהיא ראויה לה, ואובאמה הוא האדם היחיד בעולם שיכול לשנות זאת. כי כל ילדי ישראלי יודע שהדבר היחיד שבאמת יפחיד את נתניהו, ליברמן, ישי וחבריהם גיבורי התהילה, הוא הכסף האמריאני שיפסיק להגיע. אבל שישאר בינינו.

עברית קשה שפה

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"חמש מחוות זמר מחשבים לבסיס של כל חובב ברדוזי, אם אתם רוצים ללכת על בטוח". "מחוה" הוא בלשון זכר, למרות שאומרים "מחוות" ברבים. ואכן חלילי אומר "מחוות זמר נחשבים" מה שמדגיש שהוא יודע ש"מחוה" הוא זכר. אבל מדוע "חמש מחוות", אם "מחוה" הוא זכר, ולא "חמישה מחוות"? לחלילי פתרונים.

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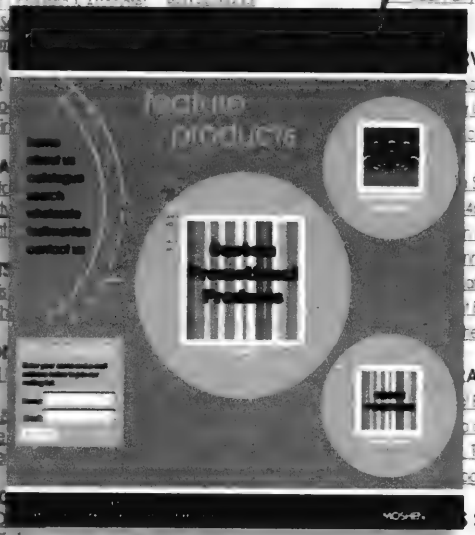
MUSIC
Beyond The Pale
Mark Enkin Music
Hu-Tsa-Tsa
Klapman's Klezmer Band
Fern Lindzon Musical Entertainment
OneMoreTime
Joe Star Band
REDZ
Rick Levine Band, The
Zebrina

SERVICES
Rabbi Eva Goldfinger
Cantor Deborah Staiman

VIDEOS
D.M.S. Video Productions
Lisa Productions
Rafael Studios
Redstone Pictures
Twins Photo & Video
Video Affairs
Video Productions By Josh



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FAMILY MOMENTS

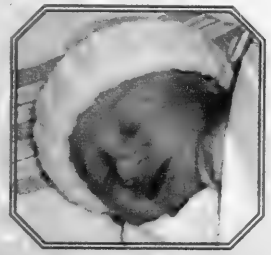
Mazel Tov
The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov to Ann & Sollie Wagman, parents of Gary and the late Howard, on their 65th wedding anniversary. Wishing you much health and happiness.

In honour of my 102nd birthday, I wish to thank Helen & David Gould, family and friends for a wonderful birthday. Love, Rose Lefko Cohen.

Shayna Levitan & Elliot Lavi are delighted to announce to their engagment. Proud parents are Rhoda & Joe Levitan and Diane & Sassi Lavi.

Mazel tov to Joey Kardish & Lisa Snider on their recent engagement! Mazel tov to Carole & Marshall Snider, and Rosie & Howard Kardish and family. Lots of love from all.



Ron & Liana Sandberg announce the birth of Maya Jaidyn. Proud brothers Adam and Zachary. Grandchild of Sol & Brenda Sandberg, Hersh & Bibi Golberg.

Mazel tov! Betty Rozendaal has fulfilled her dream to become a naturopathic doctor. We wish her well at Naturopathic Foundations in Markham. Love, Sonny, Mom & Pappa.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments button!**

Say it with Trees
"Mazel Tov on Your Simcha"
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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Blue Banana Market
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What's New holiday deadline for the April 15 issue is April 7. Deadline for April 22 is April 12. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, April 1

YIDDISH VINKL

Alf Kwinter will entertain with Yiddish humour, 12:15 p.m., Free Times Café, 320 College St., $15 RSVP yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca.

MOVIE SCREENING

April Fools night at the movies, Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. *Frisco Kid*, 8 p.m., $10.

Saturday, April 3

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (North) meets at Reena Centre. Shiur, 9 a.m, Services, 9.30 a.m. For information, tpmnorth@gmail.com.

LGBT COMMUNITY SEDER

Danforth Jewish Circle and Kulanu host a kosher-for-Passover queer, kid-friendly vegetarian potluck seder, 6:30 p.m., Riverdale Presbyterian Church. $10. RSVP kulanutoronto@gmail.com with food item you will bring.

Tuesday, April 6

MEANING OF PRAYER

Temple Har Zion **Rabbi Emeritus Michael Stroh** continues his series on "The Deep Meaning of Prayers in the Shabbat Morning Service," 7:30 p.m. at the temple.

Wednesday, April 7

VISUALIZATION WORKSHOP

Chaya Sara Brand, a spiritual therapist from Jerusalem, facilitates an interactive and experiential visualization workshop, 7:30 pm., Lipa Green Bldg., Room 7. Free. Jews for Judaism, 416-789-0020.

Thursday, April 8

ORGAN DONATION

"Organ Donation and Transplantation: Personal Experiences and Halachic Obligations," with **Frank Bialystok**, recipient; **Lisa Charendoff**, SickKids ambassador program; **Frank Markel**, Trillium Gift of Life Network; and **Rabbi Tina Grinberg**, Darchei Noam Congregation. 7:30 p.m., 416-638-4783.

MEGILLAT HASHOAH

Eighth annual community reading of Megillat Hashoah, a community commemorative service, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. No charge, tickets at synagogue office. 416-633-3838.

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rabbi Cory Weiss, Temple Har Zion, discusses Pirkei Avot: Wisdom of our Fathers, at a lunch and learn, 12-1 p.m. Bring lunch, coffee and tea provided. Program will continue each Thursday until May 13.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, explores the historical basis that has led to the virus of anti-Semitism mutating into different and viral forms in today's world. Coffee and cookies, 7.15 p.m., program: 7.30 p.m. at Temple Sinai.

OTHER NEWS

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre needs meals-on-wheels drivers and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP, **Judy**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or judy@djds.ca.

DAILY SERVICES

Temple Har Zion holds daily services: weekdays in temple library, lower level, 7:15 a.m., followed by breakfast; Shabbat, Torah study and breakfast, 9 a.m., followed by service at 10:30 a.m.; Sunday and statutory holidays, 9:15 a.m. in library. 905-889-2252.

Continued on page 25

JNF
On the occasion of
Yiskor
It is tradition to make a charitable donation in memory of a loved one or friend
Proceeds of this year's Yiskor Campaign will be directed to the Restorer of Jerusalem Project
Please complete and return the Yiskor form enclosed in this issue
Restorer of Jerusalem
416-638-7200 www.jnftoronto.ca

Yom Hashoah V'Hagvura
Multi-Generational Public Reading of
MEGILLAT HASHOAH
The Shoah Scroll
A Community Commemorative Service
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
Thursday April 8th, 2010 at 7:30 pm
Featuring Cantors
Aaron Bensoussan
Marshall Loomer
and
The Renanim Youth Singers
Copies of Megillat Hashoah will be available during the programme and for sale following.
Photo credit: David Shankbone, Yad Vashem Hall of Names
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
100 Elder Street, Toronto ON M3H 5G7
www.beby.org | 416 633.3838

Continued from page 24

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com, for info.

Picking up the Pieces: Six-session group for parents and children who are going through divorce. Starts the week of April 12. **Janice Shaw,** 905-882-2331, ext. 232.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six-session group. Topics include coping with grief, resolving unfinished business. April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Living with Teens: Parenting an adolescent without losing your cool. A six-session group, April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Widow/Widowers Bereavement: Six-session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. April 14, 1-2:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Five-session group for couples marrying in the next year. Offered with the Rabbinical Assembly. April 14, 7-9 p.m., Beth Tzedec. Also six sessions beginning April 2, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at First Narayever.

Successful Step-parenting: Six-session group for couples living in blended families, April 14, 7:30-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: Four-week group for parents of ADHD-diagnosed children, April 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St., 6th floor. Call **Pam**, 416-638-7800, ext. 315.

Aspergers 101: One-session workshop for anyone wanting to know more about Aspergers syndrome. Presented by **Margot Nelles** from the Aspergers Association and Aspergers et al. April 21, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: Six-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. April 21, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Couple Communication: A four-session group for couples wanting to learn communication skills, April 22, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 7-9 p.m.

Stepping Stones for Women: Creating Your Journey Toward Employment: One-session workshop for women looking to enter or re-enter the workforce, April 28, 7 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. No charge. Registration required.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing their life skills. Topics include: building self-esteem, time, stress management, assertiveness, April 29, 7 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

100th ANNIVERSARY

The Stashover-Slipia Congregation is 100 years old in Toronto in 2010. Call to find out how you can support, reconnect and help us celebrate, 416-789-1333 or Stashover100@bell.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or to drive seniors to medical appointments. **Lysa Springer,** 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

Circle of Care Hospice and Jewish Hospice are looking for volunteers. 30-hour training program begins April 12. **Mindy Shiel,** mshiel@circleofcare.com or 416-635-2900, ext. 467.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Registration open for Temple Emanu-El spring series. Mondays 2-4 p.m. April 12, "Everything You Know is Wrong – Leaps in Scientific Thought," with **Bob McDonald,** host of CBC Radio's *Quirks and Quarks*. $40 per series, $10 per lecture. 416-449-3880.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Hope Through Healing, a spousal bereavement group for 55+ meets Wednesdays, April 14-June 9, 10-11:30 a.m., Circle of Care. Call **Rebecca Sorokin,** 416-635-2900, ext. 462.

BROADWAY

Broadway from the Bimah features **Marvin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** and 45-piece symphony orchestra, May 27, 7:30 pm., Adath Israel Congregation. For tickets, **Sheila,** 416-635-5340 or sheila@adathisrael.com

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for a variety of learning opportunities. "Hero or Villain? The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn," with **Paul Franks,** April 15-May 6, 9:30-11 a.m. Prosserman JCC. Men and women welcome.

"Nidah: In-depth Exploration of Laws of Family Purity," with **Rivka Sonenberg,** Mondays May 3 and 10, 9:45 a.m., hosted at 543 Coldstream Ave.

"How Can We Sing a Song of God in a Foreign Land? Destruction and Healing After the Destruction of the Temple," with **Hindy Najman,** July 15, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. Men and women welcome. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca, www.mekorot.ca.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 32

THIRD SEDER

Winchevsky Centre's third seder, April 10, 4:30 p.m., Sala Caboto, Villa Columbo, 40 Playfair Ave. $45 adults; $25 children 3-6; $30 children 7-12, students and unwaged. Features musician **David Wall** and Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. www.winchevskycenetre.org or 416-789-5502.

PARSHAH OF THE WEEK

Lodger Centre Congregation holds the parshah of the week, Wednesdays, with **Judy Hazan,** 7:30 p.m, open to all, no charge.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl,** 416-635-6317, or **Sheila,** 416-665-3333.

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC, April 8, 1:30 p.m., "The ABCs of Fraud, Identity Theft, Telemarketing and More." 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Friendly atmosphere and beautiful surroundings, Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; Sunday dance, April 25, 7-10 p.m. with live music. Lunch and laughter, April 12, noon, dairy lunch provided. **Valerie,** 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. for discussion group, Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-9444.

BETEL CENTRE, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Bingo Bonanza, April 7, 1-3 p.m., two cards $1.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

April 28, 10-11:30 a.m. Open house, no charge. Join in and experience Israeli and international folkdance led by **Teme Kernerman** and **Sandy Starkman,** Room 211.

Inquire about new programs at the culinary arts studio including New Israeli Salads, with **Chef Ellen Grossman,** April 12; 9:30-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3:30 p.m. For information or to register, ext. 4235.

Check out family programs including Sports with Jay, Shabbat Party, and prenatal classes, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein,** 416-968-0200.

Stars on Spadina, April 26, 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. $180 includes dessert reception. Tax receipt for maximum allowable.Tickets: in person at the Miles Nadal JCC, by calling ext. 0 or at www.mnjcc.org.

Hebrew Language Classes beginning in April @ the J – Reading Israeli Newspapers: Thursdays, April 8-May 20; Intermediate Hebrew: April 8-May 20; Hebrew for Beginners A & B: Thursdays, April 12-May 31. Info: jewishlife@mnjcc.org, ext. 154, www.mnjcc.org.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

WOMEN'S DAY: Na'amat Toronto recently held an International Women's Day event. Speakers were Rabbi Tina Grimberg, of Congregation Darchei Noam (seated left), and Michele Sankar, a teacher and mother who converted to Judaism (seated right). Standing from left are Gerry Anklewicz, Na'amat Toronto membership co-chair; Doris Wexler-Charow, president, Na'amat Toronto council; and Reesa Karch, Na'amat Toronto program chair. ***[Mollie Rothman photo]***

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Cresichman, Nathan	March 11/10	3560 Bathurst St
Kaplan, Israel	March 14/10	20 Sunnycrest Rd
Lunarsky, Louis	March 13/10	54 Jonathan Gate
Bork, Barbara	March 13/10	440 Water St
Haim, Corey	March 10/10	
Kisilevskaya, Sofia	March 15/10	Private
Lupka, Joseph	March 15/10	Private
Wolf, Arthur Morris	March 13/10	Private
Ankiewicz, Aron	March 18/10	35 Hove St
Svirski, Nahama	March 19/10	
Blumenow, Esther	March 18/10	550 Cummer Ave
Soto, Armond	March 19/10	159 Laratt Lane
Herman, Minnie	March 20/10	100 Upper Madison
Ogrudek, Jacob	March 21/10	256 Doris Ave

HEBREW BASIC

Irene Orenbach	Mar 14/10	675 Roselawn Ave

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Rachel Schur	Mar 5/10	645 Castlefield Ave
Edith Propp	Mar 7/10	343 Clark Avenue W
Gloria Richmond	Mar 9/10	33 Lower Village Gt
Ida Chaikow Jacobs	Mar 8/10	3560 Bathurst St
Dr. Ted Glazier	Mar 9/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Selma Zimmerman	Mar 8/10	1620 Bonhouse Cir
Eddie Stossel	Mar 8/10	64 Tanbark Cres
Galina Krinberg	Mar 10/10	205 Hilda Ave
Jack Kirk	Mar 10/10	85 Skymark Dr
Laura Kirk	Mar 13/10	85 Skymark Dr
Saul Zuker	Mar 12/10	128 Ava Rd
John Krongold	Mar 11/10	414 Glengarry Ave
Sidney Pollock	Mar 13/10	10 Prue Ave
Hena Nerenberg	Mar 12/10	349 St. Clair Ave W
Moonie Rotenberg	Mar 12/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Hetty Gerofsky	Mar 13/10	2 Buchan Crt
Rae Magder	Mar 15/10	645 Castlefield Ave
Betty Kadysiewicz	Mar 17/10	7 Amos Cres
Benjamin Ranot	Mar 17/10	850 Steeles Ave W
Sarah Polgar	Mar 5/10	914 Bathurst St
Max Gerbloom	Mar 17/10	541 Finch Ave W

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Coast to Coast

Hadassah leader's killer sentenced

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — The 10-year jail sentence handed down last week for the man who killed Terry Schwarzfeld a little more than a year ago was met with disappointment and resignation by her friends and family.

Schwarzfeld – a prominent member of the Ottawa Jewish community who had just been elected national president of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO and who was executive director of Ottawa's largest synagogue, Agudath Israel – was beaten to death Feb. 28, 2009, while vacationing in Barbados with her husband, son and daughter-in-law.

She and her daughter-in-law, Luana Cotsman, were attacked while walking on a beach where they had often walked before. Both were knocked unconscious after being hit with a piece of wood. Cotsman regained consciousness and made a slow recovery, but Schwarzfeld, 60, later died in an Ottawa hospital after being airlifted back to Canada.

Last week, a judge in Barbados sentenced Curtis Joel Foster, a 25-year-old with eight previous criminal convictions, to 10 years in prison, much less than the 16 to 20 years sought by the prosecution.

Terry Schwarzfeld

Originally charged with murder, Foster, who had eight prior criminal convictions, pleaded guilty in January to manslaughter. Prosecutors said they accepted the plea because they were convinced a jury would not find that he intended to kill Schwarzfeld.

In sentencing him, Justice Randall Worell dismissed reports of Foster's difficult life and reported psychiatric problems, stating that others have risen above such circumstances. He was unable to determine that the murder had been premeditated, however, and thus pronounced the longest sentence he felt the law allowed.

In a 1,600-word victim impact statement submitted to the court before sentencing, Schwarzfeld's husband, Stephen Cotsman, said on behalf of the family that "we have truly lost an amazing person — someone who was larger than life and beloved by many… That is why our grief is so deep, so cutting and why it is so very hard for all of us to get on with our lives."

The *Ottawa Citizen* quoted Schwarzfeld's sister, Joan Schwarzfeld, as saying that she and other family members are displeased with the sentence, but that "it doesn't change anything, really."

Debbie Baylin, a longtime friend of Schwarzfeld's who worked with her on many Hadassah-WIZO projects over the years, agreed. "Terry's death made such a hole in so many people's lives that no sentence could affect how we all feel about what we lost. They could have sentenced him to 50 years and it wouldn't have made any difference. No sentence would have seemed fair," she said.

Haddasah-WIZO national honorary vice-president Toby Yan added: "Nothing is going to bring her back. I think what they did was the best they could in terms of getting him put away for awhile. They went for manslaughter because they didn't think they could convict him of murder, and it is also over with, which is good. It has been drawn out long enough, but they did get him and they charged him and he will be in prison."

Charles Leacock, Barbados' director of public prosecutions, has filed a notice to appeal the sentence, though no date has been set for the appeal.

The Canadian Jewish news
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(just West of Girouard) 514-485-6464
NEW: Chaussures Naot, 3941 Rue St Denis 514-845-7463

Spring temperatures have arrived, and it is now time to get ready for the new 2010 Spring Beauty Collection. Start this spring by treating yourself to a facial, either in a salon or do one at home. Chilled yogurt can be used as a mask to restore your skin's PH balance. For extra hydration add a teaspoon of honey. A natural look is all about flawless skin! It is important to keep the skin looking its best. Daily cleansers and moisturizers with an SPF help to protect harmful and aging effects of the skin. Make sure to use moisturizing lotions for the body as well.

Spring makeup this season is bursting with colour! Pretty pinks, lilacs and turquoise are in and hot! Black liner is replaced with dark navy and the old browns are taken over by emerald green and royal blues. Long lashes are big! You can achieve this with applying many coats of mascara or permanent false eyelashes applied individually. Eyebrows should be well groomed. Vibrant red lipsticks are classy for this spring. A bit of blush applied to the apples of the cheeks create that flushed look. Bronzer, of course, is still hot but should be applied lightly. Pink lips and red lips are making statements.

Hairstyles are asymmetrical, and we are seeing a lot of loose and one-sided buns, as well as long braids pulled over one shoulder. Long waves are still hot! Heavy bangs are strong, and ponytails are making a statement. Red hair turns heads this season. Shades of titanium orange, auburn and strawberry blond certainly stand out in the crowd.

HAIR

Continuing its dedication to issues affecting women, this year **Moroccanoil** will make a donation to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, in support of life-saving research. The promotional kit features a custom-designed reusable beach bag sporting the pink ribbon logo and pink handles, in honour of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, and includes one **Moroccanoil** Moisture Repair Shampoo, one **Moroccanoil** Moisture Repair Conditioner, one **Moroccanoil** Treatment and one **Moroccanoil** Professional Paddle Brush.

The award-winning signature product of **Moroccanoil**'s fabulous hair-care line has lightened up a little! **Moroccanoil** introduces **Moroccanoil** Light, boasting the same shiny, smooth, miraculous results as the original formula, but in a lighter consistency, perfect for fine and fair coloured hair.

With the variety of chemical and colour hair services offered these days, protecting your scalp is essential to prevent dryness, irritation and discomfort. To ensure your scalp is at its healthiest at all times, **Moroccanoil** presents Dry-No-More Professional Scalp Treatment. It fixes the root of the problem while creating an environment for fuller, healthier hair.

When it comes to scalp issues, the focus tends to be on dryness, but excessive oil production is of equal concern. Recognizing this, **Moroccanoil** presents Oil-No-More Scalp Treatment. Formulated with ginger oil, astringents and purifying properties, Oil-No-More works deep down to help control oil production.

Lancome Créme de Brilliance Lip Glosses

Travelling has never been more complicated than today. With strict restrictions on liquids and container sizes, packing carry-on luggage can be a real hassle. Helping you travel light, **Moroccanoil** introduces the new Travel Kit. The Travel Kit includes one **Moroccanoil** Treatment, one **Moroccanoil** Hydrating Styling Cream, one **Moroccanoil** Moisture Repair Shampoo and one **Moroccanoil** Moisture Repair Conditioner.

Introducing some of **Kevin.Murphy**'s bestselling products! Born.Again Wash is an ultra-rich moisturizing shampoo for extremely tortured and chemically dehydrated hair. Be sure to try Hair.Curlers. Finally, the curlers I have always wanted but could never find. These curlers have tiny hair-like ridges that feed hair evenly onto the surface.

To keep you on trend and looking ultra chic, the **LaCoupe** Volume Collection introduces three new products that give boost to your locks' needs without the bust to your wallet. **LaCoupe** Hair Plumper leave-in volumizing cream brings fullness without weighing hair down. **LaCoupe** Voluptress cream gel styler puts full body, shine and hold from one container, and **LaCoupe** Flexible Fix finishing spray keeps hair full and in place without making your style statuesque.

Schwarzkof Professional presents a new advanced formula to their best-selling hair-care range, BC Hairtherapy. **Schwarzkopf** Professional has also added new products and a brand new range to the BC Hairtherapy line, called BC Hairtherapy Volume Boost.

STACEY'S TIPS

SPA AND SKIN CARE

One of the most effective ways to keep skin looking strong, healthy, and young is to keep it hydrated. Without water, skin is less able to naturally and effectively prevent and correct the premature signs of aging. The solution to premature aging caused by dehydration? Hydrationist, **Estée Lauder**'s most powerfully hydrating crème to date. Instantly, thirsty, dehydrated skin is quenched with new and exclusive Bio-Mimetic Water to deliver immediate moisture lasting 24 hours.

Everyday facial movements from talking, frowning, squinting and laughing can all contribute to the progressive deepening of expression lines. **Estée Lauder** scientists have developed the most advanced, comprehensive, targeted wrinkle-filling treatment to date. Perfectionist [CP+] Targeted Deep Wrinkle Filler smooths, fills and helps reduce the look of even deepest wrinkles on contact. Perfectionist [CP+] Targeted Deep Wrinkle Filler is an all-in-one concentrated treatment that immediately reduces the look of all types of deep lines – including smile lines, deep creases across the forehead, between brows, and around the eyes and lips.

Harnessing the power of high performance and skin-caring ingredients, **Estée Lauder** Research brings you its most advanced and effective age-defying foundation to date. The New Resilience Lift Extreme Lifting Makeup SPF15 offers all-day continuous moisture, ultra-radiance, incredible lift and exceptional spreadability – all in a new fluid formula that is ideal for maturing skin.

The first anti-aging solution that acts by stimulating DNA repair at the cellular level, **Lise Watier**'s Résist-Age Métamulsion Serum has, less than a year after being launched, positioned itself as the landmark in the realm of modern cosmetology. The line continues to expand and now includes a day crème and night crème. Résist-Age Youth-Extender Day Fluid and Résist-Age Reenergizing Night Crème were developed from a savvy blend of powerful ingredients unearthed from the latest findings in the cosmetological industry.

More than 80 per cent of the causes of aging skin are linked to the environment and lifestyle. **Yves Rocher** has created Cure Solutions, a skin-care line to counter these external factors. These include changes in seasons, polluted environments, stress, fatigue and overwork. This powerhouse skin-care line is suitable for women of all ages, because these external factors begin to act on the skin very early on.

Prevage announces a major renovation. **Elizabeth Arden**'s bestselling anti-aging formula with acclaimed antioxidant Idebenone takes anti-aging skin care to a new level of performance and innovation with Prevage Face Advanced Anti-aging Serum, which now does even more to help prevent visible signs of aging. This new formula delivers a blend of environmental defenders and Idebenone, a highly effective environmental protectant that protects skin from environmental assaults.

Consisting of 100 per cent natural and organically grown ingredients, **Heiko** Ultra Protection SPF creams are the first natural product sunscreen approved in the Canadian market. These dermatologically tested products are ideal for people of any age and are safe for all skin types, offering essential protection for the whole family.

Continued on page 30

Spring Fashion & Beauty

NAOT known for comfort and style

Compiled by CJN Staff

NAOT Footwear has opened a new location in Thornhill, Ont., adding to the two it already operates in the Greater Toronto Area. The new store is at 1102 Centre St.W., west of Bathurst Street.

The company has also launched a testimonial site on Facebook – The Face of NAOT – where people can comment. NAOT will reward the most original entry with a pair of shoes, on a quarterly basis.

"We know fans of our footwear are hooked from the moment they put on their first pair and realize they're the most comfortable yet stylish shoes they've ever owned," NAOT president Corinne Lissoos says. "This is their chance to share with us their testimonials and feedback."

Folowing its "footprint in the sand" concept, the NAOT design ergonomically supports the foot the same way that sand fills in spaces as you leave your footprints on the beach. The unique signature innersole footbed, made of multiple layers of ergonomically designed material, can be easily removed for cleaning, or replaced entirely to extend the life of the shoes.

The new 2010 spring line features open- and closed-toes favourites, in several styles, colours and textures.

NAOT also has stores in Montreal and Calgary and NAOT shoes can be found at Brown's Shoe Shops, Capezio Shoes and Walking on a Cloud.

Visit www.naot.ca to view the new spring catalogue.

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Continued from page 28

Nivea takes luxury to a whole new level with the introduction of **Nivea** Crème Oil Body Washes. Choose from Diamond Beauty, Pearl and Beauty or Sensual Beauty. These luxurious body washes soothe and moisturize skin with a superior caring formula that lathers into a velvety creamy foam.

Nivea For Men's new Active 3 Shower, Shampoo & Shave offers the convenient and unique three in one combination. The versatility of **Nivea For Men** Active 3 is based on the formula that perfectly fulfils three purposes at the same time: gently cleanses the skin, mildly and effectively shampoos the hair, and creates the ideal foam texture for a smooth shave for the entire body.

The **Lancôme** laboratories have shed new light on events leading to the appearance of cellulite: the unsightly appearance of dimpled skin is caused not only by fat storage within adipocyte cells, but also the multiplication of these cells, followed by their migration to the skin's surface. The Slimissime 360° complex has been developed to act at each stage of this spiral in order to combat the appearance of existing cellulite and minimize its recurrence.

This season, temperatures are rising and so are SPF levels, as awareness of the sun's harmful effects becomes a hot topic of conversation. How much SPF is enough, and how does a high SPF level protect better over a lower number? After a hugely successful launch last spring of the acclaimed 70 SPF Cream, **dermaglow** has introduced 70 SPF Body Mist and helps to explain why these high-protection products are vital in today's climate. Lightweight in texture, **dermaglow** 70 SPF Body Mist is readily absorbed and has a sheer, non-greasy feel unlike competitive high SPF products.

BEAUTY SHOP

By Stacey Michaels and Francine Birken

Dedicated in memory of Carol Wise.

FRANCINE'S TIPS

CONCEALER, FOUNDATION AND BRONZERS

Before you begin to conceal, make sure to moisturize your face and the under-eye area. Finding the perfect shade of concealer is not easy. Try mixing two shades together, one that is a half of a shade lighter and one that is a shade darker. The lighter shade should be used to hide any flaws and to highlight areas such as the bridge of the nose and chin. The darker shade should be used to conceal blemishes and dark circles. Thick concealers are great for covering pimples but should not be used for the under-eye area. Concealer for dark circles should be light and hydrating.

Elizabeth Arden presents New Ceramide Skin Smoothing Concealer, a product that goes beyond hiding dark circles and minimizing the appearance of fine lines to smooth, help firm and tone the look of delicate under-eye skin for a brighter and younger look. It contains vitamins A, C and E.

Spring is the best time to change your foundation colour. Your skin has different needs depending on the temperature and foundation helps you achieve it. Try and test foundation before you purchase it, as the colour in the bottle may not match the colour of your skin. Foundation should always look natural, so make sure to blend it well into the neckline.

MAC introduces Mineralize Foundation SPF15, a luxurious solid cream compact with liquid mineral infusion. This uniquely textured foundation delivers ultimate hydration while revitalizing the look of dull and dry areas.

Don't hide your complexion; enhance it with **Revlon** ColorStay Mineral Finishing Powder. This powder provides a soft all-over lift of colour that diffuses flaws and minimizes shine. It can be worn alone or applied after ColorStay Mineral Foundation, ColorStay Mineral Mousse Makeup or ColorStay Makeup. It's long wearing, for up to 16 hours.

Lancôme presents Oscillation PowerFoundation, the first micro-vibrating mineral foundation for pixel precise complexion. It leaves the skin looking luminous and feeling comfortable. With an SPF 21, it has a lasting power of more than 14 hours.

Nothing is more seductive then the look of sun-kissed skin. Nothing feels more natural than pure, microlight minerals. **Elizabeth Arden** brings you Pure Finish Mineral Bronzing Powder in Medium. Like Pure Finish Mineral Makeup SPF20, it contains minerals, mica, seawater complex, aloe and vitamins A, C and E.

EYE MAKEUP AND BLUSH

Eye shadows this spring are bold, flashy and are making a statement on the runway, but don't get intimidated – there is a wide range of colours and a variety of shadow textures for all.

Aaron De Mey creates Ô My Rose especially for Lancôme. From sensual coral to deep aqua green, a breath of fresh air enlivens **Lancôme**'s latest makeup collection. Pop'N'Palette is an intense eye-colour quartet available in two colours, petroleum shades to create dark green smoky eyes and a copper quartet to make eyes truly sparkle.

The **Estée Lauder Michael Kors** Very Hollywood Color Collection features two modern-classic looks: Bel Air Beige – beige and coral palette made up of a smoky eye – and Rodeo Pink – new shades of vibrant raspberry tones of bright and defined eyes. Eye Pencils are available in Sepia and Film Noir.

Pick a mood, decide on a demeanour and then mix it up for an authentic emotional Spring Colour Forecast by **MAC**. Featured in four parts on four displays, each collection has a full range of shadows, lipsticks, lip gloss, blush, nail lacquers and mascaras.

Clarins Fragrance Group is proud to introduce the Blue Collection – Regard Stellaire – Blue Rhapsody by Thierry Mugler. This palette look allows flexible effects and infinite possibilities. There are various shades of blue available in cream and airy powder textures with a matte, satiny or iridescent finish, as well as Eye Sculpt- Eye Liner, an innovative formula that shapes and defines the eye hook.

Available in limited-edition format, **Lise Watier** introduces Eye Duo Vintage Moderne Eyeshadows. Each practical jewel compact contains a duet chosen for retro-chic appeal. For the eye-defined look, try **Lise Watier** Métal Liner Bronze Limited Edition. Enriched with coppery micro-glitter, Métal Liner adds drama to every eye colour.

Lancôme now creates Hypnôse Drama, mascara that provides instant lash volume, and mesmerizing hypnotic eyes. The wand's shapely curve along with the mascara's lash-coating formula ensures that each and every lash – even the shortest lashes – becomes magnified.

For that healthy dewy finish, **Elizabeth Arden** introduces Ceramide Cream Blush, a cream that glides and blends evenly, bringing a natural-looking glow to your cheeks. It's long lasting and available in three shades, nectar, pink and plum.

Sunny weather makes us want to put our freshest face forward! **Lise Watier** Vintage Moderne Illuminating Face Powder Limited Edition is the best friend a girl could have to refresh a dull complexion. It gives skin a subtle golden-beige glow.

LIPS AND NAILS

Your lips may have taken a beating during the cold temperatures. Prime and treat your lips with **Elizabeth Arden**'s new Advanced Lip-Fix Cream. Worn alone or as a perfect primer for lipstick, this formula seals in moisture to help soften and replenish dry lips.

Lancôme recently launched L'Absolu Crème de Brillance, the first infinite care cream gloss that is available in a range of sensual colours.

The **Estée Lauder Michael Kors** Very Hollywood Lip Sheen SPF15 and Lip Gloss in Hollywood Gold add the perfect finishing touch to your pout. This gloss can be worn alone or over the Lip Sheen SPF 15 for more luminous lips.

Now that your entire face looks amazing, what about your nails? Treat yourself to a manicure and pedicure – the colours are amazing and your hands and toes are more visible then ever. **Nicole by OPI** offers 14 exclusive new shades for spring at Walmart stores. The **Nicole** Walmart Nail Lacquer shades are bold, vibrant and perfect for accessorizing all the hottest new spring looks.

FRAGRANCE

Discover the fragrance you love with a refreshing new twist. Pretty eau de cologne splash by **Elizabeth Arden** Limited Edition offers the fresh, spirited bouquet of this season. It's the perfect way to celebrate the bright, lively, mood for spring.

The New Limited Edition Pure White Linen Eau de Toilette by **Estée Lauder** carries on that tradition of taking us to a perfect, sunny spring day. This fragrance was created for those who love Pure White Linen but prefer a lighter, softer scent.

Eat healthy, head to the gym and take a walk, and enjoy the prettiest time of year. Dress up and put your best face forward!

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ON BELLAIR AT CUMBERLAND, ADJACENT TO SUBWAY ENTRANCE

Blue Mountain spa offers visitors year-round pampering

Spa Life
By KATHRYN KATES

A getaway to Blue Mountain in Collingwood, Ont., isn't just about a winter ski trip – the Westin Trillium House Blue Mountain and the Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain have teamed up to offer visitors an all-year-round pampering and luxurious destination experience.

Mylisa Henderson, director of marketing and sales and co-owner of Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain, says the spa has had more than 135,000 visitors since opening in December of 2006.

Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain offers a true wellness experience, including hot baths, cold plunge pools, sauna, and eucalyptus steam room and relaxation areas. Henderson says it is truly rewarding to your body if you go through the sequence, which includes warming up your body for 10 minutes in the baths, sauna or steam room, cooling your body with a cold-water plunge, and then going into one of the relaxation rooms. You can repeat the experience all day and into the evening. The wellness benefits include improving your circulation.

"We have a staff of about 25 – operations and guest service agents, and an inventory of about 45 registered massage therapists," says Henderson. "We see ourselves as a nature spa, so our decorum here is very rustic, yet contemporary. We have used a lot of the Scandinavian red colour with deep browns and greys. The 13 treatment rooms are off-white with rustic wood panelling on the walls.

"We offer our guests Swedish massage as well as hot stone therapy. If you have an extended health plan, you can get a receipt for your service here. For massage, they use non-allergenic oils. We retail Akassa, an Alberta-based body product line."

The spa caters to those 19 years of age and over, most of the guests being from 40 to 60. Its clientele is about 65 per cent women – girls' getaways have proven popular. As well, the spa is often visited by couples for a romantic retreat. Forty per cent of its guests are day trippers living within a two-hour drive. Sixty per cent of Scandinave Spa's clientele spend the night at the Blue Mountain resort area.

"We have a great package with the Westin Trillium House, where you stay overnight and then come over to the Scandinave and enjoy the Scandinavian bath experience and lunch. Guests can upgrade their package to include a massage treatment as well," says Henderson.

Henderson wants visitors to Scandinave to walk across the spa's bridge and escape for the day into an environment that is completely different than any other spa experience in Ontario because it is a retreat back to nature. She says that the outdoor experience – whether it's snowing, rainy or sunny doesn't really matter – is always an escape from everyday life. The spa would like guests to embrace nature and the idea of calming the mind and relaxing the body, and yet feeling rejuvenated when they leave.

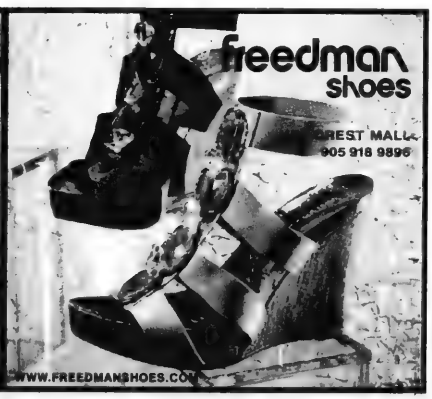
The Westin Trillium House, at the base of Blue Mountain, is the perfect spot to continue the benefits of relaxation after a day at Scandinave. The folks at trendy Oliver & Bonacini Café Grill, located in the Westin Trillium House, say they can always tell when a diner has just been to the Scandinave Spa, because they look so very relaxed, which makes for a leisurely dining experience.

All 220 spacious, contemporary guest suites boast the famous Westin Heavenly beds – and they are out of this world. Many of the suites have great views of the mountain and/or the bustling Village at Blue, chock-full of restaurants and stores.

The resort offers the Westin Kids Club Discovery for younger guests, which comes in handy when mom and dad want to visit Scandinave. There is a business centre, fitness area, a family Plunge Aquatic Centre and underground valet parking – which makes life easier if you are hauling ski equipment or golf clubs. Recreation in and around the Westin Trillium House includes skiing, golfing nearby, hiking and swimming.

To book your Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain/Westin Trillium House Blue Mountain package, call 705-443-8080, or 866-837-4192, or visit westin.com/bluemountain. For more information about Scandinave Spa Blue Mountain, call 705-443-8484 or 877-988-8484, or visit www.scandinaveblue.com.

The Scandinave Spa at Blue Mountain. *[K.Kates photo]*



Stubborn, determined and walking again

By ADRIANNE FITCH
Special to The CJN

VANCOUVER — Phil Switzer, a Vancouver radiologist who sees cancer on a daily basis, often has the difficult role of breaking bad news to patients. One wintry afternoon last year, he found himself in a new role. The mass on the MRI screen was his own – a tumour in his spinal cord.

Given the dangerous location of the tumour and difficulty of removal, Switzer faced the possibility of being paralyzed from the waist down. But months later, he was back on his feet again, seeing patients and resuming his favourite activities of bicycling, skiing and golf.

The story of Switzer's surgery, rehabilitation and recovery can give hope to spinalcord-injury patients worldwide. It speaks to the strength of the human spirit, the value of support and the unique perspective of the doctor as patient. It also testifies to the incredible strides made in spinal cord research.

On April 25, precisely two years after his surgery, Switzer will be honoured at Canadian Friends of Hebrew University's annual fundraising gala in support of spinal cord research, at the Vancouver Convention Centre. Co-sponsored by CFHU, the University of British Columbia and the Rick Hanson Foundation, the dinner will be hosted by Prof. Menahem Ben Sasson, president of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Prof. Stephen Toope, president of UBC, and Rick Hanson, a paraplegic athlete and an activist for people with spinal cord injuries.

Switzer said a gradual drop in his athletic performance was his first indication that something was wrong. However, he just assumed he was getting old. "I don't pay much attention to my own symptoms, which is typical for doctors."

More symptoms appeared, such as numbness in his abdomen and a need to urinate frequently. Blaming the bladder issues on his prostate, Switzer scheduled himself for prostate surgery. He also scheduled an MRI on his knee.

Things came to a head two weeks before the planned surgery. During a ski weekend in Whistler, Switzer discussed his symptoms with his friend Barry Tessler, a neurologist. Tessler concluded the problems were neurological, and much more serious than an enlarged prostate or poor co-ordination.

The MRI, changed to examine Switzer's spine instead of his knee, revealed a tumour in the centre of his spinal cord.

"I thought I may not walk again when I saw that tumour," said Switzer. "Because of its location, any wrong movement with the surgery could cause permanent severe damage." Before surgery, he went to the gym to get in the best shape possible.

"Can I move my legs?" were Switzer's first words to his wife after the seven-hour procedure. "I had limited movement but could not feel anything from the waist down," Switzer said. "The surgeon told me it would take two years to know what return of function I would have."

Switzer is quick to acknowledge the support of his family. His wife, Diane, was constantly by his side and his children, who live outside of the province, made two trips each to assist in their father's recovery.

"I was much more aggressive for my own rehabilitation than most patients," he said. "The doctors felt I was a difficult patient, trying too hard, pushing the system."

Switzer's determination paid off, as he progressed from wheelchair, to walker, to elbow crutches, to two canes, and finally to one cane. After seven weeks, he was able to walk out of GF Strong Rehabilitation Centre unassisted.

Switzer continued pushing himself at home, working with a physiotherapist and eventually a personal trainer. His daily walks were so vital to him that neither rain, darkness nor his own appearance could discourage him.

Though mostly back to normal physically, Switzer still has limited sensation from the waist down. Due to impaired bladder function, he makes sure to stay close to a bathroom – or bushes – at all times.

On a professional level Switzer, who performs about seven breast biopsies a day, feels more empathy toward his patients. "Before doing a biopsy, I always tried to hold the patient's hand, and I do that even more now. I think it's really important not only to do the procedure but to make the patient feel she is human and not just a specimen."

Occasionally, Switzer tells his patients about the tumour in his spine, and advises them to take things one day at a time.

"There's nothing you can do about the situation you're in. What you can control is how you deal with yourself on an emotional and spiritual level. If you don't have the right emotional attitude, you can not do the physical."

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Return to Dignity:
Protecting Holocaust-Era Mass Graves from Desecration

Meet Meylakh Sheykhet, the man who has been working tirelessly and almost single-handedly to protect the mass graves of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish men, women and children who were murdered by the Nazis in the "Holocaust By Bullets" in Western Ukraine (formerly Galicia).
The ancient Jewish cemetery in Sambor (Sambir), Ukraine, on whose ground lies the mass grave of thousands of Jews, lies under an imminent and dire threat of desecration.

Hear the story of Sambor and those of other mass graves and cemeteries.

Find out what you can do to help in this crucial initiative.

Date: Saturday, April 10, 2010
Time: Shabbat services commence at 9 a.m.; presentation at 11:15 a.m
Featuring Meylakh Sheykhet, international bureau director of the Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union in Lviv,
and Mark Freiman, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress
Location: Shaarei Shomayim Congregation – Main sanctuary,
470 Glencairn Avenue, Toronto, 416-789-3213

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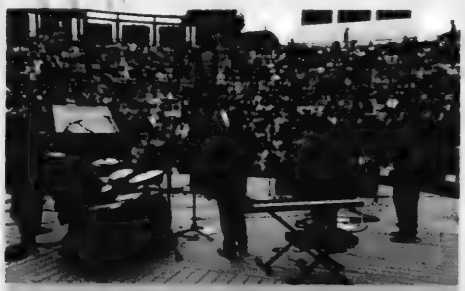
For more information about the scholarship, reservations, sponsorship or advertising opportunities, please contact Diabetes Hope Foundation by phone at 905.670.0557 or email us at info@diabeteshopefoundation.com

And now for something completely different: **HEEBONICS**

Ester Klimitz aims to bring Yiddish to young Jews



The UJA Federation Committee for Yiddish holds various events, including an annual concert, to promote Yiddish culture.

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Ester Klimitz always loved Yiddish. As a child, it was her link to her parent's past. As a teenager, it was a comfort in a foreign world. And now, at 29 years old, it's a way for Klimitz, the co-ordinator of the UJA Federation Committee for Yiddish, to keep a culture alive.

"It's our ancestors' language. I consider myself very lucky that I speak Hebrew and Yiddish," said Klimitz, who became the co-ordinator of the committee about half a year ago.

"It's not common these days for a younger person to speak and understand [Yiddish]. I'm not delusional. Eventually [the language] won't be around at all... but the culture, and everything Yiddish has given us outside the language, will never die."

Klimitz originally learned Yiddish from her grandmother and parents, who were from Russia and Lithuania.

She started learning the language formally at Bialik Hebrew Day School in Grade 8, when she immigrated to Canada from Israel. In high school, she attended the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, where Yiddish wasn't offered. Undeterred, Klimitz, along with two other students, found a night course through the Toronto District School Board.

"It was difficult to go [after school] from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. There was homework and what not," she said, adding that it was worth the effort

For Klimitz, both Hebrew and Yiddish were more than just languages. They were comforts – something familiar in a strange new society.

"A big part of going to Bialik was the real sadness that came over me when the realization came that I wasn't living in Israel. I was ripped apart from my school, my friends, and moved to a country that was extremely different," she said. "I clung to what was familiar to me. Bialik was the beginning of that. Hebrew was something I knew, I understood... it felt good to be around Jewish kids that understood Hebrew."

But learning Yiddish was about clinging to her past, said Klimitz.

"With Yiddish, I really love the language. We call Yiddish mamaloshen, your mother tongue... It's just a part of my history, of my culture," she said, adding that she taught Yiddish through the Toronto District School Board when she was 16.

"The culture is part of what makes us connected [to other] Jews. If you were Jewish in a shtetl in Ukraine and you, for some reason, had to leave, if you spoke Yiddish, [Jewish communities] immediately knew everything about you."

After Klimitz finished high school, she attended the University of Toronto, where she earned a minor in Jewish studies. At the university, Klimitz took as many Yiddish courses as she could.

"I really enjoyed... reading stories in Yiddish... They teach you so much about Jewish humour," she said, adding that she also learned about the Jewish culture in the Holocaust through her Yiddish-language courses.

For her thesis in one of her classes, Klimitz interviewed an elderly couple who had survived the Holocaust.

"Honestly, they started crying. They talked about how [Yiddish] kept them close to each other and the other people they were with," she said. "To the older generation, [Yiddish] was a way of life. Unfortunately, those generations are passing away."

Through her Yiddish studies and personal experiences, Klimitz realized that the language meant different things to different generations.

"For [the older generation] the connection was their home back in Europe. To the younger generation, if we teach them about it accordingly, [they'll] learn about the connection of the language to all the other aspects of Judaism," she said.

When interviewing for the position of co-ordinator of the committee, Klimitz was worried her Yiddish wouldn't be up to par. She quickly learned that she was wrong.

"When I was interviewed for the job, I was brushing up on Yiddish. I walked in and started speaking and they go, 'We don't understand, we don't' speak Yiddish,'" she said. "There are a few members of the committee who aren't as fluent as I am in Yiddish, they're just passionate about [Yiddish] culture and art."

The committee is a centre point for Yiddish activities in Toronto's Jewish community. Members organize conversation classes, reading circles, an annual summer concert and Sunday morning children's classes. While it has tried in the past, the organization has a hard time involving youth in many of their events. Klimitz is working to change this.

"It's a difficult thing to do. The committee doesn't have young people on it. I found it a very difficult thing to accomplish," she said of youth programming, adding that most Yiddish committee members are over 50. "It seems like they've given up because they've tried for so long and it hasn't worked."

Through her position on the committee, Klimitz is determined to connect younger Jews with the Yiddish language, as well as its stories, theatre, music and culture.

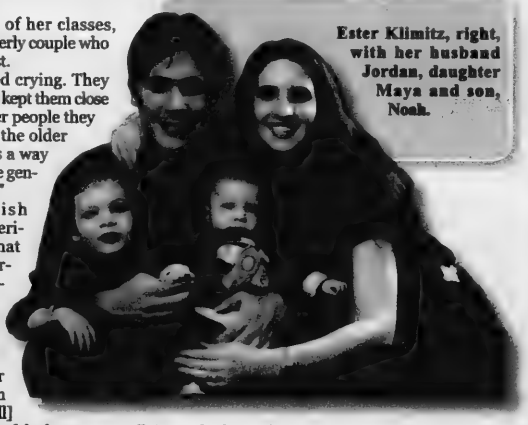
"I've just come on and that's one of my goals, to try something different from a younger point of view," she said, adding that this involves Yiddish events that are mostly in English to slowly integrate youths into the culture.

According to Klimitz, many parents don't teach their children Yiddish because they feel that Hebrew is a more relevant language and that kids can't learn more than two languages.

Klimitz disagrees. Her daughter, who's three, already knows Hebrew and Yiddish.

"Kids are just sponges," she said. "My daughter can learn seven languages at a time if she wanted to."

If your organization or synagogue is planning an event related to Yiddish, the Yiddish committee can be contacted at eklimitz@ujafed.org.



Ester Klimitz, right, with her husband Jordan, daughter Maya and son, Noah.

This Passover, ask a 5th question:
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Breakfast and lunch ideas

By EILEEN GOLTZ
Special to The CJN

Where is it written that Pesach breakfasts have to be boring? I'm all for keeping all non-seder foods simple, but I just won't start my day with anything less than a great meal. In my house, during chol hamoed, that, more often than not, means pancakes.

The following recipes capture the spirit of an everyday breakfast while adhering to the rules of Pesach.

PESACH SWEET CHEESE PANCAKES

1/2 lb. cottage cheese
2 cups matzah meal
1/2 cup sugar
3 eggs
2 cups milk
1 tsp.vanilla extract
sliced strawberries

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients except the strawberries and whisk to combine. The batter will be kind of thick. Drop by spoonfuls on a hot griddle, press down so that pancake can brown well. Turn to brown other side. Serve with sliced berries or syrup or both. Serves 6 to 8.

PEACHY PESACH PANCAKES

2 cups pancake mix
1 egg
1 1/2 cups milk
2 tbsp. packed brown sugar
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 (29 oz.) can sliced peaches, drained very well and chopped (3/4 cup set aside)
3/4 cup whipping (heavy) cream, whipped

In bowl of an electric mixer, beat the whipped cream to medium peaks. Add all of the chopped peaches except the 3/4 cup set aside. Gently fold peaches in by hand and then refrigerate.

In a bowl, combine the pancake mix, egg, milk, brown sugar, 3/4 cup chopped peaches and cinnamon. Beat to combine. Grease a griddle or frying pan, and for each pancake, pour a scant 1/4 cupful onto the hot surface (add additional grease while cooking if necessary). Cook until pancakes are dry around edges. Turn; cook until golden brown. Serve immediately with the peachy whipped cream.

BUTTERMILK BLUEBERRY PESACH PANCAKES

4 eggs separated
6 tbsp. oil
1 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup sugar
2/3 cup matzah meal
1/4 cup potato starch
3/4 to 1 cup blueberries
3 to 5 tbsp.butter or margarine

In the bowl of an electric mixer, beat the egg whites until soft peaks form. Gradually add the sugar and continue beating until you get stiff peaks. Take out 2/3 of the egg whites, and then beat the remaining1/3 of the egg whites with the oil for about 3 minutes. Add the milk to the egg white and oil and beat for another minute. Gradually add the matzah meal and potato starch – don't worry, the batter is supposed to be thick. By hand, fold in the remaining egg whites. Fold in the blueberries.

Heat a griddle or frying pan and melt the butter in pan. Pour a scant 1/4 cup per pancake onto the griddle. Cook until dry around the edges, Turn and cook until golden, 3 to 4 minutes. Makes 8 to 10 pancakes.

PARMESAN ZUCCHINI PANCAKES

4 to 5 small to medium size zucchini, grated
1 small red onion, minced
1 egg, beaten
2/3 cup matzah meal
1 tbsp. fresh oregano, chopped, or 1 tsp. dried
salt and pepper to taste
3 tbsp. olive oil
1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

In a bowl, combine the grated zucchini and onion together in a small bowl. Beat in the egg, matzah meal oregano, salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese. Heat the oil in a large heavy skillet. Drop mixture by tablespoonfuls into the skillet, pressing down with the back of a spoon to flatten the pancakes. Fry the cake, turning once, until crisp and dark golden brown, about 2 to 3 minutes per side.

TOMATO FRITTATA

3 tbsp. olive oil or butter
1 large onion, chopped
1 zucchini, halved, sliced
1 yellow crookneck squash, sliced
2 tsp.minced garlic
8 eggs
3/4 tsp. oregano
1/2 tsp. dill
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup Parmesan or feta cheese
1 tomato, seeded and diced
additional cheese for topping

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add the onion and cook 4 to 5 minutes. Add zucchini, squash and garlic; cook 5 minutes or until zucchini and squash are soft but not mushy.

Set aside the vegetables but leave them in the skillet. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, oregano, dill, salt and pepper. Return the vegetable mixture to the heat and cook for 1 minute at high. Reduce the heat to low and add the egg mixture to the squash mixture in the pan. Do not stir. Sprinkle the cheese on top.

Cover the pan and cook 5 minutes. Uncover the pan and push the egg mixture away from sides of pan with a rubber spatula. Occasionally tip pan and allow the uncooked egg mixture to run to the sides and bottom of pan.

Add a little more butter or oil if you think it's sticking. Top the frittata with the chopped tomato and additional cheese if you like your frittata cheesy and then continue to cook it covered, 5 to 7 minutes or until set, occasionally pushing and tipping eggs. Slide the cooked frittata onto the serving plate and serve immediately. Serves 6.

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Israel worries over possible row with EU

By BARAK RAVID and ANSHEL PFEFFER
Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Inc.

JERUSALEM — Israeli government sources say it's likely that after the current diplomatic crisis and the pressure applied by the United States regarding the Palestinian issue, Israel will soon face an even more serious row with the European Union.

A government source in Jerusalem said this was the concern voiced during a conference call between Foreign Ministry Director General Yossi Gal and seven of Israel's ambassadors in major world capitals.

Gal spoke last Thursday with Israel's ambassador to the United States, Michael Oren, and the envoys to the European Union, London, Rome, the United Nations, Moscow and Paris.

The envoys all said that if U.S. pressure continued, the European Union would go even further in condemning Israel and promoting diplomatic initiatives.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the cabinet Sunday that he saw "no signs of moderation" among the Palestinians. "However, we will maintain a restrained framework of debate and continue our talks with the U.S. administration to move the process of dialogue forward," he said.

Netanyahu said the statements reported in *Yedioth Ahronoth* that an anonymous associate had called Obama "a disaster for Israel" were "improper," adding that "we are trying to move the peace process ahead but also to serve our interests, and we continue to narrow the gaps with the administration."

In a first extensive statement by a senior minister on the diplomatic dispute with the United States, Defence Minister Ehud Barak said continued co-operation with America was necessary to protect Israel's security.

He added, however, that "only we have the exclusive responsibility when it comes to the fate and security of Israel, and only we can determine the matters pertaining to the fate of Israel and the Jewish people. But we must never lose sight of how important these relations are, or the ability to act in harmony and unity with the United States."

Barak termed the recent diplomatic crisis "a disagreement among friends," and emphasized that it is "crucial to remember that the United States is friendly to Israel in a deep and substantial way."

He added that "the components of the agreement [with the Palestinians] are clear. I believe it is our obligation to seek an agreement that sets a clear border within the Land of Israel based on security and demographic considerations, with the Jewish state, the State of Israel, on one side with a solid majority of Jews through the generations, and the demilitarized Palestinian state on the other side with territorial, economic and political viability."

In related developments, on Monday, Barak warned Hamas that Israel would react harshly to any escalation along its border with the Gaza Strip.

"The enemy in the Gaza Strip has paid and will continue to pay a heavy price if it tries to shake the equilibrium along the border," Barak said.

His comments came as he visited troops from the Israel Defence Forces' Golani Brigade who took part in an exchange of fire that killed two of their comrades at the border this weekend.

Netanyahu issued his own warning on Sunday, saying Israel would retaliate against any attack on its citizens or soldiers and Hamas would be held accountable for its actions.

The two deaths in Gaza clashes on Friday have increased concern in the IDF that Hamas is trying to alter the situation along the Gaza Strip border fence, possibly by targeting Israeli patrols.

"Israel's policy of retaliation is forceful and decisive," Netanyahu said during the weekly government meeting in Jerusalem, asserting that Israel would "retaliate decisively against any attack on our citizens and soldiers.

"This policy is well-known and will continue. Hamas and the other terror organizations need to know that they are the ones that are responsible for their own actions," Netanyahu said.

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UN human rights body distributes 'blood libel'

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is being accused of circulating a crude anti-Semitic document reminiscent of medieval blood libels without exercising its discretion to modify it.

During the 13th session of the council, which ended last week, the UN body distributed a document to delegates that had been submitted by EAFORD, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. The document now bears "the UN imprimatur" and was published as a UN document, said Hillel Neuer, executive director of UN Watch.

Hillel Neuer

EAFORD accuses Israel of "ethnic cleansing and massacres" and alleges that "Israeli physicians, medical centres, rabbis and the Israeli army" harvested the organs of "dead, kidnapped and killed Palestinians."

"After Israeli physicians remove organs they think marketable, the soldiers bury the bodies in graves that carry only numbers and no names, or place them in sealed caskets and deliver them under curfew conditions to the families and supervise the digging of the graves and burial," EAFORD stated.

The Swiss-based organization urged the UNHRC to investigate the allegations, which first appeared in a Swedish newspaper. The freelance journalist, Donald Bostrom, subsequently acknowledged he was repeating rumours and could not substantiate the claims.

Neuer said the UNHRC has in the past called on him to modify the language used in written statements and oral submissions, and it should have done no less with the material from EAFORD.

"We submitted six or seven written statements for this session but the UN called us with regard to calling Sudan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Zimbabwe 'regimes.' They didn't like the language and they asked us to change it" to governments, he said.

"I couldn't use the word 'regime,' but they use the most fantastic medieval blood libels," Neuer added.

Neuer pointed out that in addressing the council on agenda item seven, "Palestine," UN Watch was reprimanded by council president Alex Van Meeuwen for saying the Goldstone report adopted "the narrative of a terrorist group," referring to Hamas.

Van Meeuwen said he had called for "dignity and respect in this chamber" and said UN Watch's remarks "cannot be accepted."

"Tolerance and respect should be the key words of the council's work," he added.

Neuer accused the council of a double standard. "When they want to, they call to get a change on written documents that are circulated," he said.

Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber said the UN document circulated "blood libels" similar to one accusing Jews of using human blood in rituals.

"Not only is there no proof, it is a take-off of the historical calumny of the Jewish blood libel, and that this is coming out under the auspices of the United Nations, and from an accredited UN organization, is breathtaking in its shame," he said.

B'nai Brith Canada condemned the Human Rights Council for publishing EAFORD's claims. EAFORD, B'nai Brith noted, was funded by Libya.

"A modern-day blood libel against the Jewish people is sadly now part of the UN's international record," said Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith's executive vice-president.

David Matas, B'nai Brith's senior legal counsel who monitored the Human Rights Council in Geneva, said "We call on the UN to start its much-needed reform by denouncing and rescinding EAFORD's blood libel against Israel and cleansing its Human Rights Council of regimes whose sole purpose to sit on that entity is to shield themselves from the human rights microscope, while at the same time seeking to demonize Israel. The UN must reform or it will cease to exist as a legitimate organization capable of defending the freedoms and human rights that all people of good faith hold dear."

Circulation of the EAFORD statement came as the council adopted five resolutions critical of Israel. Only three resolutions were directed at the rest of the world, targeting North Korea, Myanmar (Burma) and Guinea.

The resolutions against Israel "all turn a blind eye to Hamas and Hezbollah terrorism," Neuer said.

"It is a continuation of the pattern and practice of hypocrisy and injustice and moral inversion. We were promised reform, and instead we're seeing regression," he said.

One of the resolutions adopted by the council was a follow-up to the Goldstone report on last year's war in Gaza, which called on Israel and Palestinians to investigate allegations of violations of human rights law. It also urged establishment of an escrow fund for reparations to Palestinians who suffered loss during the Gaza conflict of December 2008 and January 2009. No such fund is proposed for Israeli victims of Palestinian attacks.

Efforts to reach the UNHRC for comment were unsuccessful.

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Obama aide calms diplomatic waters

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JERUSALEM — A top aide to the U.S. leader said on Sunday that Barack Obama did not give Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu the cold shoulder when the two met in the White House last week.

Obama hosted Netanyahu for official talks on March 23 but did not dine with his visitor and, by keeping the talks closed to the media, also denied Netanyahu the courtesy of a photo-opportunity with him.

This raised questions in blogs and at White House news briefings that it was a deliberately calibrated gesture by the administration to communicate its displeasure with Netanyahu over Israeli housing construction in east Jerusalem, which have stalled peace negotiations with the Palestinians in the form of U.S-mediated indirect talks.

"This was a working meeting among friends. And so there was no snub intended," White House senior adviser David Axelrod told CNN's *State of the Union* news program.

Axelrod noted that the two leaders had met in private for two hours and had better things to do with their time than worry about protocol.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said prior to the leaders' meeting that Israeli construction in east Jerusalem and the disputed West Bank undermines mutual trust.

Axelrod told CNN on Sunday: "This was not about formalities. This was not about a ceremonial meeting. This was a working meeting. We have a deep, abiding interest in Israel's security. And we believe the peace process is essential to that. And we are doing everything we can to move that process forward."

Netanyahu on Sunday also rejected a description of U.S. President Barack Obama as a "disaster" for Israel, a phrase the *Yediot Achronot* newspaper attributed to an anonymous confidant of the premier.

Besides defending Obama, Netanyahu tried to play down tension with Washington over Israeli settlement policy, telling his cabinet that Israel and the United States were "allies and friends."

A statement issued by Netanyahu's office said: "The prime minister emphatically rejects the anonymous quotes about President Obama that a newspaper attributed to one of his confidants, and he condemns them."

To his cabinet, Netanyahu said: "I want to say clearly, these comments are unacceptable to me. They do not come from anyone representing me," he told his cabinet in public remarks.

"The relations between Israel and the United States are those of allies and friends, and are based on tradition spanning many years," he said.

Meanwhile, Axelrod told CNN on Sunday that the United States was making progress in its efforts to find allies to hold the line on Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Axelrod said that at the start of the Obama administration, Iran was united while the world was divided on how best to deal with Iran.

The situation is now reversed, he said, as the world is coming together while Iran itself is divided.

Axelrod added that he was pleased with the co-operation that the Russians have offered and believes Moscow would support fresh penalties against Tehran.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Saturday that punishing Iran even more because of its nuclear program is not the best option, but that step can't be excluded.

Israel Briefs

Building talks frozen

All discussions over new construction in Jerusalem have been frozen, according to reports. Meetings of the interior ministry's regional planning and building committee have been postponed until a management committee to co-ordinate among government ministries on the construction has been established, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The statement followed the approval March 23 of 20 new Jewish homes on the site of the Shepherd Hotel in east Jerusalem. The approval came just hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House. The Shepherd Hotel, located in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, was purchased in 1985 by Irving Moskowitz, a Jewish-American billionaire, for $1 million (US). In a March 24 statement, the Jerusalem Municipality noted that the plan for the site was approved in July 2009, at which time it received a great deal of media attention. The approval, however, was contingent on the payment of certain fees, which were paid on March 15, at which time the local planning councils approval became final. Construction can begin immediately.

Israeli wines win

Seven Israeli wines were recognized in the Bacchus International Wine Competition in Madrid. The ninth edition of the prestigious competition, organized by the Spanish Tasting Union, was held March 12-16 at the Casino de Madrid and attracted more than 80 wine-tasting experts from around the world. Seven Israeli wineries competed with veteran participants from Australia, Chile, France, Italy and Germany, and with others from emerging winemaking countries such as Canada and Brazil. The Israeli brands won four Gold Bacchus awards and three Silver Bacchus awards.

Peres meets Iranian dissident

Israeli President Shimon Peres met with the fiancé of the late Neda Soltan, whose brutal murder during the 2009 Iranian election protests became a symbol for the opposition. "I came to Israel as an ambassador of the Iranian people, as a messenger from the camp of peace," Caspian Makin told Peres during their meeting Monday. Makin had requested the meeting, Peres' office said. "Neda was a progressive person, a freedom fighter, and these traits flowed through her veins. She loved people with every small inch of her soul. Before her murder we spoke a lot about her goals, and we both knew the danger," Makin told Peres. Soltan's killing by Iranian soldiers attempting to quell a protest was caught on video and seen on the Internet and TV around the world. "You can murder a person, but not a spirit," Peres told Makin. "I am glad you gave me the opportunity to express my condolences for your great tragedy, and also mention my great hope for the future."

Clashes at Gaza fence

Israel Defence Forces soldiers shot and killed two Palestinians near the Gaza security fence as they tried to place an explosive device near the border, Palestinian news agencies reported last Friday. The reports said heavy crossfire took place between soldiers and Palestinians near the Kissufim crossing east of Khan Yunis, during which the Palestinians were killed. Earlier in the week, an Israeli soldier was killed by friendly fire on the Gaza border after the IDF received a report of three Palestinians who had crossed the border fence.

– JTA and Ha'aretz

Britain expels Israeli diplomat over 'passport misuse'

By DANNA HARMAN

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said Israel "regretted" Britain's decision last Tuesday to expel an Israeli diplomat over the alleged use of forged British passports by suspected killers of a Hamas commander in Dubai.

"We attribute great importance to our relations with Britain," Lieberman said in a statement from Brussels, where he was meeting with senior European Union officials.

"We hold a number of different and sensitive dialogues with them, and regret the British decision. We have never been given proof that Israel was involved in this affair."

Officials in Jerusalem expressed disappointment with Britain's public response to the matter, with some saying off the record that they saw it as a negative step in the war on terror.

Britain accuses Israel of being involved in the assassination of Hamas arms dealer Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in Dubai in January.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband went before parliament to announce that the five-week investigation by the Serious and Organized Crime Squad into the use of 12 forged British passports had concluded with the finger pointed squarely at Israel. There would be immediate and serious repercussions, he said.

According to several sources, the expelled member was the unassuming head of the Mossad agency in London, who was given two weeks to pack up, take his children out of school, and leave the country.

Fallout from the affair also continued as the British Foreign Office issued a travel advisory to citizens traveling to Israel and the Palestinian territories last Tuesday.

Citing "circumstantial evidence of Israeli involvement in the fraudulent use of British passports," the foreign office warned on its website of the "possibility that your passport details could be captured for improper uses while your passport is out of your control."

Even before Britain's decision to expel the Israeli diplomat, last Tuesday was meant to be an historic occasion in British-Israeli ambassadorial circles as the newly refurbished Israeli Embassy in London was opened.

"It has been a little more historical, and hysterical, than we would have chosen," said Ron Prosor, Israel's ambassador to Britain, at a housewarming party at the embassy last Tuesday.

Only a few hours earlier, Miliband, the expected guest of honour at the embassy event, meticulously planned months ago, announced he would not be attending.

Possibly hoping to calm the waters, Miliband, speaking later in the evening, stressed that this had not been an expulsion of the Israeli diplomat per se, but a request.

"He has been asked to leave, which is not the same as being expelled," Miliband told the Foreign Press Association. "We asked – and the embassy agreed."

The timing of the British announcement came, according to sources, as a surprise to Prosor, who was urgently called out of a formal lunch Monday while visiting Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat and high level guests, to attend to the matter.

"Like any worthwhile friendship, the friendship between Britain and Israel has had its ups and downs. Today, we are experiencing both in one day," he said, noting that this year the two nations would celebrate 60 years of formal diplomatic relations.

The British government, according to Miliband, is in touch with all the countries who were affected by this affair – France, Australia, Germany and Ireland – and all are conducting their own investigations.

Miliband says use of British passports in the Dubai assassination shows disregard for U.K. sovereignty.

Mahmoud al-Mabhouh was killed in January in what Dubai police have said they are 99 per cent certain was a hit by Israel's Mossad spy agency. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied a role in the killing of Mabhouh.

Dubai authorities named 27 alleged members of the team that tracked and killed the Palestinian, and said they used fraudulent British, Irish, French, German and Australian passports to enter and depart from Dubai.

More than half of the people identified as responsible for the killing share the names of foreign-born Israeli nationals.

Miliband told parliament there were compelling reasons to believe Israel was responsible for the misuse of British passports in this case and said he had sought assurances that Israel would not misuse them again.

"Such misuse of British passports is intolerable," Miliband said. "It presents a hazard for the safety of British nationals in the region. It also represents a profound disregard for the sovereignty of the United Kingdom.

"The fact that this was done by a country which is a friend, with significant diplomatic, cultural, business and personal ties to the U.K., only adds insult to injury," he added. "No country or Government could stand by in such a situation.

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Jewish film fest offers 'gems and surprises'

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Expect a glittering array of "gems and surprises" at the 18th annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival, says curator Ellie Skrow.

Viewers will be treated to 93 films from 18 countries, including Canada, Israel, Germany, Poland and the United States at this year's festival, which runs from April 17 to 25.

The lineup was formally unveiled last week at a press conference at Caplansky's Deli on College Street.

Leo Frank

A special series, "People of the Comic Book: The Creators of Superheroes, Graphic Novels & Toons," will celebrate the outsized role Jews played in the history of the comic book genre in the United States.

"Jews basically invented the comic book," Skrow said. "They were the innovators and pioneers."

During the golden age of comic books from roughly 1938 to 1950, Jews loomed large in the industry.

Their contributions will be acknowledged in a series of documentaries and features ranging from *Comic Book Confidential* to *Fritz the Cat*.

Complementing the screenings will be an art exhibition on the connection between Jews and comics at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre.

Paul Buhle, author of *Jews and the American Comics*, will attend the festival, as will Harvey Pekar (*American Splendor*), graphic novelist Ben Katchor and filmmaker Gary Vanden-Bergh, who is currently making a documentary on *Mad* magazine illustrator Will Elder.

Helen Zuckerman, the festival's founder, predicted that the reach of "People of the Comic Book" will extend beyond the Jewish community.

Nuremberg: Its Lesson for Today will get its North American premiere at the festival.

Written and directed by Stuart Schulberg and completed in 1948, the documentary on the 1946 Nuremberg war crimes trial was screened in postwar Germany but suppressed in the United States for political reasons.

Schulberg's daughter, Sandra, and her collaborator, Josh Waletzky, have painstakingly restored the film, a historical document on the rise and fall of the Nazi regime.

The festival will also screen Ben Loeterman's *The People V. Leo Frank*, which is said to be the most comprehensive retelling of the Leo Frank affair in the United States. Frank, a northern businessman living in the deep south, was wrongfully accused of murder and in 1913 became the first and only Jew ever to be lynched on American soil.

The Warner brothers

As usual, there will be a number of Israeli movies at the festival, which will open with *A Matter of Size* and close with *Ajami*, Israel's 2010 Academy Award nominee for best foreign film.

There will be cinematic tributes to an Israeli novelist (*Amos Oz: The Nature of Dreams*), Hollywood studio titans (*The Brothers Warner*), a French documentarian (*Claude Lanzmann: An Ode to Life*), and a maverick Israeli movie director (*Gitai in Search of his Carmel*).

As well, the festival will present documentaries on a tiny sect in Israel (*Lone Samaritan*), a pivotal moment in Zionist history (*Exodus: The True Story*), an account of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the prism of the iconic Jaffa orange (*Jaffa, The Orange's Clockwork*), a Jewish athlete who competed for Nazi Germany in the summer Olympic Games (*Berlin '36*), an abandoned Arab village in Israel where bohemians from around the world gather (*Achziv, A Place for Love*), and Israeli haredi Jews (*Haredim– A Documentary Trilogy*).

Screenings will take place at four theatres: the Bloor Cinema (506 Bloor St. West), the Al Green Theatre (Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.), Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas (4861 Yonge St.) and Silver City Richmond Hill Cinemas (8771 Yonge St.).

For further details, check the festival's website at www.tjff.com.

Musical will sing the praises of Montreal deli

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The colourful history of Montreal's most famous deli and the eccentric characters that have been associated with it will come to the Montreal stage next year as a musical comedy.

Schwartz's: The Musical, written by and starring the comedy duo Bowser & Blue, is part of the Centaur Theatre's regular upcoming season and will be presented in March 2011.

The play, which will have a cast of 12 and all-original music, is loosely based on Bill Brownstein's 2006 book *Schwartz's Hebrew Delicatessen: The Story*, but will have a fictional story line about an ill-advised attempt by Torontonians to buy the restaurant and franchise it across the country.

Eventually, they come to learn that the little Jewish deli is about more than a product, it's an authentic part of Montreal that can't be transported.

George Bowser and Rick Blue had plenty of good material to work with. According to Bowser and Blue, who sang the play's opening song at the season unveiling, Schwartz's is emblematic of Montreal, and smoked meat is almost a sacrament. In fact, the theme song has it that saying smoked meat is just something you eat is like saying Maurice Richard is just a hockey player.

Blue emphasized the play is about having fun, and the duo will not touch on language or politics, which has been the bread-and-butter of their act for many years.

"The dreaded 'f' word in *Schwartz's: The Musical* is franchisation, not francization," he said. The "food police," not the "tongue troopers," will be the villains in this show.

"We workshopped *Schwartz's: The Musical* last fall and it went very well; we're just fine-tuning now," Blue said.

The past owners will make an appearance, but could each be the subject of a play on their own. Of course, the denizens of Schwartz's are also theatrical fodder – the brusque cutters and waiters, personalities from show business, sports and politics, as well as the less famous who hang out on The Main.

Bowser & Blue perform a song from *Schwartz's The Musical.*

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CJN Profile

'The ideas just keep coming,' says novelist Joy Fielding

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

She calls it "the gift that keeps on giving." Joy Fielding, Canada's answer to Danielle Steel, is a well-oiled writing machine, full stop.

"The ideas just keep coming," said Fielding, a Toronto-based bestselling author who has just published her 21st novel, *The Wild Zone* (Doubleday), which, as usual, brims with passion, intrigue and secrets, and which the *Globe and Mail* described as a cliffhanger in a complimentary review.

Perenially prolific, she churns out novels effortlessly. "Writing comes easily to me," she said matter-of-factly in an interview in her elegant and spacious midtown condominium.

Recently, she finished her 22nd novel, *Preferred Lies*, which will be in stores next year.

Recognizing her talent for production, Fielding's publisher a decade ago asked her to increase her output. Could she write a novel a year? At first, she was concerned whether she would be able to withstand the pressure. But after accepting the challenge, she charged forward, guns blazing brightly.

"I think it has worked out pretty well," she said without the slightest trace of complacency. "I go from book to book, though I'm not chained to my desk. I take breaks. The creative juices are always flowing. The angst and self-flagellation are gone."

To Fielding, the secret of her success is apparent. "It's about imagination and discipline. You can't wait for inspiration."

Fielding, a 64-year-old University of Toronto graduate who majored in English literature, derives her ideas from newspapers, magazines, books, friends and her two daughters. "I'm aware of what goes on in the world. Everything is potential fodder for a book," she said. Usually, however, she is most inspired when she is in a relaxed mode.

After completing an outline in longhand, she sits down at her computer in her carpeted, book-lined study and starts writing. She spends four to eight hours a day on her craft, churning out about 2,500 words.

Once she has four to five chapters in hand, she shows them to a friend whose judgment she trusts implicitly. If the friend likes the manuscript, she proceeds. Yet Fielding takes nothing for granted. She rewrote the first 10 chapters of *The Wild Zone* three times.

In general, though, her most recent manuscripts have required only minor tweaking.

At the beginning of her career, rewrites were much more of a problem than today, she said, recalling that she rewrote her first four or five novels from top to bottom. "That was really painful," she said, wincing.

The hard work has paid off handsomely. She has produced a slew of bestsellers, notably *See Jane Run* and *The Other Woman*, and her novels, which generally focus on women in jeopardy, have been translated into 25 languages, including Hebrew.

Much to Fielding's astonishment, she is particularly popular in Germany.

"For some reason, they really embrace me. According to a survey, one in 10 Germans knows who I am." She chuckled, "I guess my German translator must be doing a good job. The German and Jewish sensibilities are not all that different."

Her favourite bestseller, *See Jane Run*, turns on a woman who, after awakening from a nightmare, has forgotten her name, age and identity.

Released in 1991, when she was already on the ascendancy, *See Jane Run* was made into a television movie. "It was one of those books that struck a chord," she mused. "A story where everything worked on all levels. Real characters, a fast-moving plot, well constructed and well written, and a great opening line."

Joy Fielding

Fielding admits that her main characters are a reflection of her own personality. "I put myself in the position of my characters. I have a very good understanding of me. That's why women 'get' the women I'm writing about."

Not surprisingly, the majority of her readers are women aged 16 to 60. Nevertheless, some of her most devoted fans are men, judging by their letters at least.

Although her characters tend to be generic in terms of their ethnicity, she has tagged some with obviously Jewish- sounding surnames.

Almost all her novels are set in the United States, where she and her husband, retired lawyer Warren Seyffert, maintain a home in Palm Beach, Fla. They intend to spend an increasing amount of time there, she said.

In her blog, Fielding observes that the American landscape seems best suitable for her themes of alienation and loss of identity. Yet two of her novels, *Lost* (2004) and *Puppet* (2005) unfold in Toronto, while her forthcoming novel, *Preferred Lies*, is about a Canadian woman living in Ireland.

Fielding, whose mother Anne was a housewife and whose father Leo was a costume jewellery salesman, has been a writer since childhood. "I always loved writing," she said, remembering that she submitted her first story to a magazine when she was eight. Although it was rejected, she continued writing through her teen years.

When she reached university, she decided she would be an actress. "I loved acting. As a child, I wrote little plays for me to star in."

At the University of Toronto, she won roles in campus plays. She also appeared in the 1965 Canadian romantic drama, *Winter Kept Us Warm*, the first Canadian English-language movie to be invited to the Cannes Film Festival.

Thinking she might make it in Hollywood, Fielding moved to Los Angeles in 1967. "I gave acting a try. I thought I was pretty good. I was always self-confident. I thought I'd be a star and win an Oscar."

Aside from landing a minor role in an episode of *Gunsmoke* and almost winning a part in *Yentl*, Fielding fell flat in Hollwood. "I hardly got sent out for auditions. I worked in a lot of banks as a teller and started writing again. I was unhappy in Los Angeles, a whole different world with different values."

She added, "In Los Angeles looks and image are everything. They don't read books, they read scripts. It's a culture of total self-absorption, full of plastic people. It was soul-destroying and so hard, a life of constant rejections. You're never good enough."

Returning to Toronto in 1970, she landed jobs in a succession of TV commercials and embarked on her first novel, *The Best of Friends*, which she dashed off in five weeks. "I must have been possessed."

Submitting it to five publishers, she was delighted to learn that two were interested in it. "I took the first offer I got," she said. "I was thrilled to death. It was so exciting. I thought, 'This is great.'"

Four more years would elapse before Fielding's second novel was published. But since then, she has established herself as a fixture in the industry. "It's been very lucrative," she said. "I hope to continue writing as long as I stay current and my imagination keeps working. As long as my mind is working, I'll go on. It's really fun. I enjoy the whole process."

Asked how she hopes to be remembered by future generations, she said, "As a literate storyteller, like Charles Dickens, who was very representative of the times and voiced the concerns of modern women."

Sonny Goldstein, CFP
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MARGARET ATWOOD TO RECEIVE DAN DAVID LITERARY PRIZE

Toronto author **Margaret Atwood** is one of several international recipients slated to receive a 2010 Dan David Prize, each worth $1 million. The Israeli-based awards are handed out annually for achievements having an outstanding scientific, technological, cultural or social impact within the three time dimensions of the past, present or future.

Margaret Atwood

Winner in the "present" time dimension, Atwood was cited for her body of more than 40 volumes of fiction, poetry and other forms, especially her three influential dystopian novels, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009). The Dan David Prize website also cited *The Blind Assassin* (2000), referring to it as "her most accomplished novel," although many readers would question that assertion.

Indian-Bengali novelist **Amitav Ghosh**, award-winning author of *The Circle of Reason* and *Sea of Poppies*, was also named a winner with Atwood in the "present" category. The award ceremony takes place in Israel on May 9 in the presence of Israeli President **Shimon Peres**.

Atwood, along with Ghosh and more than 20 other foreign authors, is also scheduled to participate in Jerusalem's second International Writers Festival, May 2 to 6. Theme of the festival is Hebrew literature and writers whose works have been translated into Hebrew. Other participating authors include **Paul Auster**, **Jonathan Safran Foer**, **Jamaica Kincaid**, **Daniel Mendelsohn** and **Simon Sebag Montefiore**.

Egyptian writer **Hussein Serag**, editor of the popular Egyptian magazine *October* and translator of former Israeli foreign minister **Moshe Dayan**'s memoirs into Arabic, has also indicated he will attend even though he may suffer additional penalties at home. Although Egyptians may legally travel to Israel, the Egyptian Journalists Union has already barred him from writing after he recently admitted on television that he makes regular visits to Israel.

* * *

Stars on Spadina: Some of Toronto's brightest talent pay tribute to the Y at Bloor and Spadina, and the contribution it has made to the cultural evolution of downtown Toronto. Hosted by **Tom Allen**, directed by **Ted Dykstra**, and featuring **Andrew Craig**, **George Sue-Ping**, **Hilario Duran**, **Julie Michels**, **Kellylee Evans**, **Melanie Doane**, **Micah Barnes**, **Real Divas** and **Sophie Milman**; house band directed by **Daniel Barnes**. $180 includes show and live auction, and post-show dessert reception. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

* * *

Names in the News: Fifty years after five immigrant Italian construction workers were killed in a water-main tunneling accident near York Mills Road and Yonge Street in Toronto, a memorial quilt designed by Nova Scotia artist **Laurie Swim** has been unveiled at the York Mills subway station. Swim is a Nova Scotia-based artist who lives in Blue Rocks, N.S., with her husband, **Larry Goldstein**. She is the author of *Rags to Riches: The Quilt as Art*. www.laurieswim.com

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Lawyer and Yiddish comedian **Alf Kwinter** entertains the Yiddish Vinkl lunch group. According to his official biography, he was born in Vienna in 1945 but disliked the city's cultured life and so decided to emigrate to Canada in 1947, "bringing his parents with him." Later those same parents were "broken-hearted when he decided to forsake a career in comedy and go to law school." Lunch and comedy, $15. Free Times Café, 320 College St. Thursday, April 1, 12:15. RSVP to yiddishvinkl@yahoo.ca

• Dora Award-winner **Paula Wolfson** performs *When It All Comes True*, a new cabaret show featuring an eclectic collection of songs and stories. **David Warrack** provides accompaniment on piano on a variety of Broadway classics and songs by **Joni Mitchell**, **Carol Pope**, **Lisa Lambert**, **Burt Bacharach** and others. $25. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre. Monday, April 12, 8:15 p.m. www.paulawolfson.com, 416-872-1111.

• This year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival runs April 17 to 25. Programming details are available on the website www.tjff.com.

•**Titanic the Musical:** This story of the Titanic disaster is told with glimpses in the lives of the many different people who came aboard this ship. Written by Maury Yeston and Peter Stone, this Tony Award-winning musical runs April 1 to 10 at the Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr., Toronto. Tickets $24. 416-703-6181. For dates and times www.curtaincallplayers.com

* * *

Passages: New York-born author **Erich Segal**, whose first novel *Love Story* became a bestseller and the basis of a popular film, has died in London, England, at the age of 72.

Segal, the son of a prominent Conservative rabbi, studied at Harvard and became a professor of Greek and Latin literature at Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Oxford. He wrote *Love Story* during Christmas break in 1969. The book began with the words: "What can you say about a 25-year-old girl who died? That she was beautiful. And brilliant. That she loved Mozart and Bach. And the Beatles. And me."

The book became the top bestselling novel of 1970 and was translated into 33 languages. It was made into a romantic tearjerker movie starring **Ali McGraw** as working-class Jenny Cavalleri and **Ryan O'Neal** as Harvard socialite Oliver Barrett IV. The movie retained one of the novel's most memorable – if patently untrue – lines: "Love means never having to say you're sorry."

In 1967, Segal wrote the screenplay for the animated Beatles movie *Yellow Submarine* and came up with the line, "Funny, you don't look blue-ish." He scripted a handful of other films and wrote several academic works. His other novels include *The Class* (1985) and *Doctors* (1988), each of which also became a bestseller.

Performer stages retrospective of her 30-year career

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Toronto actor and singer Paula Wolfson is premièring her cabaret show *When It All Comes True*, a retrospective of her 30-year career in theatre, this month.

Wolfson has performed in numerous musical productions, including *Les Misérables*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *White Christmas* and *A New Brain*. She received a Dora Award for her performance in *Shaking the Foundations*.

"Audiences will see where it all began, with my time as a music instructor at Bayview Glen Day Camp," says Wolfson of her one-night show at the Toronto Centre for the Arts' Studio Theatre on April 12.

"When I realized I couldn't haul the piano out under the trees to teach music, somebody handed me a guitar and someone else handed me a Joni Mitchell album and that was the end of that. So, I learned to play guitar and started to do folk nights," she said.

Wolfson started auditioning for paid gigs and found that playing an instrument increased her opportunities. "I've got my Grade 8 piano, and I learned guitar on my own. I have an autoharp, a washboard and a ukulele. I'm a one-woman band!" she said.

Dora Award-winning pianist and musical arranger, conductor and composer David Warrack will be accompanying Wolfson at the première of *When It All Comes True*. It's the first time the two Toronto theatre veterans will share the same stage.

Paula Wolfson

The show is an evening filled with eclectic songs, including the music of Canadian composers – Mitchell to Carol Pope and Lisa Lambert – as well as stories about the magic of show business. The songs Wolfson will perform relate to the stories she tells.

The show encourages audience interaction with a sing-along and pop quizzes with prizes. Also included are Broadway classics and a medley of tunes by Burt Bacharach, who is near and dear to Wolfson's heart.

"I was hosting karaoke at a wedding fair in Vancouver. While singing I declared to the audience that Burt Bacharach was my personal saviour. A woman came back after the show and asked if Jesus was my personal saviour, I didn't know what to do… so I said yes because I didn't want to tell her that I was a Jewish girl with a penchant for singing killer ballads from the '70s."

Wolfson has written another cabaret show, *Between Engagements*, which is geared to the corporate world, and she plans to increase her cabaret repertoire to include another couple of offerings.

She also tours with Smile Theatre, a theatre company catering to elderly audiences. Wolfson was touched when the company performed at Baycrest and Rabbi Asher Turin told the performers that they were performing a mitzvah for people who couldn't get out, and that it was bringing a little smile into their lives.

Wolfson has an artist educator certificate from the Royal Conservatory of Music, which allows her to go to schools and use music to teach curriculum.

She also finds time to run a business. Wolfson, who has a horticultural certificate from Guelph University, operates My Garden's Keeper, a company that tends urban gardens.

Wolfson describes herself as an extroverted introvert who enjoys spending time on her own. She is a member of Shir Libeynu, a Reconstructionist Jewish organization.

Tickets for *When It All Comes True* ($25) can be purchased online at ticketmaster.ca; by calling Ticketmaster at 416-872-1111; from the website, studio5040 cabarets.com; or in person at the theatre box office.

For more information about Paula Wolfson, visit www.paulawolfson.com.

Arts & Travel

Krakow is one of Europe's great historical cities

By WOLF ARNOLD
Special to The CJN

If you're looking for unspoiled countryside and moderate prices, Poland is a good choice, especially if you travel in the south of country, and in particular, in the region that spreads north from the Tatra Mountains.

These giant granite formations, reaching 2,500 metres, are the highest peaks between the Alps and the Ural Mountains. The river valleys of the Tatra foothills, with their clean air, their health resorts, pure water and scenic settings, attract visitors and health-seekers alike.

In the valleys of the Raba, Dunajec and Poprad rivers, the resort towns of Krynica, Szczawinica, Rabka, Muszyna and Piwniczna are renowned for their mineral springs and their micro-climates (a local atmospheric zone where the climate differs from the surrounding area) that possess healing properties for various ailments. While Rabka is known for treating children's ailments, Krynica, the largest of the spas, draws some 50,000 patients a year who seek relief from diabetes and circulatory and digestive diseases.

If you're looking for excitement, you can go river rafting in the Dunajec Valley, in the Pieniny Mountains National Park. The Dunajec River, which is flanked by towering cliffs, cuts through the valley in sharp turns and loops. It's one of the most beautiful river gorges in Europe.

Farther north lies Nowy Sacz, at the confluence of the Dunajec and Kamienica rivers, a pleasant market town from which on a clear day the snowcapped Tatras can be seen. Famous in the history of Chassidism under the name of Zans, Nowy Sacz acquired a sizable Jewish population when they started to settle there in 1469. The town became a major religious centre in the 17th century.

The Town Hall at Nowy Sacz

The Guild Hall in Krakow

People in the market square, the largest functional square in Europe. ***[Wolf Arnold photos]***

In 1939, the Jewish population still numbered 10,000, but it has now dwindled to an unknown few. Only the Jewish cemetery, looking utterly neglected, and the former synagogue, now a gallery and a museum of the history of the Jewish people of Nowy Sacz, remain as the only tangible traces.

Medieval houses in Stary Sacz, which is Nowy Sacz's sister town a few kilometres away, surround a cobblestone market square. But the town's main attraction is a 13th-century monastery that is famous for its artwork, to which the Italian artists Giovanni de Simoni and Baldassare Fontana contributed.

The Italian connection is evident in the city of Krakow, the ancient capital of Poland. Enter the vast market square, called Rynek, and the Renaissance Guild Hall of the cloth merchants will catch your eye. If you have been to Italy, you can't help but think of an Italian palazzo, for the Guild Hall bears a resemblance to the Palazzo della Raggione in Padua. Definitely southern in spirit, it was built by Polish and Italian architects.

The interior has shops that sell all kinds of goods and souvenirs, and outside, cafés, with their colourful parasols, make you want to linger for coffee with a delicious cake or a fantastic ice cream.

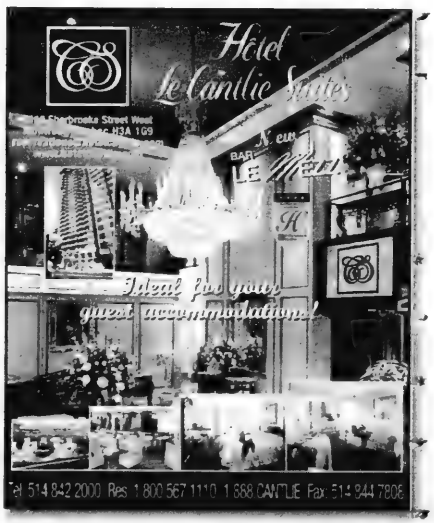
The Rynek measures 40,000 square metres and is the largest functional market square in Europe. The square is an ongoing street theatre, alive with people, pigeons, flower sellers and cafés. Surrounding patrician houses, splendid in their baroque and Renaissance facades, add to this urban beauty.

A short walk takes you from the Rynek to the Florian Gate at the old-city wall. Here, during any summer day, local artists display their creations. The ancient city wall is covered with paintings that tempt you to take home a souvenir. Beyond the gate, under chestnut trees, a promenade leads to Wavel Castle, the former residence of the Polish kings.

Declared by UNESCO as a world natural and cultural heritage site, Krakow has always been the intellectual focal point of the country. The home of astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473- 1543), the city is a must-see on a journey to Poland. Its university is the alma mater of Pope John Paul II.

From the belfry of the Wavel, you can enjoy a panoramic view of Krakow, one of the great historical cities of Europe.

If you go: For information, contact Pekao Travel, 1610 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ont., M6P 1A7. Telephone 416-588-1414.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Books & Authors

Surviving in Berlin during the Nazi era

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Berlin, the capital of Germany, had a Jewish population of about 160,000 when Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime assumed power in 1933.

But by the summer of 1941, on the eve of the first deportation of Jews to ghettos and concentration camps in eastern Europe, the Jewish community had dwindled to 65,000 members, the remainder having emigrated.

In the next four years, 55,000 Jews in Berlin were deported to the east by rail in 65 transports. Up to 1,500 Jews survived underground as "submarines," while 4,700 made it through the war thanks to marriages to Christians.

The plight of Jewish Berliners during the Nazi era is detailed in *Jews in Nazi Berlin: From Kristallnacht to Liberation* (The University of Chicago Press), a lavishly illustrated book of essays edited by Beate Meyer, Hermann Simon and Chana Schutz.

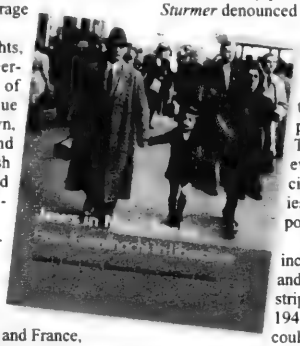
The topics in this fine and comprehensive volume run the gamut from emigration and the expropriation of property to deportation and survival.

The introductory essay, written by Hermann Simon, deals with the year 1938, which was indeed a fateful one. "One had the feeling that disaster was on the horizon," he quotes a German Jew as saying.

Until then, Jews still living in Berlin thought that they could somehow manage. But with the passage of a series of laws and regulations further isolating them, the last illusions vanished. The vandalization of Jewish shops and the arrest of 1,500 Jews, followed by the deportation of 17,000 Polish Jewish nationals throughout Germany, deepened the gloom. The nation-wide pogroms in November were the final straw.

Christian Dirks, in his essay, focuses on May and June 1938, which saw an increase in the number of anti-Semitic attacks in Berlin, a boycott of Jewish shops on the Kurfurstendamm – an elegant shopping thoroughfare – and raids on cafes. These events, Dirks says, were preceded by a decision by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to step up the pace of anti-Semitic measures in Berlin.

Michael Schabitz, in an essay titled *The Flight and Expulsion of German Jews*, points out that Germany's policy was to choke off Jewish life and encourage the emigration of Jews.



Despite being deprived of their rights, only a quarter of the Jews living in Germany had left the country by the end of 1937. Many Jews hesitated to leave due to family bonds, the fear of the unknown, a lack of emigration opportunities and Germany's policy of Aryanizing Jewish property. With the outbreak of World War II, emigration became virtually impossible.

Tracing the tide of emigration, Schabitz lists three waves.

The first one took place immediately after Hitler became chancellor on Jan. 30, 1933. The emigrants settled in neighbouring countries such as Holland and France, though Zionist organizations vigorously promoted Palestine as a destination.

The second wave began with the promulgation of the 1935 Nuremberg laws, which officially rendered German Jews second-class citizens and forbade mixed marriages. The third and final wave began with the heightening of anti-Jewish restrictions in the spring of 1938 and culminated with Kristallnacht.

Beate Mayer's essay is on Aryanization, a euphemism for confiscation of property. Aryanization did not formally come into force until after Kristallnacht. Up to that point, the transfer of Jewish property into non-Jewish hands was not a priority.

Mayer, in her piece, concentrates on the Aryanization of the Garbaty family cigarette factory, which employed hundreds of workers and was one of the first in Germany to produce brand name cigarettes. As she suggests, the fate of the Garbaty plant was sealed when the Nazi newspaper *Sturmer* denounced its products as "Jewish."

In his essay, Albert Meirer methodically retraces the repression of Berlin's Jewish community, from the curt dismissal of Jewish civil servants to the demeaning restrictions that hampered the freedom of movement of Jews. They were forbidden to attend cultural events of any kind, barred from theatres, cinemas, concert halls, museums, libraries, parks, sports facilities and swimming pools.

Signs reading "No Jews Allowed" were increasingly common in hotels, restaurants and cafes. In systematic fashion, Jews were stripped of their livelihoods. By September 1941, in a transition to extermination, they could no longer use public transportation or keep pets and were forced to wear the yellow star.

Chana Schutz's essay on Zionists in Berlin reminds readers that the city was once the headquarters of the Zionist movement, and that Otto Warburg, a renowned scientist, was its president from 1911 to 1920. Nonetheless, Schutz says, the number of dues-paying Zionists was never high in Berlin, nor in other cities in Germany. With Hitler's accession to power, interest in Zionism and immigration to Palestine grew.

The figures tell the story. In 1933, 7,600 Jews immigrated to the Holy Land. In 1934 and 1935, the figures were 9,800 and 8,600, respectively. They fell to 3,700 and 4,800 in 1937 and 1938 as Britain tightened entry rules.

Diana Schulle's essay concerns itself with the Rosenstrasse protest of February 1943, a singular event in the annals of Nazi Germany.

When the Gestapo arrested about 1,700 Jewish men of partial Jewish ancestry and in mixed marriages on that historic day, their indignant Christian wives and relatives mounted an unprecedented demonstration in front of the building where they were held.

Relenting under their pressure, the Nazis released many of the Jewish prisoners and, still more incredibly, recalled 25 men who had already been dispatched to Auschwitz. Calling their protest unique, Schulle quotes American historian Nathan Stolzfus as saying that the Rosenstrasse incident was "the only instance of mass German opposition against the National Socialist destruction of Jewry."

Beate Mayer's essay on deportation starts with the first transport on Oct. 18, 1941 and concludes with the last one March 27, 1945. Summing up the fate of the Jews of Berlin, she says that 90,000 emigrated, 55,000 were murdered, 7,000 committed suicide and 8,000 survived in mixed marriages, concentration camps and in hiding.

Christian Dirks, in *Snatchers: The Berlin Gestapo's Jewish Informants*, writes about the Jews who saved themselves by betraying their fellow Jews.

Dirks focuses on the most notorious of the lot, Stella Kubler and her husband, Rolf Isaaksohn, who roamed the streets in search of prey.

Barbara Schieb's and Michael Schabitz's respective essays deal with the so-called submarines, the Jews who went into hiding and survived against all odds with the help of Christians.

Schieb concentrates on a couple, Walter and Leonie Frankenstein, while Schabitz fleshes out Hans Rosenthal's tale of survival. After the war, Rosenthal became the most celebrated television host in West Germany.

What an ascent to fame after so much hardship.

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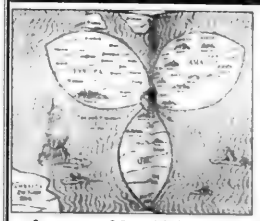

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Cycling for togetherness in South Africa

By SUZANNE BELLING
JTA

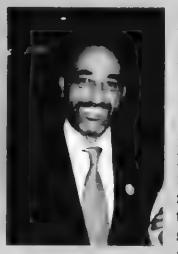
JOHANNESBURG — The Jews call it *b'yachad*. The blacks call it *ubuntu*.

Whatever the term, it was the spirit of togetherness that marked the launching Sunday of the bar mitzvah-year Cycalive, a 400-mile bike ride fundraiser from Johannesburg to Durban that brings together Jewish students from the Torah Academy Boys' High School of Johannesburg with students from the Moletsane High and Pace secondary schools in the black township of Soweto.

The idea is to promote togetherness and road safety, and raise funds for the participating schools from Soweto. Cycalive usually raises about $18,000 each year.

The date of this year's launch, March 21, marked South Africa's Human Rights Day and the 50th anniversary of the Sharpeville Massacre, when police opened fire in 1960 on protesters in Soweto, killing 69 people.

The anniversary was also the first official Mandela Day event on the 2010 calendar leading up to anti-apartheid activist and ex-president Nelson Mandela's 92nd birthday on July 18.



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein

This year's cycle kicked off amid a raucous celebration, complete with police escorts, the roar of motorcycles – many with Jewish riders from Steelwings and Rolling Thunder – and the rousing music of the brass band of the Field Band Foundation from the nearby town of Springs.

The band comprises once-underprivileged black youths trained and sponsored by South African Jewish philanthropist Bertie Lubner.

Before the students set off pedaling, Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein said, "This is more than a physical journey, it is a journey of hope. The central principle is we are all human beings created in the image of God."

Goldstein added that it was also a celebration of "the power of nation building" through sport, the innocence of youth and the simple joys of life in our technology-rushed society.

One student on the ride, Raphael Leepilo of Moletsane, told JTA, "I am very happy. I have never been to Durban, never seen the sea. I am a practising Christian and am now going to learn about the Jewish religion."

Sibusiso Nanga of Pace was looking forward to an "amazing experience."

Yosef Jameson of the Torah Academy said, "I think it's going to be a bonding session, getting to know people from different cultures."

Rabbi Motti Hadar, principal of Torah Academy Boys' High, who as a student there was at the head of his class and cycled to Durban, said this was his second ride from Johannesburg to Durban.

The ride "is a great opportunity for the boys. It helps them learn about others and, more importantly, about themselves," he said.

Rabbi Dovid Hazdan, the Torah Academy's dean, accompanied the students on their journey and said they're traveling with their "tzitzit flying in the wind."

Pace principal Dan Zimba said, "In terms of our kids learning Jewish culture and that there are other religions, this is their first contact. It promotes understanding, respect and recognition."

Since the first Cycalive 13 years ago, the participating schools from Soweto have become among the best in the township. The funds raised by the event helped them improve their library, set up intercom systems, and purchase computers and audio-visual aids.

The communications manager for the Nelson Mandela Foundation sent a message to the participants praising their effort.

"We appreciate your commitment to Mandela Day," said the organization's spokesperson, Sello Hatang.

"Please spread the word as you stop in villages, towns and cities, in churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, schools and hospitals along the way on the road to Durban."

Marlene Bethlehem, former deputy chairwoman of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, commended the Cycalive organizers for bringing people of different backgrounds together.

"Where there is no vision, the people will perish," she said.

The students did not take the highway, but took a longer route to Durban. When they arrived there Thursday, they were expected to parade through the city's streets accompanied by traffic police and the Durban Field Band.

Civic and Jewish community leaders from the coastal city were to meet them on the steps of City Hall at the ride's conclusion.

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Sledge hockey goalie ends career at Paralympics

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It wasn't supposed to end this way.

The Canadian team was ranked first in the world and they were playing on home ice in front of thousands of enthusiastic fans.

The men's and women's teams had just wrapped up gold medals and now it was the sledge hockey team's chance to make it a trifecta at the Vancouver Olympics and Paralympic Games.

But it was not to be. In a critical game against Japan, the Canadians couldn't find the back of the net and dropped a 3-1 shocker to end their chance for back-to-back gold medals.

Said Japanese head coach Kojin Nakakita afterward, "Canada would beat us if we played them 1,000 times, we're going to lose 999. But not this one."

In the bronze medal game that followed, Canada fell 2-1 to Norway, leaving them completely out of the medals.

Goalie Paul Rosen, who backstopped the Canucks to a gold in Turin four years before, was "extremely disappointed. I was looking forward to not just being in the gold medal game, but winning it."

Unfortunately, the hockey gods – and some will say the referee – were not with them that day against the Scandinavians.

Canadian goalie Paul Rosen stretches out to make an acrobatic save during the recent Paralympic Games in Vancouver. Despite strong goaltending, Canada finished out of the medals. ***[Photo © Hockey Canada]***

Rosen, however, is "content with the way I played. I think I had one of the best tournaments I had in my career."

The bottom line was that the Canadians just couldn't score when they needed to. They scored on their single shot in the third period, but Norway tied the game after what was seen on the Canadian side as a bad ref's call that awarded the Scandinavians a penalty shot that they capitalized on.

The winner was a shot with only seconds left to play that caromed off a Canadian defenceman and over Rosen's glove.

"It just wasn't meant to be," he said.

In the end, the United States won the gold, Japan got the silver and Norway the bronze.

The loss not only ended Rosen's run for another gold, but marked the end of a remarkable career. The netminder, who is closing in on age 50, announced he was hanging up the sledge and getting out of competitive hockey.

It wasn't the cap on a 10-year career he was hoping for, but he remains "very proud" of what he's accomplished.

On the ice, he has the gold from Turin as the centrepiece of his trophy case – along with the MVP award from that tournament – but he says representing Canada was reward in itself.

"It's been an honour competing for the last 10 years. I'm very proud of it. I'm proud to be an athlete for this great country."

What's more, he takes great satisfaction from the example he's set for other Canadians with disabilities. He's received numerous calls and e-mails telling him what an inspiration he's been, including a moving testimonial from an eight-year-old to whom he gave his blocker. "That blew me away," he said.

He also hopes he's served as a role model for young Jews who also are disabled.

"I'm an extremely proud Jew, and I want to help the Jewish community so disabled Jewish kids realized that life is not over," he said.

Back in his youth, Rosen was an able-bodied skater who played AAA midget hockey.

He broke his leg in a game and it never did heal, despite 24 surgeries. On a trip to Israel he was told by a doctor he faced death if the leg was not amputated. Rosen believes he owes his life to the Israeli medical system.

In 2000, a year after losing his leg, he took up sledge hockey and a year after that, he made the national team.

It was a natural transition. "To play disabled sport was the next stage," he said.

His success and the impact he's had on other disabled people has taught him that nothing is impossible. Since he lost his leg at age 39, "my life has been better than it was with the leg. It depends on your mindset."

In recent years he's found a new love of his life – Louise Berman – a woman he went to kindergarten with in 1965 whose paths crossed over the years but with whom he didn't reconnect until a couple of years ago.

And he's setting his sights on a shift of career that will keep him connected to hockey. A motivational speaker by occupation, he hopes to parlay his talents into the role of a hockey commentator, perhaps even be part of the crew that covers the next Olympics and Paralympics in Sochi, Russia.

And as for the Canadian sledge hockey team, he's – what else? – optimistic about their future.

"By Sochi," he promises, "we'll be ready."

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Chabad holds fashion fundraiser for women's shelter

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Bay's flagship downtown Toronto store recently hosted Chabad Markham's annual fashion show, attended by nearly 500 women.

Three generations – bubbies, their daughters and children – modelled designer clothes in the store's Arcadian Ballroom. The guest of honour was Judy Feld Carr, who rescued more than 3,000 Syrian Jews.

When the women arrived, they were ushered up to the eighth floor of the store and were treated to cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, donated by Tiara Culinary Catering and Joe Elmaleh.

The women were then seated in the glamorous Arcadian Ballroom, where they were welcomed by MC Erica Ehm, a former MuchMusic host and the creator of the website YummyMummyClub.ca.

The co-chairs of the event, Allison Solomon and Joanne Herr, welcomed the representatives of the women's shelter Alternate Short Term Emergency Housing (ASTEH) and presented them with a plaque and a cheque on behalf of the Chabad.

Tehillim were then recited for those in need by Shira Klasner and Aviva Forer, rebbetzins of the Chabad of Markham community.

Opening remarks were made by Rebbetzin Goldie Plotkin. She spoke about the inspiration she received from her grandmother and how women can make a difference today, adding that women in leadership roles are changing the course of our history. Plotkin spoke about empowering ourselves and others with the knowledge that we all can make a difference. She then introduced the guest of honour, Feld Carr, as a true example of a woman who makes a difference.

Feld Carr mesmerized the audience with her poignant story of her heroic efforts to save the Syrian Jews.

When Feld Carr heard about the plight of the Syrian Jewish community and their being imprisoned and tortured in Syria, she raised thousands of dollars and over a period of 28 years rescued each and every surviving Jewish family and helped bring them to safety. She urged the women in the audience to go home and see how they can make a difference and change the course of Jewish history.

Feld Carr also told the audience about her daughter's involvement with Chabad in Virginia and how incredible the group's shluchim were when her family needed help and guidance. Chabad was there with meals, friendship and comfort. Feld Carr stressed the importance of the saying, "*Kol Yisrael areivim ze lazeh*," all Jews are responsible for one another.

The crowd was then treated to a fabulous, very entertaining fashion show. "A celebration of the generations," was the theme of the show, as three generations modelled on the catwalk, showing off designer clothing in honour of the upcoming holiday of Passover. The music that accompanied the show kept the crowd clapping.

The evening was orchestrated by co-chairs Allison Solomon and Joanne Herr and their team – Julie Goldentuler, Mandy Gnesin, Stella Saul, Kim Cohen, Romy Pilarski, Jackie Brenkel, Robyn Green, Heather Aaron, Yonet Blanch, Teri Cohen, Illona Kibel and Adi Tooch.

A private shopping experience was the final highlight of the evening. The entire Bay@Queen Street was kept open till 10 p.m. for the guests of the Chabad of Markham event.

CITRUSY CHICKEN QUINOA SALAD

1 c quinoa rinsed & drained
1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
salt & ground pepper, to taste
1 bunch scallions
1 lg navel orange
juice of 1 lemon
3 tbsp + 1 tsp olive oil, divided
4 c. baby lettuce
1/4 c unsalted pistachios, toasted, chopped

Check with your Rabbinical authority whether this is permissible at Passover.

Boil 1 1/4 c. water in a small saucepan. Add rinsed quinoa, cover, reduce heat, simmer for approx. 12 min, or until water is absorbed. Remove from heat, let stand 5 min., then fluff. Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces; season with salt, pepper. Trim scallions and cut into 1" pieces. Saute chicken and scallions in skillet with 1 tsp olive oil until no longer pink inside.

Dressing: Cut 1"off each end of orange. Squeeze juice into small bowl, for 2 tbsp juice. Whisk together orange juice & lemon juices, 3 tbsp olive oil, salt, pepper. Add chicken mixture, dressing, sliced orange, pistachios to quinoa and toss. Arrange 1 c. of salad greens on each of four plates, garnish each chicken mixture with peeled remainder of orange; sliced very thinly

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

A national convention of the Federation of Zionist Societies of Canada drew more than 250 delegates to Toronto in 1910. Energetic meetings were held at the Lyric and Lyceum theatres, and distinguished visiting rabbis exhorted from the pulpits of Goel Tzedec Congregation and Temple Holy Blossom on Shabbat. Mayor George Geary welcomed the visitors to the city, and local newspapers declared their sympathy with Zionist ideals. Pictured, a group of delegates pose on the steps of an unidentified building (not Goel Tzedec).

But they are not enough

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

It's that time again. Israeli Apartheid Week has come and gone. The Swedes are acting out, and anti-Semitism quietly operates under slimy rocks, keeping a low profile, until barn, "Gaza" happens again. The danger is there. Do we see it? Are we acting?

Diaspora and Israeli Jewry make world-class software, hardware and medical equipment. We create wealth, write books, win Oscars, are bank presidents and chancellors of universities, and even grow football, hockey and baseball stars.

Our ability to create communities and organizations is unmatched. We have friends in the right places (not enough) because we are loyal. This is not ego. This is pride.

We are better positioned and developed than ever before to fight anti-Semitism, know who our friends are and make many more.

But we are *not* doing these things,

I write this to you in the voice of Ze'ev Jabotinsky. This visionary Zionist and Jewish activist exclaimed to European Jewry in the 1930s that they were "living on the edge of the volcano." They did not listen, and a chapter was written for us in which the protagonist, we the Jewish People, fell off a cliff. Recall your falling dreams and the feeling in your gut when you were unable to grab onto a single branch.

Jabotinksy was right. Few listened. We fell, and toppled *hard*. The ground has not since reached us.

Jewish organizations are doing a splendid job of fighting anti-Semitism, but they cannot do it alone, although they often want to. Jewish community workers work courageously, but like a pianist, they can only play one march at a time. They are not enough.

The State of Israel protects us, as God did the Jewish People in the desert. Our manna is their existence. The world knows Israel embraces us and will rescue us should we be taken hostage by this era's highwaymen, but that is not enough. Israel is overextended and small. It is not enough.

When anti-Semitism crawls out from underneath that mossy, bug-infested rock – and it will – all the organizations and professional staff will be surrounded by wagon trains of hatred creating deafening noises. They will know then that they are not enough.

I therefore, once again, call upon our leadership and every Jewish community member in the world to assemble and create, through our vast treasures, a world body whose mandate is to develop and implement a strategy to fight anti-Semites and find and make friends with non-Jews.

I am asking you not to put this article down, but rather to post it around your house as a wake-up for you and your family from an unreal sleep. Anti-Semitism is here.

Wake up and recognize that we are the most blessed people in the history of personkind. We can learn Torah freely, debate politics, compose symphonies, read poetry, visit Thailand, drive a Hummer, sleep peacefully and wear silk and cashmere. We have it all.

And with this comes responsibility to act. I ask you to ponder your comfort and then think about the Jews of France, Sweden and Venezuela. They are us. They are in trouble.

Tell our leaders it's time we designed such an entity. We must stop crying over our losses and bemoaning anti-Semitism. The shivah is over. We must instead fight. Fight. Fight. Fight.

Do so, oh sleepy brothers and sisters. Toronto is a good place to start.

To comment go to http://avrum.net

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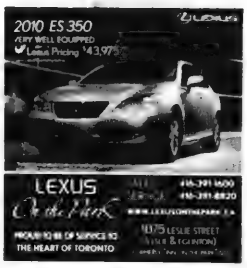

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Being blessed in Jerusalem

Hundreds of Kohanim blessed some 10,000 worshipers at the Western Wall last week. It marked the 40th year that such gatherings have been held at the Western Wall during the pilgrimage holidays of Passover and Sukkot. The chief rabbis of Israel, Rabbi Yona Metzger and Rabbi Shlomo Amar, and Western Wall Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovich held a reception at the Western Wall pavilion following the event.
[Flash90 photo]

Israel's angel of mercy

By ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN
Israel21c

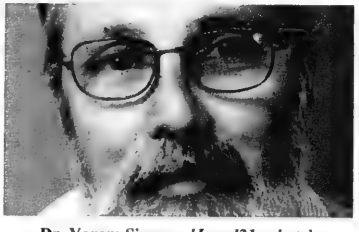
BE'ER SHEVA, Israel — Caring for terminally ill Bedouins in the Negev desert may not be a popular medical specialty, but Dr. Yoram Singer was raised to believe in equality among people.

He said his European parents also taught him that "if you want to do something, you can always find a way to do it."

Late last year, Singer received an award from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in recognition of his twice-weekly visits to the tents and shacks in unrecognized Bedouin villages. The medical director of the home palliative care unit of the Clalit Health Services health fund and chair of the Israeli Association of Palliative Care, Singer was described at the award ceremony as "an angel of mercy."

"I think an important part of being an adult is helping the helpless, trying to do something in places where there is nothing," he said.

Singer was born in Canada in 1953, grew up in Switzerland and immigrated on his own to Israel after high school. He began his career in palliative care, which aims to alleviate symptoms and improve the quality of life for chronically or terminally ill patients, in 1991, when he was invited to head the newly founded palliative care unit at Ben-Gurion University's faculty of health sciences in partnership with the Israel Cancer Association and Clalit Health Services.



Dr. Yoram Singer *[Israel21c photo]*

Singer estimates that throughout Israel, no more than 15 per cent of those needing palliative, end-of-life care actually receive it. His ambition is to build up a larger and more comprehensive network of services, including inpatient hospice units.

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Feature

Young Canadians flock to fellowship program

By LANCE DAVIS, SAMUEL KONIG and BENJAMIN SHINEWALD

For the first time in its 23-year history, a significant contingent of young Canadian leaders attended the most recent Nahum Goldmann Fellowship Program.

Held on the Croatian island of Pag, the program brought together some 50 young Jewish leaders from around the world who spent a week learning about a wide range of subjects related to Jewish life.

The fellowship is sponsored by the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, whose largely unsung work has a significant impact on the Jewish world.

Funded in part by German reparation money and founded 45 years ago by Nahum Goldmann, the legendary president of the World Jewish Congress and the World Zionist Federation, the foundation aims to reconstruct Jewish cultural life around the world, especially in Europe in light of the double devastation as a result of the Shoah and communism.

Guest Voice

Please see related photo on page 4

The foundation tries to achieve its aims by supporting a new generation of scholars, intellectuals, academics, writers, artists, rabbis, educators and other Jewish communal professionals. Its greatest impact seems to be in former Iron Curtain countries.

The fellowship brings together a culturally and religiously diverse group. The meeting in Pag attracted lay leaders and professionals from Croatia, India, Macedonia, France, South Africa, Belarus, Australia, Poland, Panama, Israel and the United States, as well as Canada. Some fellows came from centres with large Jewish populations, while others came from small towns where the Jewish population numbered in the dozens.

The intellectual focus of the week-long conference was on Jewish textual study, social theory and the practical application of different leadership models.

Some of the Jewish world's stellar scholars taught at the program. Among the scholars were Prof. David Myers of UCLA; Moshe Halbertal of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; Prof. Ismar Schorsch, the former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary; Rabbi Saul Berman of New York University Law School; Prof. Benny Ish Shalom of Beit Morasha in Jerusalem and Steven Bayme of the American Jewish Committee.

Over the years, the foundation has awarded scholarships and fellowships to more than 13,000 men and women, many of whom were thus enabled to subsequently step into leadership positions in their respective communities. One such recipient was Chief Rabbi Eliezer Aloni of Croatia.

The foundation has also assisted in the publication of almost 4,000 books related to Jewish culture in over 25 languages. More than 600 books in Russian and eastern European languages were distributed behind the Iron Curtain during the two decades before the fall of communism.

The foundation is represented in Canada by the Canadian Jewish Congress. Canadians attending this year's program included Samuel Konig, national director of National Jewish Campus Life in Toronto; Lance Davis, executive director of the Calgary Jewish Community Council; Rabbi Jeni Friedman, formerly of Edmonton and now of Temple Beth Sholom in Roslyn Heights, N.Y.; Noah Slepkov, formerly of St. Catherines, Ont., and now of Tel Aviv; Guido Setton, formerly of Vancouver, Montreal and Argentina and now at the Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Okla.; Robin Nobel, formerly of Montreal and now at the Rothschild Foundation in London, England, and Benjamin Shinewald, national executive director of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

The fellowship is held annually. It alternates between locations in Israel and the Diaspora and is open to those ranging in age from 25 to 40.

More information is available at www.mfjc.org or http://ngfp.org/.

Canadians Lance Davies, Samuel Konig and Benjamin Shinewald attended the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship Program.

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War-related stress found among Sderot's residents

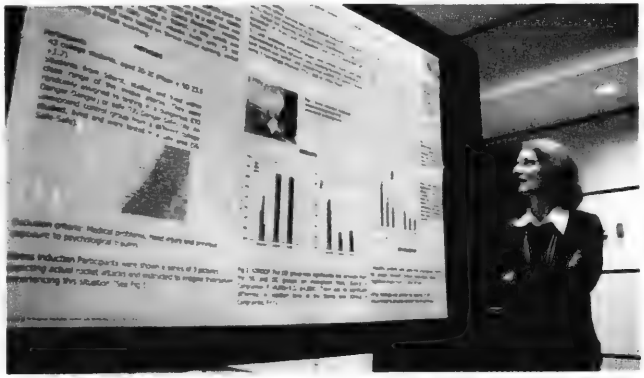
By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

That Israelis inhabit a tense land is not new. Stress levels in Israel have long been found as higher than average, which is unsurprising in a country that's perennially in a state of war.

But now a Canadian-born Israeli expert has hard data to show that among some young people in the western Negev city of Sderot, war-related stress led to damaged cognitive functions and impaired memories.

The impairments were "subtle but significant," but also temporary, according to research carried out by Ora Kofman, a psychology professor at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

The Montreal-born Kofman tested 43 healthy college students aged 20 to 30 — civilians who studied at the local Sapir College and lived in Sderot in 2007. During that year, prior to Israel's war in Gaza, Qassam rockets fired from Gaza one kilometre away rained on the town at the rate of 15 to 50 a day, with just 15 seconds warning.



Dr. Ora Kofman with a poster outlining her work on residents of Sderot.
[Ron Csillag photo]

Sderot became the symbol for Israeli suffering under the rocket fire. MSNBC reported during the attacks that "nearly everyone" in the town of 20,000 was "traumatized by the frequent sound of air-raid sirens and explosions of incoming projectiles."

For her study, conducted in the spring of 2008, Kofman divided her subjects into three groups: those who lived, studied and were tested in Sderot; those who lived and studied in Sderot, but were tested in Be'er Sheva, well away from the rocket attacks, and a control group of students who studied, lived and were tested in a safe zone northeast of Sderot.

Impairments and deficits were found only in the first group, suggesting that the trauma was "context-dependent," says Kofman. Also, the general evidence showed that the students who lived in Sderot were jumpier and more alert than usual.

Continued on page 15

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The Jews of Europe today

From the editor's desk...

Next week, on the 27th of Nisan (April 11 this year), we commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah. Sixty-five years after the near total destruction of European Jewry, it is appropriate that we reflect upon the "condition" of our kinfolk, the Jews of Europe.

Using figures published by the Jewish Virtual Library for the year 2006, Jews comprise barely more than one quarter of one per cent of the total population of the 15 original countries of the European Union (EU). Of the 386 million people who lived in the original 15-member EU, some one million are Jews.

Of the 460 million people who live in the current 25-member-country EU, some one million are Jews.

The largest Jewish community in Europe, by far, is in France. Some 491,500 Jews live there. Indeed, the French community is the third-largest community in the world after Israel and the Unites States.

Parenthetically, it should be noted, that the 373,500 Jews of Canada constitute the fourth-largest Jewish community in the world!

After France, the next largest Jewish community in the 25-member EU is that of the United Kingdom with a population of 297,000. Some 118,000 Jews live in Germany.

The demographic statistic, however, that is so very sorrowful and staggering to note, that settles most heavily in the collective hollowed heart is the fact that where in 1939, more than three million Jews once lived in Poland, today there are but 3,200.

Typical of Jews wherever we have resided, one of our chief concerns has always been for the well-being, not to mention the survival, of our co-religionists. Thus, in each respective community, there is a organizational structure of lay and professional leaders advocating on behalf of communal needs and giving expression to community concerns.

The European Jewish Congress (EJC) links all the communities of the EU, as well as an additional 15 in eastern Europe and in North Africa. Since 2007, its president has been Moshe Kantor, a community activist and philanthropist from Russia.

The website of the EJC describes the body as "a leading Jewish secular umbrella organization that co-ordinates 40 national Jewish communities in Europe, encompassing 2.5 million Jews. The EJC's goal is to address the world's most pressing issues: protecting human rights, fighting xenophobia and anti-Semitism, promoting interfaith dialogue, implementing cultural and educational programs, and remembering the Holocaust and other tragedies that claimed millions of human lives throughout the world."

In light of the EJC mission's statement and when one looks at the pronouncements and press releases of the EJC, one quickly sees, not surprisingly, that the issues that concern Jews in North America also concern Jews in Europe.

Moshe Kantor

It could not be any other way.

It should not be any other way if we are to be always and ever faithful to the millennia-old maxim *kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh* (the entire peoplehood of Israel cares one for the other).

A quick glance at some of the major news items last month affecting the Jews of Europe prove the point.

• "The EU has condemned all the settlement activities," Spanish Foreign Miguel Angel Moratinos said at the monthly meeting of EU Foreign Ministers in Brussels. Spain currently holds the EUs rotating presidency. "We ask for a total freeze of settlement activity. We will pursue this policy."

The EU is "very disappointed by the position of the Israeli government. I think I can say very clearly that Jerusalem is not Tel Aviv," said Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn. Asselborn's comment was in reference to a declaration made by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [that Israel will continue to build homes in the Jerusalem area]. "The Netanyahu announcement is completely, utterly unacceptable." Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubb said.

• "The EJC has expressed deep disappointment that the European Parliament passed a resolution today [March 10] endorsing the Goldstone report.

"Dr. Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress, led the lobbying efforts in the European Parliament and told the parliament group leaders and members of Europe's Parliament (MEPs) that the endorsement of the Goldstone report would be a blow for the peace process."

• "The EU parliament urges Hamas' immediate release of Gilad Schalit.

"MEPs meeting in plenary session in Strasbourg, France, [March 12] also called upon Hamas to grant Sgt. Schalit rights and privileges pursuant to the Geneva Convention."

In 1939, there were approximately 18 million Jews in the world. In 1945 alas, that figure was reduced to 12 million. Sixty-five years later that number has increased by about one million, to 13 million.

More people live in the larger urban areas of each of Tokyo, Mexico City, Cairo and Shanghai (to name just four cities) than there are Jews on earth.

When we commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah and we recall the Jews who once lived in Europe, let us also recall the obligations we have to one another today. – ***MBD***

SeeJN

PICKING UP JEWISH CULTURE IN CROATIA

From left are Noah Slepkov, Benjamin Shinewald, Lance Davis, Rabbi Jeni Friedman, Robin Nobel, Samuel Konig and Guido Setton, attendees of the recent Nahum Goldmann Fellowship Program on the Croatian Island of Pag. This group of young Canadians spent a week learning about a wide range of subjects related to Jewish life.

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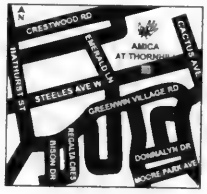

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Greater Toronto Area

Shuls increase accessibilty for Shabbat Itanu

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

Look around this Shabbat. Who's missing from your synagogue? And what's keeping them away?

Maybe it's a physical or developmental disability. Maybe they can't hear the service as well as they used to. Maybe they worry that their special-needs child will be stared at, or won't make friends. Maybe they fear that a few steps up to the bimah will mean defeat; a lost opportunity to participate.

On April 17, synagogues around the GTA will work to increase accessibility by observing Toronto's second annual Shabbat Itanu: a Shabbat of inclusion.

"Itanu means 'with us' and the intent is that we're all together," says Fay Rotman of Itanu Toronto, the inclusion initiative of UJA Federation.

To prepare for Shabbat Itanu, Beth Sholom Synagogue will be ensuring that participants in wheelchairs can reach their mezuzah with a Lowering the Mezuzah ceremony, which will take place before the inclusive Shabbat.

The rabbi's sermon that week will also deal with inclusiveness.

For Andrea Spindel, chair of diversity at Darchei Noam Reconstructionist Synagogue of Toronto, inclusion is "a big piece of what we stand for" as part of the Reconstructionist movement, she says.

"People with disabilities are one of the groups we try to include."

With an almost brand-new building, Darchei Noam is ahead of other congregations that may have heavy entrance doors and fixed theatre seating.

The Darchei Noam sanctuary was designed with no permanent benches, which makes it easier for those with physical disabilities to get around.

"It's all chairs... things can always be moved."

Kenny Wise, chair of Beth Sholom's greening and inclusion committee, says their challenge is greater.

"The building's old, to be honest," he says. "We have a temporary ramp for people to get up on the bimah," but the cost of a permanent ramp and other accommodations is prohibitive.

According to Wise, the shul is doing everything they can to increase inclusion.

"We have large siddurims for people who are visually impaired. We're working toward- getting a sound system for the hearing impaired," he says.

"These are not luxuries for a synagogue... I think these are necessities."

At Beth Sholom last year, a developmentally delayed man from a nearby Reena group home was honoured with an aliyah. Since then, says Andrea Rowan, program and youth director, five or six residents have been attending regularly.

"They wanted to come but weren't always fully comfortable."

Inclusion isn't just a nicety; in Ontario, it will soon be the law.

As of January 2012, all organizations must comply with the province of Ontario's accessibility standards for customer service. Government and other public sector organizations began complying in January 2010.

Standards include accommodating service animals, such as guide dogs, and providing seating for individuals who have difficulty waiting in line for extended periods.

To help synagogues begin planning for Shabbat Itanu and long-term inclusiveness, Itanu Toronto held a workshop in December at which Reena, an organization that works with those with developmental handicaps, launched its new brochure, called Breaking Down Barriers: A Guide to Synagogue Accessibility.

Synagogues may be required to provide assistance in the form of magnifying devices, wheelchairs, adequate lighting or captioning. Staff and volunteers should also be trained in meeting both the physical and spiritual needs of all participants. Even if a location is usually accessible, the standards require explicit notification and accommodation during service disruptions, of an elevator for example.

Spindel, who is also president and CEO of Ontario's March of Dimes, praises Shabbat Itanu as a moment when the entire community can take notice of how it can become more accommodating.

"We aren't all thoughtful all the time," she says. "Shabbat Itanu is an opportunity to stop and think."

Rotman agrees.

"The synagogues really are committed to doing the right thing," she says, adding that it's hard to know how many Jews in Toronto are affected by a disability.

Rotman estimates that around 20,000 people might require accommodations.

Along with Darchei Noam and Beth Sholom, the synagogues participating in Shabbat Itanu are: Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, Temple Sinai Congregation of Toronto, Beth Torah Congregation and Shaarei Beth El Synagogue of Oakville. Others may be holding an inclusion Shabbat on another date. Beth Tikvah Synagogue, for example, will hold a special, closed-captioned service on April 10.

Rotman encourages everybody to ask how their synagogue is honouring Shabbat Itanu, which launches the community's third annual Inclusion Action Week April 16 to 22. The week will culminate in an awards ceremony honouring those who have contributed to the inclusion of people with disabilities.

Though Shabbat Itanu "focuses the community's attention," Rotman hopes participants "will continue coming and feel welcome and included... we want it be something that keeps on going for the rest of the year."

Shabbat Itanu may be a special day, says Rotman, but "we don't want it to be just that one day."

For more information about Shabbat Itanu and Inclusion Action Week, visit www.itanutoronto.ca.

Adath Israel's rabbi emeritus celebrates 90th birthday

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

"Basically, age is not a disease," said Rabbi Erwin Schild, who celebrated his 90th birthday March 9 with family, and again at Adath Israel Congregation, where he is rabbi emeritus, on a recent Shabbat.

On the second occasion, he shared with congregants his thoughts on aging, as expressed in a 1982 sermon that appears in the first of his three books, *World Through My Window*.

"We must live each day fully, not as if it was our *last*, but as if it was our *only one*," the rabbi reaffirmed.

Referring to a sermon he gave 10 years ago for his 80th birthday, Rabbi Schild said that people who "can still grow and change" remain young regardless of their chronological age.

Sixty-three years after becoming Adath Israel's spiritual leader, Rabbi Schild can still be found most days in his study at the shul, which has grown to some 1,700 families from less than 200 when he started there.

Rabbi Erwin Schild
[Frances Kraft photo]

He still gives sermons on occasion and officiates at some life cycle events.

"Unfortunately, mostly funerals," he added wryly.

As well, he teaches a weekly text-based study group that he calls Eclectic Torah.

"I enjoy that very much," said the rabbi, who has also led more than 30 trips to Israel.

Last winter, in December 2008, Rabbi Schild experienced a setback when he fell on the ice, fracturing his left hip and shoulder. He credits his recovery – which, he noted, "amazed some people" – in part to the fact that he was a jogger from the late 1950s until five years ago, when he switched to walking for exercise.

"We shouldn't say that certain things are inevitable. A lot depends on your mental attitude," he told *The CJN*.

The rabbi said he still can't identify "as an aged person. If I sit on a bus or subway and I see an elderly person, I get up and offer my seat, and I'm always surprised if somebody gets up for me.

"You have to live for others," Rabbi Schild said. "You have to try to – it sounds trite – to make the world a better place."

His own efforts in that regard include a long history of interfaith work, both locally and abroad.

A regular visitor to Germany following an initial invitation in 1982, Rabbi Schild has spoken to many Christian groups there about Judaism and his own personal history.

A native of Cologne, the future rabbi was imprisoned briefly in Dachau in 1938 before going to Britain on a student visa and later entering Canada as an enemy alien. He spent two years in an internment camp before starting yeshiva studies in Toronto.

Rabbi Schild is a member of the Order of Canada, and received a similar honour from the German government in 2000, in recognition of his contributions to Jewish-Christian dialogue in Germany.

He said he would probably return to Germany this year or next, but recently turned down three invitations to speak there. Instead, he and his wife will attend two family bar mitzvahs: their great-grandson's and their great-great-nephew's.

"I held this to be more important," he said.

In his own family, in addition to the Conservative Judaism the rabbi represents, there is a "very Orthodox" branch, as well as a Reconstructionist one.

"The resurgence of Orthodoxy has helped the entire community remain true to our tradition," Rabbi Schild said. "Even the liberal movements are influenced by the resurgence of strictly halachic Judaism."

However, he warned of the "danger of Judaism splitting into sects" and eventually no longer being able to form a community. He attributes the risk partly to "the exclusivity of some of the Orthodox, and the lack of appreciation, on the part of the liberal Jews, of the necessity that we must remain one people."

Rabbi Schild believes that non-Orthodox denominations shouldn't do anything to create a breach between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities.

At the same time, he said, the Orthodox "should realize that many Jews are what they are. They're liberal not because they want to tear down Judaism or diminish it, but they want to maximize it, making it more relevant to their lives. There has to be more mutual recognition that we all have a job to do.

"We should remember that we are still one Jewish people, and our liberalism should not go so far as to alienate them completely."

He noted that the "hardening of the lines, and the erecting of barriers that are difficult to cross" has become significant. A case in point: recently he came across a decade-old contract to sell chametz signed by himself and a local Orthodox rabbi.

"Today it would be almost unthinkable that an Orthodox rabbi and I would be signing the same contract," he said.

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The long shadow of eternal remembrance

Last week, Matthew Burrows, an adviser to the U.S. National Intelligence Council, told a foreign press briefing in Washington, D.C., that American intelligence agencies "continue to assess that Iran has a scientific, technical and industrial capacity to produce enough highly enriched uranium for a weapon in the next few years if it chooses to do so, and eventually to produce nuclear weapons. The central issue is a decision to do so."

American intelligence estimates have not always proven to be especially reliable in the past. Thus, if Burrows was attempting to assuage Israeli and international anxieties regarding the imminence of an Iranian nuclear bomb with his vague assessment of "next few years," he failed to do so.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who repeatedly told her AIPAC audience last month that a nuclear-armed Iran would be "unacceptable," also failed to do so, for she prescribed no program of effective prevention.

Even news last week that six world powers – United States, Russia, Britain, Germany and France, and for the first time China – agreed to pursue a new round of sanctions against Iran, failed to do so. For it is widely known that China will likely only agree to relatively weak sanctions, and even then, not before three or more months have passed.

Two new nuclear plants will soon be under construction in Iran, adding to Tehran's complex network of underground, well-protected nuclear installations. Even the International Atomic Energy Agency now believes that Iran is trying to acquire nuclear weapons. It announced last week that Iran is building another uranium enrichment facility.

Without sounding like Cassandra screaming her alarms into the wind, it is nearly impossible not to pause with shivering disquiet at the prospect of nuclear weapons in the hands of the regime that bankrolls and trains its sadistic cadre of terrorist surrogates and openly yearns for Israel to be "wiped off the map."

It was 65 years ago, after the gates to the various killing and concentration camps in Europe were thrown open, that the world saw the full horrible and horrific truth of Nazi Germany's genocidal wartime objectives. Not a few commentators have drawn the parallel between the failure of the world's democracies to stand up to the Nazis in the mid-1930s and the failure of the world's democracies to stand up to Iran today.

Next week, we commemorate Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah. The destruction of European Jewry casts a very long, dark shadow of eternal remembrance with very clear imperatives. That shadow did not only fall upon the Jewish people. It fell upon the entire world. The entire world, therefore, needs to grasp the urgency of those imperatives.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

U.S. president Ronald Reagan said his refusal to visit the Dachau concentration camp on an upcoming trip to Germany to mark 40 years since the Nazis' defeat didn't mean the Holocaust should be forgotten. He said memorial events should be a celebration and not "for reawakening memories of the war." He said Germans have had "a guilt feeling imposed on them" and few were alive who had taken part in the war.

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Get abuse is abuse against women

I was so pleased to see the article "'One agunah is too many,' despite changes in law, 'the problem persists'" (March 18), as *get* abuse is another type of abuse against women that is not recognized as such in the majority of cases. Education is always the key factor in creating change.

Two years ago, Jewish Women International of Canada (JWIC) participated in a project to produce *Family Law Education for Women* (FLEW) materials, funded by the Ontario Women's Directorate. JWIC was also asked to produce a "specialty product" for Jewish women. A group of community experts worked on this project for one year, producing *Why Do I Need A Jewish Divorce? Questions & Answers for Jewish Women*. This excellent and informative booklet is available in English, French, Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian and Spanish free of charge from JWIC. It answers important questions for women, religious or not about the need for a *get*, the procedure and other details. Contact JWIC at 416-630-9313 or at info@jwic.com.

Penny Krowitz
Executive Director
JWIC...Ending Violence Against Women
Toronto

* * *

Shabbat at the ends of the earth

The reopening of the Israeli Embassy in New Zealand is a fortuitous development that will strengthen world Jewry (The News in Brief, March 18).

Jews who will be moving to New Zealand in order to staff and support the embassy are halachically obligated to observe two consecutive days of Shabbat every week and two consecutive days of Yom Kippur every year, owing to the insoluble doubt regarding the longitudinal position of the international dateline, as it is defined by Torah law. A detailed legal analysis of why this is so is published in an article co-authored by Rabbi Moshe Ashen and myself that appears in Yeshiva University's journal *Beit Yitzchak* (www.yutorah.org).

The duty to observe two consecutive days of Shabbat in New Zealand sheds homiletical light on the verse "May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him" (Psalms 67:8). Namely, Jews living at the ends of the earth (in such locations as New Zealand), where it is not halachically clear whether they inhabit the far east or the far west, are summoned to manifest fear of God by observing two consecutive days of Shabbat.

Shalom Spira
Montreal

* * *

Jewish life flourishing in Kingston

As president of Queen's Hillel, allow me to congratulate the Kappa Phi Chapter of the AEPi fraternity on their recent chartering ("Kingston fraternity comes of age," March 18). I would also like to assure your readers that there are other aspects to the flourishing Jewish life in Kingston.

Queen's Hillel is the second-oldest Hillel in Canada, founded some 65 years ago. Since then, we have grown into a thriving hub of Jewish life. With many cultural, religious, educational, and philanthropic events for our nearly 200 members, we provide a welcoming community for Jewish students of all backgrounds while they are away from home.

We also work together with the other Jewish organizations in Kingston, such as the Kingston Jewish Council, Beth Israel Synagogue and Iyr Hamelech Congregation, as well as AEPi. Hillel and AEPi are not mutually exclusive alternatives to one another. Rather, we complement each other. We have been successful at building a co-operative, positive relationship, recently partnering on a Gift of Life bone marrow registry clinic where we entered 410 new names.

AEPi is a wonderful addition to the Kingston Jewish family. While we are sure that incoming Jewish students will benefit from all the hard work these young men do, the other elements of the dynamic Jewish community at Queen's should not be ignored.

Madlyn Axelrod
President
Queen's Hillel, 2009-10
Kingston, Ont.

* * *

People Search

I am researching my mother's family. Her father, Woolf Brodie, came out to Toronto from Manchester, England, in 1923 to stay with his sister, Leah (formerly Brodie). Her name on the shipping form is given as Mrs. Apelrod (or could be Abelrod). The address is 217 Bellwoods Ave., Toronto. I recall Leah had a son called Sidney. Does anyone among your readers recognize these names? I look forward to hearing from you.

Hilary Thomas
Cheshire, England
hiltone@talktalk.net

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

'Hitler did not win'

By ELI RUBENSTEIN

A well-known story from the Holocaust is told by Primo Levi in *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Shortly after Levi first arrived in Auschwitz, he saw an icicle hanging from one of the barracks. Attempting to relieve his parched throat, Levi reached for the icicle only to have it snatched away by a Nazi guard.

"Why?" the naïve Levi asked the guard, yet unfamiliar with the alien rules of "Planet Auschwitz."

The guard responded bluntly: "There is no why here."

There is no "why" in Auschwitz.

This simple story illustrates the grim reality of a universe created primarily for the purpose of causing human suffering, and ultimately murder, where rules existed for the sole reason of crushing the human spirit, and where this cruel intention was made amply known to the prisoners.

Over the years, Auschwitz has been "elevated" to the symbol of human evil. The wedding of technology and murder, the staggering number of victims, the infamous moment of selection by "Dr." Josef Mengele, the "Angel of Death," the eyewitness testimonies of so many survivors, have all contributed to Auschwitz's representing the deepest abyss to which humanity can plunge.

And yet, communities around the world, as far away as Australia, have been sending thousands of young people on visits to this darkest of places, on programs like the March of the Living (for Jewish students) and the March of Remembrance and Hope (for multifaith students).

Why?

The reasons are both universal and specific, and too complex to be adequately described here.

Nevertheless, a few general reflections are worth noting.

On a universal level, Auschwitz reminds us of what the thin veneer we call "civilization" really masks, and how easy it is for societies – "advanced" or not – to slip into genocidal behavior. It has been said that after Auschwitz, we can no longer be naïve about the dark side of humanity. So too, can one no longer remain oblivious to the human capacity for evil, after a visit to Auschwitz.

Human rights education, the dignity of all humanity, the infinite preciousness of each life, what Jewish tradition calls "Tzelem Elokim" – there is no greater, more tragic reminder of the need for the inculcation of these values than a visit to a site of mass murder such as Auschwitz.

Since the Holocaust, there has been no shortage of genocides. Need I mention Rwanda, Cambodia and the ongoing tragedy in Darfur? Perhaps these calamities could have been averted if children there and throughout the world were raised within educational systems that proclaimed a love and compassion for humanity at the core of its purpose. Perhaps there would have been no perpetrators or no bystanders – or more realistically, fewer of each.

From a specifically Jewish perspective, the purpose and lessons of a visit to Auschwitz and other Holocaust sites in Poland, followed by a visit to Israel, touch upon personal, theological, cultural, political and other areas, too important and numerous to adequately address here.

But there are two areas I would like to dwell upon.

One area concerns the idea of pilgrimage. On the March of the Living, young people transport themselves thousands of miles away from their homes, and with their own two feet, tread upon the very earth where our ancestors learned, prayed, loved – and perished. This act of travelling to these former places of life and learning, and destruction and martyrdom, is in itself a cry of protest over the injustices of the past. It is an act of sacred memorialization, a statement to the entire world – and perhaps even to those who have perished – that the death of six million of our people and so many others will never be forgotten.

The students are not just learning about history, but with their physical presence they are touching and indeed entering history, making a statement, with their entire being in the present, about the past.

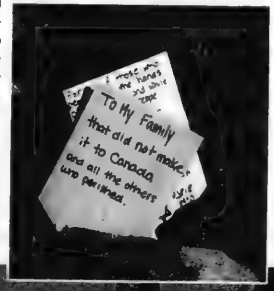
Sally Wasserman, a Holocaust survivor and hidden child, recalled one moment from all her trips to Poland that still stands out for her. She and her students had visited a charming town called Tykcohen, a shtetl right out of *Fiddler on the Roof*. The lovingly restored small synagogue in the village square, dating back to 1642, was a reminder of the traditional way of life that once thrived there. Then the group left the idyllic town for the nearby Lopohova forest, where Tykcohen's Jews were marched, ordered to dig pits, then shot en masse into the graves they had been forced to prepare for themselves. Silence engulfed the students standing at this sombre site of grievous carnage. "You know I'm not a religious person," Sally recalled, "but I couldn't help myself."

I shouted out, "Please, please, someone say Kaddish! Please!"

And Kaddish was indeed recited in the middle of the lush, green forest that hid this terrible crime – and all the children answered, "Amen."

Why do we return? To say: "We are here, and with all our might and all our strength, we proclaim on this very ground, with our bodies and our souls: We remember, we shall always remember!" And to answer, "Amen" when Kaddish is recited in the memory of our martyred ancestors.

The second area concerns the role of the survivors on the trip. The March of the Living has evolved since the trip was first begun in 1988. More attention is now paid to the rich Jewish life that existed in prewar Europe; dialogue between Jewish and Polish Christian students and meetings with the Righteous Among the Nations are encouraged; the revival of the Jewish community in Poland is discussed. But the single most significant change has been with regard to the role of the survivor.



[Israel and Flash90 photos]

It's hard to believe, but Holocaust survivors did not join the March of the Living in its earliest years. Now, they are seen as indispensible to the program. Each bus on this year's March of the Living, comprised of some 30 countries, will include at least one survivor who will share his or her painful Holocaust stories with the students in the very places they unfolded.

Over the years, thousands of stories have been transmitted by survivors to students travelling to Poland – standing near the dome of ashes in Majdanek, or in a barrack in Auschwitz, or among the silent stone monuments in Treblinka. Each story is more heartbreaking than the next, each a story of life and love interrupted, of irreparable loss.

Who can forget Pinchas Gutter telling of the last time he saw his twin sister in Majdanek? All he can remember is the long golden blond braid swinging behind her back, as she was herded with their mother toward her end – but he cannot to this day, try as he might, recall her face.

And how can anyone forget Judy Weissenberg Cohen telling of the last time she saw her mother, during the selection on the train tracks in Birkenau, and how, to this day, she still wishes she had given her mother one last hug and kiss goodbye.

Which student could ever forget Anita Ekstein, whose life was saved by righteous Poles, visiting Belzec on, of all days, Mother's Day, and finding her mother's name on the memorial wall in Belzec; or the recounting of her father's last words to her, at eight years of age, which were: "Always remember who you are."

And yet, in the survivors' act of telling, of transmitting their memories to a new generation, a seed of hope is planted anew. By embarking on these trips, the young people are, in effect, pledging: "Your struggles will be remembered, your loved ones will not be forgotten. We, a new generation of young people, commit to creating a better world for the Jewish People, and for all humanity, a world far different than the one that sought to destroy your generation."

We who were born in the post-Holocaust era have inherited a broken world.

But as we study this broken world of ours and then look at the earnest faces of our young people, who so much want to understand and to not repeat the mistakes of the past, we are reminded of what Rabbi Nachman of Breslev taught us some two centuries ago: "If you believe it can be broken, then know it can also be fixed."

Hitler attempted not only to destroy the Jewish People, but to spiritually break them in the process. To reduce them from individuals, to numbers, and then to ash, to destroy the very memory of every Jewish woman, man and child.

Each time we return to Poland, each time a Holocaust survivor shares his or her story of survival, we are denying Hitler's aims. Each time a survivor shares the story of his or her martyred relatives, we are lifting them out from their anonymous deaths and denying Hitler a posthumous victory. Each time a group of young people arrives in Auschwitz and proclaims the values of human dignity and equality, we know our broken world can yet again be made whole.

Let me share one last moment from the March of the Living.

Looking out on the sea of humanity, upon thousands of young people from around the world wearing blue and white jackets, marching from Auschwitz to Birkenau on Yom Hashoah, Anita Ekstein told her daughter, Ruth: "You see? Hitler did not win."

Our Holocaust survivors and our young people have banded together to remind the world of the terrible wave of hatred that once engulfed it, and how we must strive to set a new course for humanity, one that embraces love, dignity, and empathy for each and every member of the human family.

Their legacy is our hope.

Eli Rubenstein is national director of the March of the Living and director of education for the March of Remembrance and Hope. Together with 10,000 young people from around the world, and more than 600 Canadian participants, students, survivors and adults from Canada, he will be marching on Yom Hashoah from Auschwitz to Birkenau on the 2010 March of the Living.

Until the last breath

In times of oppression, it feels as if we don't have free will. If someone is holding a gun to your head, what choices do you have?

But there is free will in hell. Even when he's lost control of his fate, man can choose quiet nobility.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

It's easy to ignore these fragments of free will. Choices seem insignificant when the outcome is inevitable. When the Romans executed the great Rabbi Akiva, his students stood by during his last moments. As the Romans were torturously tearing Rabbi Akiva's skin off, the time for the *Shema* arrived. Weakened and dazed, Rabbi Akiva recited the prayer. His startled students exclaimed: "Rebbe, even now?" Do you still need to say the *Shema* seconds before death, when you have already proven your courage?

The students' amazement is understandable, but Rabbi Akiva's lesson is a significant one: there's still free will in hell.

Free will remains, even when death is inevitable, because we can choose how we live our last moments. To spend one's last seconds whispering a prayer may seem insignificant, but actually, this whispered prayer is a heroic declaration that our final choices matter. (Indeed, Rabbi Akiva's *Shema* has been emulated ever since.) Rabbi Akiva reminds us that free will is possible everywhere, even in hell.

Of course, free will under duress is precious. Victor Frankl, a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, wrote a book about his experiences entitled *Man's Search for Meaning*. He relates that even though many were dehumanized by the concentration camps, some inspirational people rose above their circumstances.

He writes: "We who lived in concentration camps can remember the men who walked through the huts comforting others, giving away their last piece of bread. They may have been few in number, but they offer sufficient proof that everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Yes, it's normal for a person who has been degraded to believe that he's an animal. But man's free will shines its brightest in crises – when people courageously choose to recite the *Shema* in their dying moments and heroically choose to share their rations in a concentration camp. Man always has a choice.

It may seem absurd to stand before the angel of death and still worry about mumbling a prayer or giving away a half eaten crust of bread. But in actuality, these small choices affirm man's invincible spirit, a spirit as infinite as the image of God.

And that invincible spirit remains with us, until the last breath.

Anti-Israel week elicits yawning, not yelling

On Feb. 25, the Ontario legislature unanimously passed, by voice vote, a resolution condemning "Israeli Apartheid Week" (IAW), days before it began in Toronto, as well in 11 other Canadian cities and another two dozen locations worldwide.

Gil Troy in Montreal

This all-party amity on any issue is rare. Just as the Obama Administration was gearing up for an unnecessary, counterproductive showdown with Israel, Canada once again took the lead in supporting it.

MPP Peter Shurman, should be hailed for leading the fight against what he branded a "hateful… odious" comparison that insults Israel, all democratic countries that share Israel's values, and millions of black South Africans who endured racism under apartheid, which separated people on the basis of colour systematically, legally and brutally.

Shurman's resolution proclaimed: "I move that in the opinion of this house, the term 'Israeli Apartheid Week' is condemned, as it serves to incite hatred against Israel, a democratic state that respects the rule of law and human rights, and the use of the word 'apartheid' in this context diminishes the suffering of those who were victims of a true apartheid regime in South Africa."

Shurman understood that these resolutions are not binding. Moreover, they do not squelch anyone's right to free speech, no matter how aggressive or untrue that speech may be. Rather, he explained, the resolution was a tool of "moral suasion," reflecting the feelings of a democratic body, appalled by an unreasonable, undemocratic assault against the democratic nation of Israel.

By contrast, in a video circulated on the Internet promoting the bash-Israel-fest, Toronto-based activist Naomi Klein proclaimed: "Nothing about this week is motivated by hate. It's motivated by justice. It's about using our freedom to defend the freedom of Palestinians to exist in peace and dignity and with full equality in their land."

In fact, Palestinian nationalism's great failure is its nihilism, the fact that so much of the movement's energies are dedicated to destroying Israel rather than building a Palestinian state. A week celebrating Palestinian nationalism could be about "peace and dignity." But a week demonizing Israel and celebrating the false, misleading comparison with South African racism is about hate – and, not surprisingly, has often degenerated into hooliganism and anti-Semitism.

There is much to debate regarding Israel, Palestinians and the quest for Middle East peace. But someone committed to "peace and dignity" would acknowledge how much of this constant Israel-bashing is fed by the crudest Arab anti-Semitism. The disgusting images rooted in Nazi propaganda that still appear in the Arab press feed a demonizing discourse that led some York University students to yell "die Jew" and recently led a student at Oxford University protesting an Israeli government official to yell in Arabic "*Itbah al-Yahud*," which means "Slaughter the Jews."

Nationalism is a double-edged sword: it can elevate and enlighten, as it does in democracies such as Canada, or it can rouse and ruin. Becoming addicted to hatred of one's defined adversaries gives a fleeting feeling of unity, but it ultimately degenerates into violence and destructiveness. Too much of the Palestinian national movement – and far too much of it on campus and in North America – is devoted to Israel-bashing. It creates a culture of martyrdom that celebrates suicide bombers rather than nation builders. It honours leaders such as Yasser Arafat, who preferred the purity of perpetual violence to the complexity of compromise. It results, in a cult of violence, sometimes feeding Hamas-versus-Fatah bloodshed, usually aimed at Jews.

Too much of the Arab world seems engulfed by this irrational hatred of Israel and Zionism. That this hatred is perfumed, rationalized and masked on campus in the language of human rights, then ennobled with the sacred mantle of the anti-apartheid struggle, is perverse.

Fortunately, most of our students are too smart to be swayed by such distortions. Initial reports this year suggest that "anti-Israel week" 2010 was a bust.

Students repudiated this festival of historical distortion, nationalist nihilism and Israel-bashing by yawning, not yelling. Most demonstrated the good sense to avoid the tumult and let the haters shout to mostly empty rooms – a perfect response.

Let's bring a little bit of Jerusalem to T.O.

Recently a friend of ours here in Jerusalem remarked, "When I arrived in Jerusalem, I had a master's degree in Jewish studies from Brandeis University. I soon realized that was barely the equivalent of a high school diploma here." How true! Although certainly not all Israelis are Einsteins, and in fact there are many ignoramuses, in a society where you can often be taught some Torah from a cab driver, or a snippet of Maimonides from your plumber, it can be pretty intimidating.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Jerusalem

I'm in awe at the depth of learning and erudition in Jerusalem, where the competition to teach and to learn is stiff. Fabulous days of learning happen all over the city before every festival, drawing interested, curious and passionate students from across both the religious and non-religious spectrum. Any night of the week offers you a chance to learn with another "big name" speaker. These speakers sometimes go on "speaking tours" that hit Toronto, and we get the opportunity to hear them once a year if we're lucky. Here, you can attend their shiur weekly. Great yeshivas are a dime a dozen, and great teachers a nickel a dozen.

By great teachers, I don't mean teachers who are all charisma and little content; who tell the students what the text means without giving them a chance to unpack it themselves, or who teach other people's "stock" curriculum. They may be great teachers in that they're funny, entertaining, provocative and make difficult material easy to digest. But what I mean is truly great scholars who have encyclopedic knowledge and offer novel and startling insights, not the same old reheated rabbinic clichés.

They don't "dumb down" the material or interpret it using their own personal agenda. They expect students to reach up, to struggle with a difficult passage, to read the commentaries, and to go home and explore further (and not on Wikipedia, either). They admit when a text is confusing, contradictory, emotionally charged or even bizarre, and they wrestle with it even when it doesn't "sit right" with a student at the end. I've learned as much from simply watching these methodical, brilliant teachers as I have from the material itself.

We have an amazing community and talented, first-rate scholars in Toronto, but I worry that we do not "reach in" and "reach up" enough. We should and must continue all our efforts to bring into the fold those on the margins – the unengaged, the peripheral. We should and must offer innovative and creative opportunities to start a Jewish journey. But what about those who are already well on the path, literate in Jewish texts and involved in Jewish life, those who have studied all the "basics" and want to move deeper, faster, higher?

I envision opportunities for advanced students to study on a higher level than most "basics" we already have, especially in liberal settings. I envision more Limmud-type days, evening and weekends where people learn in the same room with folks from very different backgrounds and viewpoints. I envision a beit midrash where men and women from across the Jewish spectrum could just "drop in," find a study partner (who might not be from the same shul or even denomination as they are) and a teacher. I envision people learning biblical Hebrew as well as the beginner's alephbet. I guess I envision a little bit of Jerusalem in Toronto.

At the beginning of May is Lag b'Omer, marking the end of a plague upon Rabbi Akiva's students. Most people know it as a holiday of bonfires, but during the Middle Ages, Lag b'Omer became a special holiday for rabbinical students and was called the "Scholar's Festival." As such, it symbolizes the Jewish determination to learn, and the Jewish passion to teach. How wonderful if Toronto would lead the way in being a Diaspora Jewish scholar's town.

Read Rabbi Goldstein's blog from Israel at www.jerusalemofgoldstein.blogspot.com.

The Kirshner File

Iran's quest for nuclear arms may touch off a war

Iran's war of words with Israel, spurred by Israel's extremely strong suspicion that Iran is building a nuclear arsenal despite its insistent denials, has reached new rhetorical heights of brinkmanship lately.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently taunted Israel, boasting that neither the Israeli government nor the western powers can do "a damn thing" to stop Iran's budding nuclear program. Ahmadinejad, who has repeatedly called for Israel's destruction, warned Israel it would be finished off "once and for all" if it launched a preemptive attack on Iran's nuclear sites. Iran's foreign minister, Manchour Mottaki, added that while Israel – "a crazy country run by crazy people" – is militarily in no position to strike Iran, "we must prepare for the chance that Israel will do something crazy."

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

The question that consumes the Middle East these days is whether Israel will eventually act on its oft-stated belief that a nuclear-armed Iran is an intolerant danger to its very existence.

Prior to his election last year as Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu described Iran's nuclear program as "an existential threat [to] Israel" and said, "I promise that if I am elected, Iran will not acquire nuclear arms." After taking office, Netanyahu suggested that his foremost task was "to eliminate the danger" emanating from Iran. "Who will eliminate it? It is us or no one." Netanyahu's national security adviser, Uzi Arad, reiterated that Israel would not allow Iran to attain nuclear weapons capability.

Neither Netanyahu nor Arad were staking out a new policy. Five years ago, Israel's then defence minister, Shaul Mofaz, said, "Under no circumstances would Israel be able to tolerate nuclear weapons in Iranian possession." Israel's former chief of staff, Dan Halutz, was just as emphatic. Asked how far Israel was ready to go to stop Iran, he replied, "Two thousand kilometres."

Since then, Iran has made considerable strides to attain an atomic bomb, notwithstanding a comment by its supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, that Iran is not seeking nuclear weapons and is only interested in developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Last month, shortly after Tehran approved plans to build 10 industrial scale uranium enrichment plants, Ahmadinejad announced that Iran was close to enriching uranium to more than 80 per cent purity, the level required for a nuclear device.

This came on the heels of a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran may currently be working on ways to convert enriched uranium into a nuclear warhead.

Israeli officials are absolutely convinced that Iran wants a nuclear arsenal and is on the brink of joining the exclusive nuclear club, of which Israel is a member.

"Iran will not abandon [its] nuclear program," said Vice-Premier Silvan Shalom last autumn. Israel's chief of military intelligence, Amos Yadlin, claims that Iran has accumulated enough materials to manufacture a bomb. Yossi Baidatz, the head of Yadlin's research division, says that Iran has the technical knowledge to outfit a missle fitted with a nuclear device that can reach Israel.

Meir Dagan, the director of the Mossad, has said that Iran will be ready to launch a nuclear weapon by 2014. A study published by the Institute for National Security at Tel Aviv University concludes that Iran could be a year away from producing a nuclear weapon. "Politically, however, Iran may choose a later date to do this," says its co-author, Ephraim Kam.

The former director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohammed El Baradei, claimed that Iran's pursuit of a bomb is a function of its desire to be recognized as a major power in the Middle East and serves as an "insurance policy" to ward off possible threats to its sovereignty.

There is an element of truth in his assertion, but it is also true that a nuclear-armed Iran would embolden Tehran and its allies – Hezbollah and Hamas – and thereby create more uncertainty and instability in the region.

An Iranian nuclear arsenal could also have a disastrous and demoralizing effect on Israelis. According to the Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, 23 per cent of Israelis would consider leaving the country if Iran acquired a nuclear device.

Having considered this scenario, Israel's former deputy defence minister, Ephraim Sneh, said, "We cannot live under the shadow of an Iran with nuclear weapons."

So what is the solution?

The former director of the Mossad, Danny Yatom, put it bluntly: Iran's quest for nuclear arms can only be stopped by military means. Israel's current defence minister, Ehud Barak, is more circumspect: Israel is not "taking any option off the table." Its deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, has been clearer: Israel has not given up the option of a military response.

Last summer, however, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman said, "Israel is not planning to bomb Iran," while President Shimon Peres said, "Israel does not plan to launch any strikes on Iran. We are a peaceful country and we will not do this." More recently, following claims by Iran that Israel is planning "a spring or summer war," Netanyahu discounted such speculation. But last September, he refused to rule out the possibility of an Israeli strike on Iran.

For now, Israel is focused on fostering support for a fourth set of United Nations sanctions against Iran. "I believe now is the time for diplomacy," said Barak. Netanyahu was more specific: "This means not moderate sanctions or watered-down sanctions, this means crippling sanctions." Israel has thus urged Russia and China – which have both been wary of imposing tough sanctions on Iran – to turn a new page. In addition, Israel supported a U.S.-backed plan to curb Iran's nuclear program through shipments of its enriched uranium abroad.

If Israel attacks Iran's nuclear sites, the burden would fall on Israeli aircraft such as these.

But since Iran's leadership ultimately rejected this plan, and since sanctions may not deter Iran, Israel may seriously consider a military response. The passage of two Sa'ar 5-class Israeli Navy ships through the Suez Canal last July, as well as Israel's more recent unveiling of a long-range drone capable of carrying a variety of payloads for thousands of kilometres, were interpreted as implicit messages to Iran that Israel may be preparing for unilateral action in the near future.

If Israel were to attack Iran, the Israeli Air Force would probably be called upon to carry out the mission. The main targets would presumably be Iran's nuclear research centre in Isfahan, the uranium-enrichment facility in Natanz, the heavy water factory in Arak and perhaps the reactor in Bushehr.

An Israeli bombing campaign would be "a complex and high-risk" venture, lacking "any assurances that the overall mission [would] have a high success rate," write Anthony Cordesman and Abdullah Toukan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., citing Iran's fortified and dispersed underground facilities and its formidable anti-aircraft defences. Besides, Iran may well have built secret sites.

At best, Israel may succeed in damaging Iran's nuclear infrastructure, leaving the problem fundamentally unresolved and itself open to Iranian retaliation. By way of reprisal, Iran's minister of defence has threatened to bomb Israel's nuclear installations, while the leader of its Revolutionary Guards has promised to "blow up the heart" of Israel.

Clearly, a war with Iran would be prolonged and very costly to Israel, as Israeli researcher Moshe Vered has written. In other words, it may be counterproductive.

Finally, the United States, Israel's sole ally, is opposed to a military strike, as a parade of American visitors from the vice-president to the director of the CIA have informed Israel of late in no uncertain terms.

At the end of the day, as NATO's former secretary-general, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, has noted, Israel may have no choice but to learn to live with a nuclear-armed Iran. For Israel, this would be a bitter pill to swallow.

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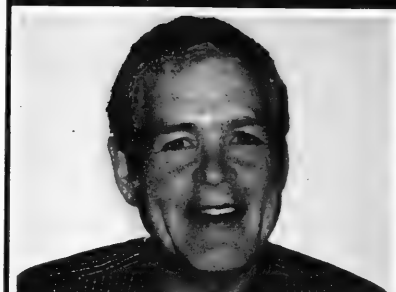

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Pride of Israel rabbi preps for U.S. Navy deployment

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Until recently, Rabbi Sean Gorman's commission with the United States Navy hasn't impinged much on his duties as a spiritual leader in Toronto.

This fall, however, he will be deployed as a battalion chaplain after Sukkot.

Following two months of preparation in Mississippi, the rabbi's unit, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 26, will travel to the CENTCOM region, which includes Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Kuwait. He expects to return in August 2011.

Rabbi Sean Gorman

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., who attended junior high and high school in Norfolk, Va., Rabbi Gorman – a self-described "navy brat" whose father was a boiler technician – arrived in Toronto in 2005 to serve as the third rabbi of Beth Tzedec Congregation. Last summer, he became the rabbi of the Pride of Israel Synagogue.

Ordained by the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary in 1998, Rabbi Gorman trained as a navy chaplain while still a rabbinical student. "It was something I thought was very important."

Rabbi Gorman announced the upcoming deployment – his first – to his new congregation in last month's synagogue bulletin. "The reaction has been supportive," he told *The CJN*.

While other types of support – such as care packages – are "vitally important," it's "a much more emphatic statement" for a congregation to send its rabbi, he said.

Until recently, Rabbi Gorman's navy commitment was two days a month and two weeks a year of service.

The rabbi's preparation at the moment, aside from two weeks of training, involves "mostly logistical stuff, such as making sure the cars get tires."

His wife, Rabbi Jennifer Gorman who is regional youth director for Eastern Canadian Region United Synagogue Youth (ECRUSY) and congregational consultant for United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – does not have an official role at the Pride of Israel. She will remain here with their three children.

As chaplain for people of all faiths, Rabbi Gorman will address the religious and spiritual needs on both an individual and unit level, act as a counsellor when necessary, and "be a smiling face at all times," he wrote to his congregants.

He added that an enlisted man will be assigned to him to make sure he always has his religious gear, and to be his bodyguard in the field.

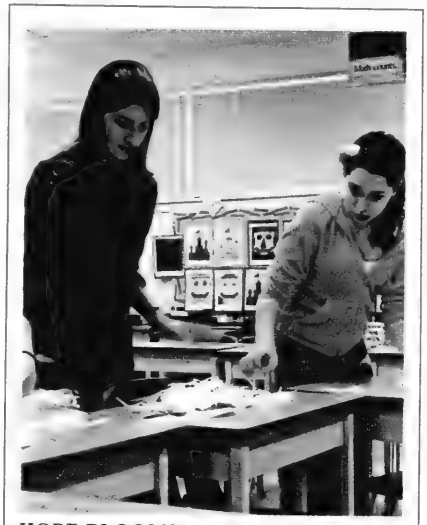
Although he can only run religious services for Jewish personnel, he will ensure that trained lay leaders are available for other faith groups.

The rabbi estimates there will only be about half a dozen Jews in his 600-strong battalion.

Rabbi Gorman said he is excited about his deployment. His battalion – one of the construction battalions (CBs), also known as SeaBees – consists of builders. The rabbi expects that they may build a hospital or school.

"It's got to be something along those lines," he said. "We are not a strike force."

Although he doesn't expect to be in a combat situation, he said the battalion is prepared for that possibility.



HOPE BLOOMS: Associated Hebrew Schools Students Rachel Sender, left, and Mila Schneider prepare tags for the 753 bunches of daffodils sold for the annual Hope Blooms campaign for the Canadian Cancer Society. This year, students and staff raised $5600 in 10 days to honour two Associated teachers currently receiving treatment for cancer.

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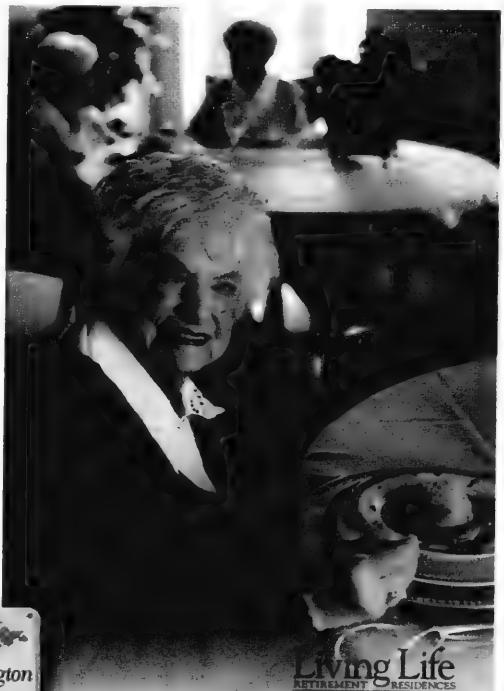

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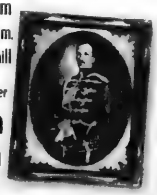

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UJA Walk with Israel 2010 to benefit the children of Bat Yam

42nd annual event takes to the streets of Toronto on Sunday, May 30th

By Daniel Horowitz

It's hard to believe, but United Jewish Appeal's annual Walk with Israel is about to turn 42, and will again turn the streets of Toronto into a veritable sea of blue and white on Sunday, May 30th.

By taking part in this year's event – the largest one-day Israel solidarity walk in the Diaspora – not only will you be showing your support of Israel, you will be helping young children in the city of Bat Yam, with proceeds being allocated through United Israel Appeal Canada to children's projects.

Located just south of Tel Aviv, Bat Yam has been plagued with severe unemployment, poor living conditions and an educational system that faces many challenges. The city is also home to a high population of Ethiopian immigrants striving to integrate into Israeli society.

The Walk kick-off party, held at Coronation Park – across from the CNE's Princes' Gates and sponsored by Horizons Betapro ETFs - will begin at 9am, with the Walk starting at 10am, rain or shine.

This year's Walk will again be chaired by husband and wife team Lianne and Bruce Leboff.

"Our family has two personal connections to Bat Yam, so chairing this year's Walk is even more meaningful to Bruce and I," said Lianne who, along with Bruce and their three daughters Rachel, Stephi and Danielle, have just returned from the Israeli city. "Our twin daughters have just celebrated their bat mitzvah, and one of them is donating her gifts to a sport and dance program for Ethiopian teens at the community centre there. Our other daughter is using her gifts to provide special needs kids in Toronto with a Jewish camp experience."

A portion of funds raised from this year's Walk with Israel will fund children's programs in Bat Yam.

The Leboffs have also been involved with developing Bat Yam's community garden, which gives elders in the Ethiopian community the opportunity to get back to doing what they do so well, working the land. The community garden is supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

"We felt that it was important to co-chair the Walk again this year to build on the experiences we gained after last year's event," said Bruce. "We are also delighted to have two outstanding vice chairs in Laurie Sheff and Johnny Cole, both of whom are committed to making this year's walk the best ever. We hope that children and families in Toronto will be inspired to help those in Bat Yam. We just witnessed firsthand the positive effects that the Toronto partnership is providing to the residents of that community."

The title sponsor for this year's Walk with Israel is Metropia Urban Landscapes, a national real estate company devoted to urban development and renewal.

"It was an easy choice for Metropia to sponsor the Walk, which has been a very visible and important part of the GTA's fabric for decades," said Howard Sokolowski, CEO of Metropia. "While the Walk supports important, life-changing initiatives in Israel, it's also a day for families and friends to come together and enjoy all that it has to offer. "

The Walk with Israel ends with the RioCan Festival which starts at 11:30am at The Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, and features carnival rides and games; a petting zoo; Guitar Hero; an Israeli arts and crafts centre; a kosher barbecue; and much more.

For more information or to register and raise funds online visit walkwithisrael.com or call 416.631.5700.

Ivey mission gives participants the unbiased truth about Israel

Combining their business savvy with a strong bond to the State of Israel, three students of The Richard Ivey School of Business recently organized a unique experience for several of their classmates.

From February 12 to the 20th, Rebecca Klaczkowski, Aaron Posluns and Tamar Zagdanski - all Ivey Honours in Business Administration students - organized and led two dozen schoolmates, including 19 non-Jews, on a life-changing mission to Israel.

While the mission is an educational and thought-provoking experience in itself, organizers also hope that the non-Jewish participants, many of whom may well become Canadian business and political leaders, will carry a positive view of Israel in the future, based on that experience.

One of those possible future leaders is Steph Zhang, who found her first trip to Israel to be a moving one.

"Despite the magnitude of the conflict in the Middle East, I was so moved by the Israeli people who I spoke to on this trip," she said. "They all have so much hope and optimism for the future. No matter what they have been through, everyone remains hopeful that they will continue to thrive. I loved the people and I loved the country."

"Leading this trip was an educational, inspirational and extremely rewarding experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life," said Posluns. "I am so grateful to all of our donors for the opportunity to take so many of my non-Jewish classmates to a place I treasure so much. We are also grateful to our school, which strongly supports our efforts, and provides all participating students with an academic credit."

Billed as a study trip, mission participants were asked to write a "reflection paper" about their experiences on which they were graded.

The eight-day mission included meetings with a number of high profile business leaders, journalists, politicians, Israeli students, a visit to the Weizmann Institute of Science, and much more.

"Exposure to the business leaders and journalists was very exciting, but the real highlight was connecting with my peers as they reacted to Israel," said Klaczkowski.

"I had a basic level of understanding about the conflict when I came, but now I have a completely different view of the situation in Israel," said Israeli first-timer Chris Selby. "After seeing Israel with my own eyes, I now see that what is portrayed in the media is not actually the full story."

"Bringing 19 non-Jewish Ivey students to Israel to educate them about the culture, heritage and the current economic and political situation, was a very rewarding experience," said Zagdanski. "We were fortunate enough to meet with some of the leading entrepreneurs and venture capitalists in Israel who demonstrated the country's cutting-edge in technology and innovation. It was also gratifying to see so many participants come to the realization that the media portrayal of Israel was biased."

This was the third year of the Ivey Mission to Israel, and organizers hope that with support from the Jewish community, it will continue its important role of building positive relationships within the non-Jewish community in the future.

Students from The Richard Ivey School of Business enjoy Jerusalem.

For Israelis, peace is a necessity, not a 'hobby'

In his March 28 *New York Times* column, "Hobby or Necessity," Tom Friedman wrote that the recent clash between U.S. President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is not just a disagreement over settlements, but rather reflects what Friedman termed "a tectonic shift" in U.S.-Israel relations.

Still, Friedman justified the dramatic imagery of major structural change underway by arguing that a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become a "necessity" for the United States while it remains a "hobby" for Israelis, thereby implying that U.S. pressure on Israel will continue to mount as it has never done so before.

The "necessity" part of Friedman's article must be left for a future column. For now, what is one to make of his calling Israel's commitment to the peace process a "hobby"? For sure it's a provocative claim. But it's also a false one.

Here's why: Friedman acknowledged that Israel's efforts over the last decade to seriously achieve a breakthrough with the Palestinians came to naught with the "collapse" of the Oslo peace process. Yet he failed to mention the reason it collapsed: former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat rejected Israel's offer of a viable Palestinian state – the same offer, although Friedman also didn't mention it, that current PA President Mahmoud Abbas rejected under the Annapolis formula just a couple of years ago.

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The essential point is that the Palestinian refusal to say "yes" to a Palestinian state that entails the recognition of a Jewish state is the cause of Israelis' disillusionment with a "peace" process that has brought Israelis only violence and, ironically, growing international condemnation and isolation when they react in self-defence.

True, Friedman recognized that Israel's unilateral withdrawals from Lebanon (2000) and Gaza (2005) "were followed not by peace, but by rocket attacks by Hezbollah and Hamas on Israel," and that these attacks, together with the failure of negotiations with the Palestinians, "decimated Israel's peace camp."

What he didn't say, however, is that these factors didn't decimate Israel's yearning for peace, only the idea (still widely held in the West) that more talks at this time – with the PA corrupt and weak, with the Palestinians divided between Fatah and Hamas, both of which are hostile to the Jewish character of Israel, and with Iran's growing menace – are likely to be productive.

Friedman, however, confused Israel's well-founded skepticism with complacency, given the country's solid economic performance and freedom from terrorist attacks since the security barrier (although only half completed) went up. In Friedman's view, Israelis are comfortable and feel no urgency to make peace, hence his use of the denigrating term "hobby."

But the validity of using that word to describe Israel is belied by two key facts. First, despite its skepticism, Israel has repeatedly called for negotiations without preconditions. American heavy-handedness over the settlement issue, not Israeli intransigence, has given Abbas and the PA a convenient excuse (so far) to avoid talks – even mediated talks – with the Israelis.

Second, it's fundamentally wrong to imply, as Friedman does, that the onus for peace falls squarely on Israel, since this assumes the Palestinians are willing this time to compromise, including over Jerusalem. There's simply no evidence to support that assumption, and much to contradict it.

(Yes, several Israeli analysts have argued that the current Israeli governing coalition would find it far more difficult to make the same generous offers than previous governments made to Arafat and Abbas. But they also note that if Israelis saw that the Palestinians are genuinely committed to compromise – instead of counting on the United States to "impose" their demands – Israeli democracy would find a path to a deal.)

On this subject, Hebrew University professor Emanuel Gutmann told the *Globe and Mail*'s Patrick Martin (March 26) that the "majority of Israelis support the idea of a unified Jerusalem in its present boundaries… But a majority of Israelis also support a two-state [Israel-Palestine] solution to this conflict and are prepared to accept compromise in the matter of Jerusalem."

Israelis need to see the same willingness for compromise from the Palestinians. And Tom Friedman needs to understand this, too.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Impairments found to be temporary

Continued from page 3

Kofman, who was in Toronto recently for a conference on frontal lobes, co-hosted by Baycrest, said she wanted to take advantage of the "ongoing chronic stress the students were subject to, and we wanted to look at the effects of real-life stress on their performance of certain cognitive tasks."

She administered three tests on members of the three groups, none of whom were taking medication or being treated for psychological problems.

But first, the students were subjected to "stress induction." Kofman asked them how many times they'd been exposed to attacks, how many times they heard rockets falling and if they knew anyone who'd been injured. The students were then shown three pictures of actual rocket attacks and instructed to imagine themselves in those situations.

Conference co-hosted by Baycrest

They then performed unrelated cognitive tests, the point of the exercise being that they had to suppress stronger, dominant emotions, such as fear.

"It's parallel to what happens when you have to perform any kind of test when you have a strong emotion in the background," explains Kofman, who earned her doctorate at the University of Toronto. "You sort of have to ignore it, put that aside and continue to function."

The first test was called verbal list learning, in which the students were told to memorize four lists of fruits and vegetables and one list of furniture. Kofman was looking for something called proactive interference, a process in which past memories interfere with the ability to retain new ones. She didn't find it.

"We found that the students who were from Sapir and tested in Sapir, where they'd been exposed to the rockets, their learning was just lower overall. We assumed that it might be because they didn't remember enough words to interfere with subsequent learning."

The second test timed the students as they switched between responses involving colours and shapes. The students from the first group – those in the danger zone – were found to be more accurate, but slower than the others.

"They were using a different strategy," Kofman said. "They may just have been used to being more cautious in general."

The third exercise was the tricky Stroop Test, which forces subjects to inhibit or stop one response in order to say or do something else. For example, it will show the word "blue" in red ink, and subjects are asked to name the colour.

In this task, the students in the danger zone were found to be "significantly less accurate" than those in the other groups, but not slower.

"It's not that they were being sloppy or distracted, but when it came to incongruent words, they had to suppress the natural tendency to read [and they] made more mistakes," Kofman explained.

Kofman steers clear of describing the residents of Sderot as suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She cites another study in which the residents of the town were found to have "ongoing traumatic stress response." The symptoms are similar to PTSD, but the triggers are not in the victim's past. Rather, they keep happening.

An upside to Kofman's study shows that the students' impairments were temporary, as those who were removed from Sderot showed better responses than those who were tested there.

Asked whether her study's results could be true for everyone in Sderot, Kofman said there would be many variables, but "probably."

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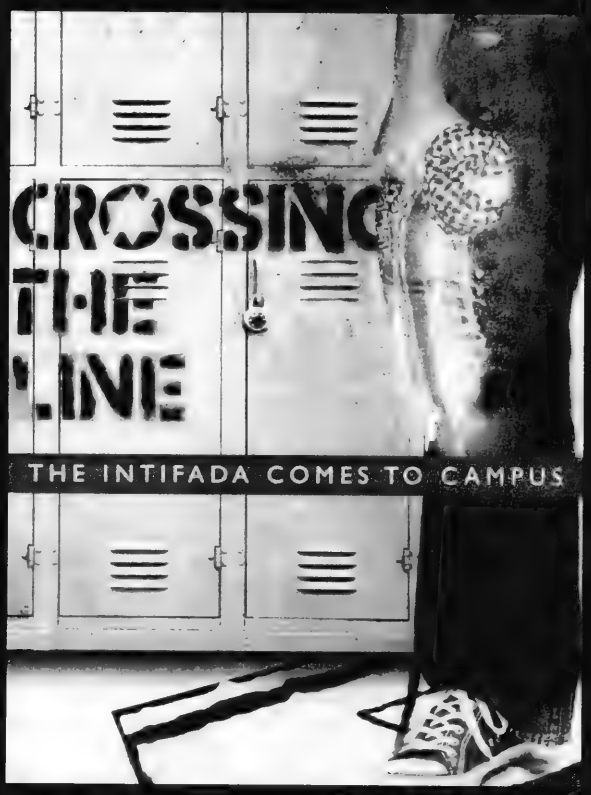

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An old friendship and a very old shul

By GEORGE KUN
Special to The CJN

In 1970, when I was 21 years old and living in Romania, I worked as an international tour guide in the Romanian Black Sea shore resorts. I met lots of interesting people from all over Europe, and speaking seven languages well helped me make many friends.

I got particularly close to one young couple from what is now the Czech Republic, who came to spend their honeymoon in Mamaia, an attractive resort. The bride was four months pregnant and the couple was very happy. Pavel, the groom was a refined, sophisticated intellectual with encyclopedic knowledge of history and arts. We forged a solid friendship, based on common interests, and after their vacation was over, we kept in touch by frequent correspondence for more than 10 years.

Later, our writing faded, and when I immigrated to Canada in 1980, we completely lost touch. I remembered, however, that his mailing address included an easy street number and the name of a famous Czech writer. Another 25 years later, I went on vacation to Croatia, where my wife is from, and we took a minibus trip to Biokovo Mountain, a jewel of a tourist attraction towering over the sparkling blue Adriatic Sea, by Makarska.

There were only four of us on that trip: me, my wife and a younger couple speaking Czech, who sat next to us. The sound of the language of my childhood triggered strong emotions, and I addressed the lady in Czech, asking where they were from.

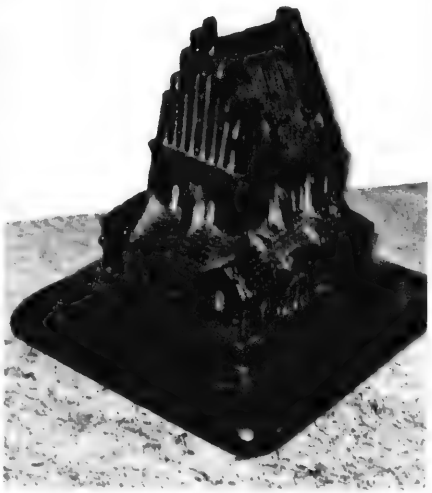
It turned out that they lived in the Czech Republic, in a small town near Prague, where my old friend Pavel was from, and they had also come as tourists to Croatia.

When I bragged about my friend Pavel and the street address I still remembered, it turned out that the woman was Pavel's daughter, precisely the one that 35 years ago was "hiding" in the womb of Pavel's wife on their honeymoon to Romania.

The revelation was shocking, and I obtained Pavel's home phone number from her. We returned to Canada long before our friends returned to the Czech Republic, so when I called Pavel, he was still unaware that I had met his daughter. After 35 years, he recognized my voice rather quickly and was in awe.

One month later, my wife and I decided to take a trip to Prague and we were able to meet him. Pavel was commuting daily by train from his hometown and was teaching arts at a high school in Prague. We spent a few days together walking in the old town, visiting art museums and watching a show at a unique and original puppet theatre that I used to go to as a child.

One day, we strolledthrough the famous old Jewish Ghetto, the largest in medieval Europe, with its famous synagogues, and we stopped at my favorite, the Old New Synagogue, the oldest active shul in Europe. Franz Kafka, the famous writer celebrated, his bar mitzvah there. We went on to visit the layered cemetery, where filming was done for the *Fiddler on the Roof* movie with Chaim Topol, and we traced the legend of the Golem.



A 350-year old bronze replica of the famous 13th-century Old New Synagogue of Prague.

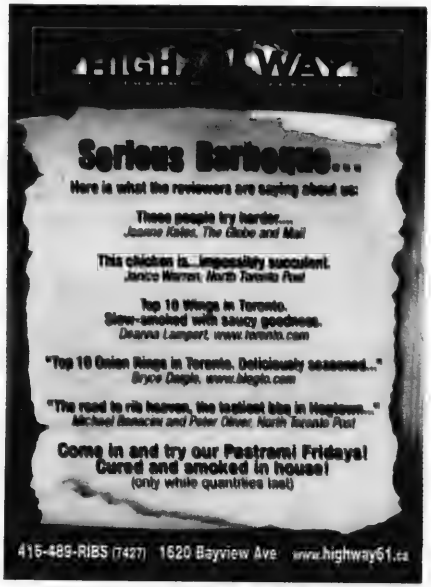
Prague is a deeply romantic and charming city, a perfect place to rekindle an old friendship. Pavel, long separated from his wife, very much enjoyed the time he spent with us. Our obvious enjoyment and gratitude for having such a graceful host, guide and friend did not go unnoticed, either, and it further cemented our friendship.

The last day before our departure, Pavel showed up at our hotel with a very special gift wrapped in a beautiful cotton pouch. Inside, it was a 350-year-old bronze replica of the famous 13th-century Old New Synagogue of Prague.

Pavel isn't Jewish, but his father's best friend was a rabbi who, before his death, gave the piece of art to Pavel's father as a good luck charm. The little synagogue had been in the rabbi's family for 300 years. Shortly before Pavel's father died, he handed over the precious gift to his son, for his good fortune in life.

And Pavel, when he found out about my Jewish roots and saw my interest in and knowledge of Jewish history in Prague, handed over the gift to me. It came with a hug, a few tears and the telling of the family's history with it.

That old bronze replica of the Old New Synagogue now has a spot of honour in my living room, and in my heart.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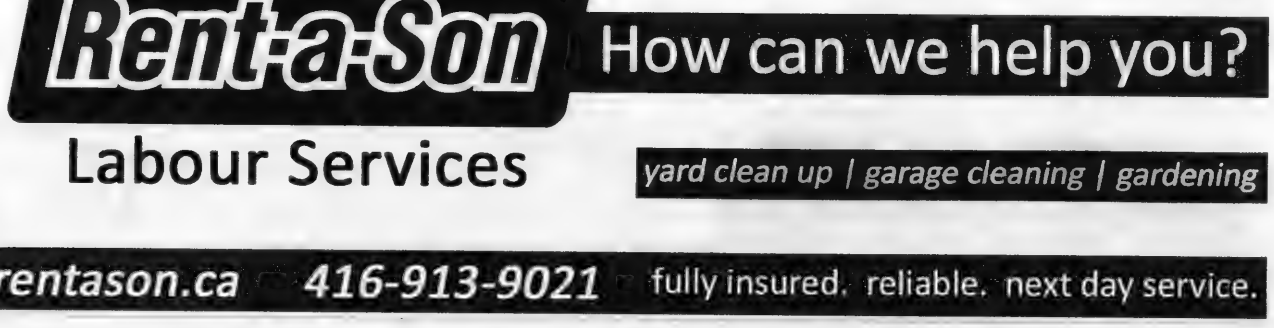
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Jewish Life

On belonging

By MITCHELL PARKER
Special to The CJN

In less than 24 hours on the Saturday night and Sunday morning of the first weekend of March, belonging, long important to me, literally took centre stage.

On Saturday night I was invited by a parent in my school to attend the seudah shlishit and *Havdalah* being held in honour of the Skverer Rebbe, a renowned spiritual leader, visiting Toronto from the New York City area.

When I arrived, the room was packed with Chassidim standing upon rows and rows of bleachers, listening attentively to each word of the Rebbe sitting on a raised podium in the front of the room flanked by his followers. There was barely any room to move.

Sometimes the Chassidim chanted phrases from the *mizmorim* following the cue of the Rebbe, other times they danced almost raucously, singing loudly and swaying back and forth on the tiny bench space allotted to each one.

Within moments of my arrival, a total stranger came up to me and offered politely but strongly to lead me into the very centre of activity. (Maybe it was the noticeable lack of black and white in my attire that suggested to him that I was a guest.) Magically, he found me a space at a table that did not look like it could possibly hold another soul. I was touched by the attempt to make me feel that I belonged.

In the next half hour, several others were seated near me in a similar fashion. We were caught up in the moment. We guests, outsiders at the outset, were made to feel as though we belonged and encouraged to participate, each person at his own level of comfort.

A short time later, after squeezing away from the table, I was tapped on the shoulder by a Zareinu parent who was eager to welcome me to the event. He quickly told me that his 15-year-old son was in the thick of things and that he lives for events like these.

Most of the time, a statement like this is interesting but not particularly exciting. But this proud father's declaration was about his 15-year-old with Down syndrome.

The young man has significant academic delays and marked speech difficulties. He also has a sparkling personality. He routinely greets others enthusiastically and can elevate you with his smile. He has the unique ability to make everyone feel like his personal friend.

I have to admit that I never saw him that evening, even though I scanned the room repeatedly. There were so many people in the building. But I left several hours later, with complete confidence that on that late winter evening, at least one of our students felt like I did – we belonged.

Early the next morning I rose early to go to my very first Zimriyah at Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto. Hundreds of day school students in more than a dozen choirs congregated at the site to sing well-practised and choreographed songs and to represent their home schools.

That morning was also to be the first time Zareinu was to participate in the event. Eight of our students, together with an equal number of volunteer students from Associated Hebrew Schools, were soon to get on stage and sing two songs, one in Hebrew and one in English, to the more than 1,000 people in the audience.

I was more than a little bit nervous. Which students might not show up? What might happen if one of our boys or girls could not get up on the stage? What about stage fright? Maybe they would forget the lyrics.

Our turn came about half way through the morning. Not only was our school listed in the program, but now our presence was announced and we were welcomed to perform. We got on the stage quickly.

One student in a wheel chair needed the assistance of an electric lift to get on the stage. Not a big deal. Two of our students who cannot speak, one with autism and the other with cerebral palsy, played percussion instruments.

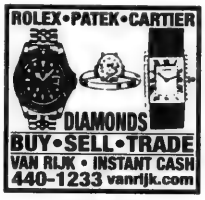
The others, most singing proudly on key with their new friends from Associated and several belting out the songs in their own unique fashion, stood or sat proudly on the stage as hundreds of people clapped in rhythm to the music or sang along with them. They were the best!

After what seemed like an hour to me – but was actually about five minutes – the 16 students were greeted by prolonged applause from the audience, just as occurred with the choirs that preceded and succeeded them.

After the performance, many people approached our choir director, Wanda Gasscho-White, complimenting us on the quality of our performance and telling us how wonderful it was that we had joined the event. I was now able to leave another event, only hours after the first, confident that these students, too, knew that they belonged.

It has always been important to me that students with challenges be accepted and embraced by the Jewish community. Often I am frustrated that they are cared for and acknowledged but remain on the periphery. On this particular weekend, our students did belong, not by doing anything special, but simply by being given the opportunity to be part of the crowd.

Mitch Parker is principal and clinical director of Zareinu Educational Centre.



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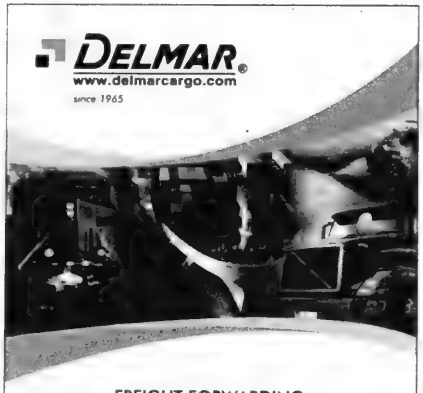
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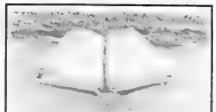
Jewish Life

The healing power of memory and ritual

By RABBI RENA ARSHINOFF

Many years passed before a day was demarcated to be an official observance of the six million who perished in Nazi Europe.

The 27th of Nisan is the day that came to be known as Yom Hashoah, and it's observed in Israel and the Diaspora as a vital day of remembrance. This observance is fraught with raw emotions and memories of trauma and loss by those who still survive, as well as by subsequent generations who strive to keep the memory of this atrocity alive so that we do not forget.


Rabbinic Reflections

The questions are complex. How could this have happened? How can we keep this memory with us and with future generations? How do we best pay respect to those who suffered and continue to suffer?

A crucial component of healing is the comfort of memory, which is an important tenet of Jewish tradition. Ritual also has a powerful effect on healing, and this is evident in the significant role that the *Mourner's Kaddish* and the rituals around shivah play.

The most powerful experience of my year in Israel during rabbinical school was the week of Yom Hashoah. It was not mere coincidence that the State of Israel was established in 1948, not long after the end of World War II and the Holocaust. Israel was to be a homeland that provided comfort and protection for so many people displaced by the Holocaust.

Memory and ritual have immortalized those who perished as a result of being Jewish, and at the same time, have provided healing opportunities for the survivors from the nightmare of this terrible historic catastrophe.

I had the privilege of being at Yad Vashem for the special memorial ceremony. Although I had seen many documentary clips of footage of the camps, the scenes and the faces of the people we saw on the screen at Yad Vashem belonged to the six survivors selected to light the six torches, each representing one million Jews who perished. These were their personal stories. This was their moment to tell their story.

Through the rituals of candlelighting, telling of their loved ones, and prayer, they and the Jewish people mourned the loss of so many. The siren we heard the following morning prompted the country to come to a standstill as everyone stood in silence, mourning an unfathomable number: six million.

Mourning rituals allow us to connect with each other on this day. The prayers of mourning are powerful as we remember. The chanting of *Kel Male Rachamim* is haunting and reminds us of the tragedy of the number of these horrific deaths.

Yet, in contrast, the *Mourner's Kaddish* doesn't mention death, but rather, emphasizes life. It speaks of praise for God, and for the continuity of life. It helps us to remember those who no longer have life, whose physical functioning no longer occurs, but whose memories still live with us. Saying this prayer keeps memories alive for us. It elicits emotions that we need to tap. We learn that we can heal and ultimately help others in their pain of loss. In the depths of grief, the people Israel around the world recognize and meet the need for such rituals on Yom Hashoah as a means of connection and a way of healing and renewal, both as a community and as a people.

We remember them – *Zichronam livrachah* – may their memories be for a blessing.

Rabbi Rena Arshinoff is a chaplain with the trauma, ICU, and nephrology departments at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto.

God's perfect food

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

As is very typical of this time of year, the seders are barely complete and we immediately begin counting the Omer in preparation for the holiday of Shavuot. It's easy to see how the month in between, Iyar, can be overshadowed by the two great events on either side: Pesach and Shavuot. But with Rosh Chodesh Iyar upon us, we should take a moment and recognize one of the most important events in Judaism that began in the month of Iyar: the manna.

Midrashic Moments

When the Israelites left Egypt, what began was a period of transformation and constant complaining. I like to label that time period "the 40 years of kvetch-du-jour." If we're not whining about the lack of food, we're whining about lack of water. When we have water, we complain it doesn't taste right. When we have food, we complain nostalgically of all the high-end cuts of beef we miss from Egypt, when we had so much meat to eat we had to turn it down. (Nostalgia can be a tricky thing.)

The Israelite complaint about food is an interesting one, since there should be food all around. The entire nation is headed to Sinai to make offerings to God, which necessitates cattle and sheep. Where there's cattle, there's milk, so, in fact, there should be an abundance of both food and liquid, and yet we complain to Moses as if death by starvation is imminent.

Interestingly, God responds by providing unique food. Through the various descriptions of the text, the "bread" God provides rains down from the sky and lays upon the ground as frost would. It's moist, off-white in colour, spoils easily and represents the perfect personal measure of food. The Torah explains that everyone should gather an omer (roughly the size of your stomach), and if someone gathers more or less than an omer, it won't matter since they will ingest exactly an omer.

The midrash in several places augments the information in the Torah by explaining that this perfect food varies in taste, but not in appearance. Although everyone will see the same substance on the ground, if, for example, someone prefers the taste of baked goods, it would take on that taste. This bread from heaven will rain down six days out of seven, and everyone should gather manna in the morning only for that day. However, no one should leave the bread overnight, or it will spoil and worm. On Friday, each person should gather double portions, since it will not rain down on Shabbat. Miraculously (in reality, a miracle within a miracle), the bread gathered on Friday would not spoil when left for Shabbat. This is one of the reasons that Jews today will put two challah breads on the table for Shabbat.

The sages agree that the delivery system of the manna built trust between God and Israel. But the name "manna" still remains a bit of a mystery. The first day that the Israelites saw this bread, they remarked in Hebrew: *"Man hu,"* which means "What is it?" and the name stuck. Manna literally means the "what is that?" or in today's parlance, the "whatchamacallit," because we still don't have a word for that kind of food.

But lacking a proper word does not mean we didn't recognize the symbol. This is food provided by God regularly that is moist, off-white, spoils easily, changes flavour but not appearance, builds trust and perfectly measures to the person's stomach. The only image we can connect this to is mother's milk. According to the descriptions we have, God is nursing Israel, the infant nation that has food all around but cannot access it. As an infant, we turn to God, wanting God to provide for us and keep us safe and feed us.

Later in the Torah, when we once again bombard Moses with our complaints, Moses will turn to God and ask why God expects that Moses will nurse this nation. In the ancient world, it's clear that God is sustaining Israel with food and meaningful symbols. So as we proceed from the seders to begin to count the Omer, which is usually a time when we hold back on public celebrations and gatherings as we remember some of the darker moments of Jewish history – Rabbi Akiva losing his students, the Crusades, Yom Hashoah – it's equally important to remember that we live in a world of balance, and that Iyar reminds us of the beautiful moments of nurturing, trust and bonding between God and the Jewish people.

Rachael Turkienicz is director of Rachaelscentre.org.

Jewish Life

The Exodus: fact or fiction?

By ALEX GROPPER

Now is the time of year when we celebrate Passover and commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. Passover lies at the heart of our faith. At its core is the theophany on Mount Sinai, when God revealed himself to Moses and gave us the law.

Past Forward

For many, these events have been immortalized in the epic Cecil B DeMille film *The Ten Commandments*. For most of us, Moses is indelibly imprinted in our consciousness as Charlton Heston, whereas Rameses II will always look like Yul Brynner.

To what extent does the modern discipline of archeology illuminate the events of the Exodus that were so vividly portrayed in *The Ten Commandments*?

Archeology is a fairly recent discipline. It emerged in the latter part of the 19th century and was galvanized by the search for evidence of another story that is central to the study of the origins of western civilization. That event was the Trojan War, which coincidentally occurred at approximately the same time as the Exodus.

Heinrich Schliemann, a German entrepreneur, claimed to have found proof for the Trojan War. However, in the field of biblical studies, there were many skeptics regarding the ability of archeology to find evidence of the Bible's historical veracity.

The Germans were especially dubious of archeology's ability to find proof for biblical events. Scholars such as Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth preferred to use textual analysis in their important works on biblical history.

It was the American scholar William Foxwell Albright who would influence a generation of both American, and later, Israeli scholars, with his belief that archeology could prove the veracity of the biblical text, including the events of the Exodus.

Albright believed in the historicity of the Exodus. His view was shared by many of his students who studied with him at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. These disciples would go on to occupy prominent positions at many major universities in North America. They included George Ernest Wright and Frank Cross at Harvard University, as well as David Noel Freedman of the University of Michigan, and most recently at the University of California at San Diego.

Indeed, the earliest extra-biblical inscription mentioning Israel is the Merneptah Stela, set up by Pharaoh Merneptah, the son of Ramses II (a.k.a. Yul Brynner). It dates to around 1207 BCE, just after the Exodus, which is usually placed around 1250 BCE.

Despite the fact that a people called Israel was mentioned in the Merneptah Stela as living in Israel shortly after the Exodus, recent surveys by Israeli archeologists in the Sinai after both the 1956 Sinai War as well as the Six Day War of 1967 produced no evidence of any large group in the Sinai during the supposed time of the Exodus.

Baruch Halpern, a pupil of Frank Cross as a PhD student at Harvard who now holds the chair of Bible studies at Penn State University, is considered by many to be the pre-eminent biblical historian of this generation. He once jokingly told me that if there was an Exodus, it may have consisted of six or seven runaway slaves from Egypt.

Why the revolutionary change in outlook? Ironically, it was an Israeli scholar, Israel Finkelstein, who helped to start the process with the research for his doctoral dissertation on the settlement of Canaan, which appeared to indicate that the settlement involved indigenous Canaanites and not some outside invading force.

Most of the archeological indicators of radical cultural change such as new pottery styles were absent. The settlement and conquest of Canaan appeared to have all the makings of an "inside job," although some scholars such as James K. Hoffmeier still support the veracity of the Exodus and subsequent conquest.

Yet one wonders if we will ever be able to prove the historicity of the Exodus and whether it really matters. After all, it's a question of faith, and faith by its very definition defies proof.

Free Jewish apps for the iPhone

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Since it was launched in July 2008, Apple's App Store has become an industry leader in carrying apps (applications or programs) for the iPhone, iPod Touch and now the iPad. The store currently has more than 150,000 applications written by third-party vendors, which have accounted for over three billion downloads. **[bit.ly/happ01]**

The Jewish Highway

Not surprisingly, if you do a bit of searching, you can find plenty of Jewish and Israeli content in the App Store. And although it's called a "store," some developers are happy to create free apps just because they're proud of their work and wanted to share. Today, we'll sample some free Jewish apps.

Don't let Dovid Zikind's iPhone page deceive you. It looks quite plain, but there is a wealth of material there. There is a free, downloadable Chumash and Rashi (with English translation), several holiday guides and, for a fee, the complete Mishnah and Gemara. While there are many texts geared toward the Chabad community (Tanya, HaYom Yom, the 12 Pesukim), there are free siddurim that cater to Ashkenazim, Edot Hamizrach and Lubavitchers. **[bit.ly/happ02]**

• iSiddur also provides many variations of the morning, afternoon and evening services, as well as *Birkat Hamazon*. **[bit.ly/happ03]**

• iPray delivers all 150 Psalms in a clear, Hebrew-only interface. **[bit.ly/happ04]**

• iMasoret gives you much of the above, along with some novel twists such as the lyrics for popular holiday songs and even direct links to holidays videos from YouTube. Most of the prayers are in Hebrew, although there is some English translation. I just wish the interface were a bit more consistent. **[bit.ly/happ05]**

If you are looking for apps that are slicker and more sophisticated, and are willing to put your money where your iPhone is, there are plenty of Jewish apps that range in price from 99 cents to $30 or more. The best two places to browse are JewishiPhoneCommunity.org and the Jewish iPhone feed on Twitter. **[bit.ly/happ06]**

One of the leaders in commercial, Jewish-themed iPhone software is RustyBrink Inc. I give the company credit because it provides a number of free apps too.

• Shabbat Shalom – Check candlelighting and *Havdalah* times for the week in any location in the world. This is a great app.

• iPhone Shofar – Click on the shofar sound you want to hear: tekiah, shvarim, truah or tekiah gedolah. Have a blast.

• Menorah for iPhone – Do you forget every year whether to light the Chanukah candles from left to right, or is it right to left? This app will guide you nightly and teach you the blessings, too. **[bit.ly/happ07]**

Not surprisingly, Jewish food-related apps are quite common. Let's say you've enjoyed your meal, and you want to wait the prescribed amount of time between meat and dairy. Just start your ParveO-Meter. The countdown clock will tell you when it's time to indulge. My only qualm is that the app has very limited preferences to allow customization for various community traditions for waiting. **[bit.ly/happ08]**

Some apps try to do almost any function you can think of. Others are determined to focus on one goal only. I would say that the KosherFish app falls into the latter category. When you activate it, you are presented with a very, very long list of kosher fish. With this app in hand, never again will you have to walk away from your local fishmonger wondering whether you can feast on Jewfish, Mozambique Mouthbrooder or even Porkfish while remaining faithful to your heritage. You can. **[bit.ly/happ09]**

Next week, more iPhone app freebies for tourists to Israel and lovers of Hebrew.

* * *

A reminder: I use "bit.ly" in my column to shorten what are often extremely long web addresses. Just type the address I provide into the space at the top of your browser – *not* the Google search box – hit enter, and it will deliver you to the proper site.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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Jewish student elected president of SSMU

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Zach Newburgh isn't much of a follower.

As a teen, he was president of his local youth group at Shaarei-Beth El Congregation in Oakville, Ont. Then he became the national president of the North American Federation of Temple Youth.

When he got to university, he became the president of Hillel at McGill, then the house president at Hillel Montreal.

Now a third-year student at McGill University, he has been voted president of the Students Society of McGill University (SSMU).

"I'm a person who is always interested in making sure that our community is the best that it can be. I've always driven toward that," he said, adding that this started in Oakville.

"In Oakville, the Jewish community was the closest community to me... There weren't a lot of Jews in Oakville at the time... I wanted to make sure the Jewish community was the strongest it could be."

Newburgh is now taking this attitude to his university's student council, where one of his goals is to get different groups on campus to come together and find a common identity.

He hopes to accomplish this by "not catering to one particular student, but catering to all students," he said, adding that one way to do this is to concentrate on sports events and athletic activities.

"It's something that is apolitical, it's something every student has in common," he said.

Through his role as house president of Hillel Montreal, Newburgh has been trying to reach out to other campus groups:

"[At Hillel] we've taken... steps to work with Arab, Muslim and Palestinian groups on campus," he said.

"We've been meeting with them and recognizing on the most basic level that we're human beings who are fighting for basic human rights, whether or not they're from different perspectives."

According to Newburgh, his work with Hillel has given him valuable experience.

"I've gained leadership skills," he said.

Zac Newburgh

"Jewish students have largely felt targeted and uncomfortable on campus, as have other student groups. As the president of an organization that deals specifically with groups who feel isolated, I have experience... making [these groups] feel like part of the community."

Newburgh, who is a Middle East studies major, may eventually get involved in politics, and is fascinated by Arab society.

"I think the culture and language is remarkable. [Middle Eastern] politics have always been interesting to me... That interest has been affected by the fact that I'm Jewish," he said, adding that he spent four months in Israel during a high school exchange program.

Rabbi Stephen Wise, spiritual leader of Shaarei-Beth El Congregation, sees Newburgh as a natural leader.

"He's got a charisma about him, he's got this magnetism. People are drawn to him, and when he gets excited about an idea, people want to... help him," Rabbi Wise said. "I can see him being prime minister one day."

Rabbi Wise, who saw Newburgh grow up in Oakville, said the student is not just passionate, but creative.

Newburgh proved this last year when he decided to make and hand out chicken soup at school.

"It wasn't to make money, it was just to give people a big cup of chicken soup and a bit of Jewish love," Rabbi Wise said, adding that it was also a way to get people to stop and talk about Hillel.

"He comes from a tiny community... where he was one of three Jewish kids in a high school of 1,000," Rabbi Wise said.

"He's got his eyes on the big picture... In this climate, where Jewish students feel threatened on campus, to have a leader like him is incredible."

Correction

In the story "Students foster identity through written word" (April 1), the name of Milim's editor-in-chief Josh Zelikovitz was misspelled. We apologize for the error.

Lemonville: Sunday, June 6, 2010

Ride with us in a show of solidarity for victims of terror in Israel.

55 km route. Registration: 8:30 a.m. Ride: 9:30 a.m.

Register online at www.onefamilyfund.ca or call us at (416) 644-4955.

Clash of Civilizations: Judaism and Islam?

Scholar Weekend at Beth Tzedec
Saturday & Sunday, April 17 - 18, 2010

Shabbat, April 17th, Shacharit 8:45 a.m.
Pulpit lecture:
The "Crying" Conception of Jewish-Arab History

Mincha: 7:15 p.m. *Seudah Shelisheet* Lecture:
Jews and Muslims in Commerce: Maimonides' Legal Writings

Sunday, April 18th, Shacharit 8:45 a.m.
Breakfast Lecture 10:00 a.m:
The New Muslim Anti-Semitism

Co-sponsored by The Pearl Gertrude Brody Annual Memorial Lectures and the generous support of Mr. John Pollock & Steeles Memorial Chapel

Prof. Mark R. Cohen

Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, Dept. of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University.

בית צדק Beth Tzedec Congregation
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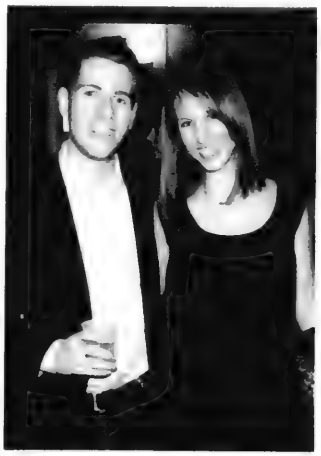
Young Leaders

NOT JUST ANOTHER SATURDAY NIGHT: The Reena Foundation's new leadership division raised more than $25,000 at its sixth annual Not Just Another Saturday Night fundraiser March 27. This year's party was held at The Berkeley on Queen Street East. Guests enjoyed complimentary cocktails, great music and an art exhibit featuring some of Toronto's top photographers, artists and jewelry designers. Proceeds go to help people living with developmental disabilities. Top photo: from left are event committee members and co-chairs Jen Kirsch, Aron Kadis, Dayna Bleeman, Esther Benarroch, Justine Grossman, Sheri Becker, and Adam Henechowicz. Below, left, event co-chairs Paul Bleier, and Sheri Becker; right photo from left, are event press co-ordinator Esther Garnick and featured artist Jessica Gorlicky.

[Rachel Singer photos]



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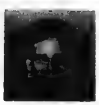

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Mazel tov to Ruth & Ben Balaban who celebrated their 60th anniversary. All our love from Marcie, Aaron, Maria, Arlyn, Bill and granddaughter Kori.

On their 55th wedding anniversary, the children and grandchildren of Fila & Jerry Blitzer joyfully wish them good health, happiness and more naches from us.

Marcia & Leon Orlowsky and Elizabeth & Irv Nadel are pleased to announce the engagement of Rhona & Joel. Proud grandparents, Harriet & Louis Cherkas.

Happy 95th birthday to Leo Goodman! With much love from your children, terrific grandchildren and amazing great-grandchildren.

Maureen (Monson) & Jeffrey Katz, Ottawa, and Tita & Sam Srour announce the birth of Oliver Benjamin to Jodie Katz & Jeff Srour on Nov. 28.

Happy first birthday Rylee, born to Mara Lewis & Jeff Spindel. Love, the Lewis, Silverman, and Spindel families.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

Women and Cancer
Taking Charge of Our Health
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Tuesday, April 27
7:30 pm Info Booths Open
8:00 pm Program Begins
Shaarei Shomayim
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What's New deadline for the April 22 issue is April 12. Deadline for April 29 is April 19. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, April 8

ORGAN DONATION

"Organ Donation and Transplantation," with **Frank Bialystok**, recipient; **Lisa Charendoff**, SickKids ambassador program; **Frank Markel**, Trillium Gift of Life Network; and **Rabbi Tina Grinberg**, Darchei Noam. 7:30 p.m., 416-638-4783.

MEGILLAT HASHOAH

Community reading of Megillat Hashoah, a commemorative service, 7:30 p.m., Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. No charge, tickets at synagogue office. 416-633-3838.

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rabbi Cory Weiss, Temple Har Zion, discusses Pirkei Avot at a lunch and learn, 12-1 p.m. Bring lunch. Program continues Thursdays until May 13.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, explores the historical basis that has led to the virus of anti-Semitism mutating in today's world. Temple Sinai. Coffee and cookies, 7:15 p.m., program: 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 10

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (south) meets at Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave. Shiur, 9 a.m., services 9:30 a.m. Kiddush following. tpmsouth@gmail.com.

TORAH CLASS

Beth Tikvah Congregation Torah class, 10-11 a.m., Shmini, with **Morley Goldberg.**

THIRD SEDER

Winchevsky Centre's third seder, 4:30 p.m., Sala Caboto, Villa Columbo, 40 Playfair Ave. $45 adults; $25 children 3-6; $30 children 7-12, students and unwaged. Features musician **David Wall** and Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. www.winchevskycentre.org, 416-789-5502.

Sunday, April 11

HOLOCAUST LECTURE

Beth David Brotherhood and library committee Holocaust Yellow Candle lecture, "Jewish Refugees in Switzerland during the Holocaust," by **Frieda Johles Forman,** 9:45 a.m. 416-633-5500.

HEALTHY HEART

Martin Strauss, a cardiologist, and his daughter, **Risa Alyson Strauss,** will talk on "The Healthy Heart: A Jewish Daughter/Father Perspective," Beth Emeth. Services 9 a.m., followed by breakfast. $12 per person. 416-633-3838.

Tuesday, April 13

IRON CHEF ISRAEL

Beth David sisterhood presents "Iron Chef Israel" with Israeli emissaries **Gal Meshoulam** and **Yuval Derry,** 8 p.m. Non-members $5.

Thursday, April 15

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rabbi Cory Weiss, Temple Har Zion, discusses Pirkei Avot: Wisdom of our Fathers, at a lunch and learn, 12-1 p.m. Bring lunch, coffee and tea provided. Program will continue each Thursday until May 13.

OTHER NEWS

DIVA DAY

JWIC fundraiser includes yoga, information about health issues, complimentary spa treatments, a lecture by a survivor of abuse and more. Tickets $125, include light breakfast and lunch. April 18, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. 6 Garamond Crt. 416-630-9313, www.divaday.ca.

Continued on page 23

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MIZRACHI
Yavneh Olami

What's New

Continued from page 22

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre needs meals-on-wheels drivers and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School open house April 21, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP, **Judy**, 416-928-3537, ext. 135, or judy@djds.ca.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com, for info.

Picking up the Pieces: Six-session group for parents and children who are going through divorce. Starts the week of April 12. **Janice Shaw**, 905-882-2331, ext. 232.

Adult Children Losing a Parent: Six-session group. Topics include coping with grief, resolving unfinished business. April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Living with Teens: Parenting an adolescent without losing your cool. A six-session group, April 13, Lipa Green Centre, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Widow/Widowers Bereavement: Six-session daytime group for men and women who have recently lost a partner or spouse. April 14, 1-2:30 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Five-session group for couples marrying in the next year. Offered with the Rabbinical Assembly. April 14, 7-9 p.m., Beth Tzedec. Also six sessions beginning April 2, 7:30 to 9 p.m. at First Narayever.

Successful Step-parenting: Six-session group for couples living in blended families, April 14, 7:30-9 p.m., Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: Four-week group for parents of ADHD-diagnosed children, April 20, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St., 6th floor. Call **Pam**, 416-638-7800, ext. 315.

Aspergers 101: One-session workshop for anyone wanting to know more about Aspergers syndrome. Presented by **Margot Nelles** from the Aspergers Association and Aspergers et al. April 21, 7 to 9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: Six-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. April 21, 7:30 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Couple Communication: A four-session group for couples wanting to learn communication skills, April 22, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 7-9 p.m.

Stepping Stones for Women: Creating Your Journey Toward Employment: One-session workshop for women looking to enter or re-enter the workforce, April 28, 7 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. No charge. Registration required.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing their life skills. Topics include: building self-esteem, time, stress management, assertiveness, April 29, 7 to 9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

100th ANNIVERSARY

The Stashover-Slipia Congregation is 100 years old in Toronto in 2010. Call to find out how you can support, reconnect and help us celebrate. 416-789-1333 or Stashover100@bell.net.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or to drive seniors to medical appointments. **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

Circle of Care Hospice and Jewish Hospice are looking for volunteers. 30-hour training program begins April 12. **Mindy Shiel**, mshiel@circleofcare.com or 416-635-2900, ext. 467.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Registration open for Temple Emanu-El spring series. Mondays 2-4 p.m. April 12, "Everything You Know Is Wrong – Leaps in Scientific Thought," with **Bob McDonald**, host of CBC Radio's *Quirks and Quarks*. $40 per series, $10 per lecture. 416-449-3880.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Hope Through Healing, a spousal bereavement group for 55+ meets Wednesdays, April 14-June 9, 10-11:30 a.m., Circle of Care. Call **Rebecca Sorokin**, 416-635-2900, ext. 462.

BROADWAY

Broadway from the Bimah features **Marvin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** and 45-piece symphony orchestra, May 27, 7:30 pm., Adath Israel. For tickets, **Sheila**, 416-635-5340 or sheila@adathisrael.com.

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for a variety of learning opportunities. "Hero or Villain? The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn," with **Paul Franks**, April 15-May 6, 9:30-11 a.m. Prosserman JCC.

"Nidah: In-depth Exploration of Laws of Family Purity," with **Rivka Sonenberg**, Mondays May 3 and 10, 9:45 a.m., hosted at 543 Coldstream Ave.

"How Can We Sing a Song of God in a Foreign Land? Destruction and Healing After the Destruction of the Temple," with **Hindy Najman**, July 15, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. Men and women welcome. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca, www.mekorot.ca.

PARSHAH OF THE WEEK

Lodger Centre Congregation holds the parshah of the week, Wednesdays, with **Judy Hazan**, 7:30 p.m, open to all, no charge.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 26

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Active Seniors: April 15, 1:30 p.m., celebrate Israel Independence Day. *The Beauty of Israel* is presented by **Aviva Reifler**, shlichah, JNF. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, Friendly atmosphere and beautiful surroundings, Casino Rama April 14, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; Sunday dance, April 25, 7-10 p.m. with live music. Lunch and laughter, April 12, noon, dairy lunch provided. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. for discussion group, Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-9444.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

April 28, 10-11:30 a.m. Open house, no charge. Join in and experience Israeli and international folk dance led by **Teme Kernerman** and **Sandy Starkman,** Room 211.

Inquire about new programs at the culinary arts studio including New Israeli Salads, with **Chef Ellen Grossman,** April 12, 9:30-11:30 a.m. or 1:30-3:30 p.m. For information or to register, ext. 4235.

Check out family programs including Sports with Jay, Shabbat Party, and prenatal classes, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Stars on Spadina, April 26, 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. $180 includes dessert reception. Tax receipt for maximum allowable. Tickets: in person at the Miles Nadal JCC, by calling ext. 0 or at www.mnjcc.org.

Hebrew Language Classes begin in April – Reading Israeli Newspapers: Thursdays, April 8-May 20; Intermediate Hebrew: April 8-May 20; Hebrew for Beginners A & B: Thursdays, April 12-May 31. Info: jewishlife@mnjcc.org, ext. 154, www.mnjcc.org.

Sundays on Bloor, April 11, 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p..m., "The Holocaust: Facts, Myths and Misconceptions." $9, drop-in ($5 with valid student ID) Includes light refreshments. ext. 154, www.mnjcc.org, jewishlife@mnjcc.org.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

BUILDING DEDICATION AT BAR-ILAN U: Bar-Ilan University recently dedicated a building that houses the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, which is on the university's main campus in Ramat Gan. The building was outfitted by a contribution from Saul and Mira Koschitzky of Toronto. From left are Bar-Ilan University president, Moshe Kaveh, centre founder Thomas Hecht, Riva Heft-Hecht and centre director Prof. Efraim Inbar.

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BRIDAL REGISTRY

Holocaust memorial to be unveiled in Owen Sound

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Harry Kozuch will never forget the Holocaust.

He'll never forget being taken to a labour camp at 16, then to two concentration camps. He'll never forget his parents, who were killed in a gas chamber in Auschwitz. And he'll never forget that 33 members of his family were murdered in a few short years.

But for Kozuch, one person's memories are not enough.

"In my extended family, from my father's and mother's side, there were 33 members that perished in the Holocaust," Kozuch, 84, said. "Who remembers them?"

Kozuch was born in Poland and later immigrated to Canada. When he moved from Toronto to Owen Sound, Ont., three years ago he was surprised to learn that the town had no Holocaust memorial. So he voiced his opinion.

"Here in Owen Sound, there's a shul, a Jewish community, and there was not a single memorial or anything to remember the six million Jews," he said. "I started to talk about it."

And the town agreed, said Aly Boltman, an administrator at the city's Beth Ezekiel synagogue and the chair of the Holocaust memorial committee.

"One of our survivors… said, 'I really feel there's a lack here.'

"We all looked at each other and said, 'Of course [there is],'" she said. "It was never a question of should we, it was more of a question of how should we."

The Jewish community in Owen Sound is a small one, and eight or nine years ago, it was even smaller.

In 2001, Beth Ezekiel synagogue had only 15 families, and the Jewish population was decreasing. A Holocaust memorial wasn't an option.

"It was this fatalistic attitude that the synagogue can't survive. [Jews] were watching kids move to cities. [The Jewish community] was just sort of struggling," Boltman said.

But times have changed. While the community is still small, Beth Ezekiel is thriving. In 2007, 52 families were involved in the synagogue. Now, the shul has about 120 members, or 60 families.

In 2008, the synagogue began to fundraise for the memorial, which will be unveiled on Apr. 11.

"It went fantastically well," Boltman said of the fundraising event, an auction called Let My People Bid.

The memorial itself is a large tree, carved out of wood, with a yellow star at its centre, a dove at the top, barbed wire and a banner with the Hebrew phrase for "to remember and not to forget."

It was created by Brahm Friedlander, a woodcarver, and Ofra Svorai, a painter, and took about 1,000 hours to make.

Gary Weinger, the synagogue's vice-president, understands the importance of a Holocaust memorial. His parents were Holocaust survivors, and he learned about their experiences as a child, while hiding under the table at get-togethers.

"I got a first-hand historical account [of the Holocaust] from my father and all the men that would come together," he said. "It's easy to forget and put things in the back of your mind and just go through daily life. It's something that needs to be remembered."

For Weinger, seeing the design for the memorial was an emotional experience.

"[The tree] is a symbol of great rooting and strength. The first thing that came to my mind is I saw my mother and father behind the iron gates and barbed wire," he said.

"If you just look at [the memorial] as a piece of artwork…, it might not reach you… For us, it really means something."

The memorial's formal unveiling will take place on Apr. 11 at 7 p.m. at Beth Ezekiel Synagogue and will be followed by the screening of *Our Father's Bar Mitzvah*, a documentary about the life of a Beth Ezekiel member and Holocaust survivor made by a local filmmaker.

For more information, e-mail aly.boltman@bethezekiel.org.

Beth Ezekiel Synagogue's Holocaust memorial, created by Brahm Friedlander and Ofra Svorai, will be unveiled Apr. 11 in Owen Sound, Ont.

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Harry Picov	Mar 17/10	170 Park Rd, N
Bryan Dobbs	Mar 18/10	1060 Broadview Ave
Sam Silver	Mar 18/10	85 Skymark Dr
Lillian Tobin	Mar 18/10	1201 Steeles Ave W
Steve Yuranyi	Mar 20/10	80 Antibes Dr
Ruthe Zaretsky	Mar 19/10	484 Steeles Ave W
Molly Willer	Mar 21/10	8 Covington Road

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MINDLE AUERBACH
will take place
Sunday, April 18th at 10:00 a.m.
Lambton Cemetery
Royal York Rd (North of Dundas)
Chmielnicker Charitable Society Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling

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QUALITY MONUMENTS... FACTORY PRICES

Oshawa, Ajax shuls unite to hold Holocaust memorial

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Two Ontario shuls are coming together to remember the six million Jews that were killed in the Holocaust.

Beth Zion Congregation in Oshawa and B'Nai Shalom V'Tikvah in Ajax will be holding a Holocaust memorial service on April 11 from 7 to 9 p.m. The service will be held at Beth Zion synagogue, located at 144 King St. E. in Oshawa.

The shuls will commemorate the victims of the Holocaust as well as genocides taking place worldwide at a candlelighting service that includes songs and readings.

Judy Lysy, a Holocaust survivor, will speak at the memorial. Lysy, born in Czechoslovakia, was deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. She also worked in other slave labour camps and was liberated by the U.S. army in 1945.

For more information or to RSVP, contact lidaz@sympatico.ca or king838@gmail.com.

Library reaches the next generation of Jews

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — This month 360 Jewish children in British Columbia received their first of a series of gifts in the mail: a book for and about Jewish children.

The books arrived on their doorsteps thanks to the PJ Library, an initiative begun four years ago in western Massachusetts by Harold Grinspoon. Some would say, "it's just a book," but to Grinspoon and the 125 communities across North America who support the library, it is a key investment in raising children with a strong Jewish identity.

Grinspoon, who is dyslexic, first began to understand the power of literature on children when he watched a father calm his child on an airplane by reading to him. Then he heard on the radio that singer Dolly Parton was giving away free books to disadvantaged families, and decided to join her. So he called Parton's Imagination Library and sponsored her program in Springfield, Mass., the city he calls home.

Free books made available to children

At a Passover seder at his son's house, he watched his daughter-in-law give picture books with Jewish themes to each guest, and was surprised by the quality of stories and illustrations, and by the fact that his grandchildren cherished these books. It dawned on him that a Jewish version of Parton's Imagination Library would be a fine idea.

It started in western Massachusetts with 200 participants and a goal of reaching 5,000 participants across the country within five years. But just four years later he has given away two million books. Today, there are 60,000 children in the United States and Canada receiving books, thanks to the PJ Library. British Columbia was the most recent community to join the library, following closely on the heels of Montreal, Calgary and Winnipeg.

Participants have children aged between six months and five years old. They receive 11 books and one CD a year per subscription, and Grinspoon vets every choice. "We're looking for books that will inspire parents and families in thinking about their Jewish lives," explains Natalie Blitt, program director for book selection at the PJ Library.

"We look for a balance of books that reflect the diversity within the Jewish community and that deal with holidays, values, ethics, folk tales and Bible stories. Not every book will appeal to every child or family, but we hope families will see themselves in some of the books and not in others, so kids can understand there are many different ways of doing things Jewishly."

Eighty-eight titles are selected each year, and a handful are by Canadian authors, published by Canadian publishing houses. Canadian titles include *Bagels from Benny* by Aubrey Davis, *Clever Rachel* by Debby Waldman, *The Market Wedding* by Cary Fagan and *The Kugel Valley Klezmer Band* by Betty Ann Stuchner.

"People think they know what Jewish books look like," Blitt adds. "Our goal is to choose compelling books that are every bit as interesting as other books on a kids' bookshelf. For our program to work, the books have to be tantalizing and exceptional."

For each subscription, Grinspoon's Harold Grinspoon Foundation provides $60, and regional Jewish agencies, synagogues and donor families provide $40 in matching funds. At the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, $150,000 has been earmarked for the PJ Library, to keep it going for the next three years. Right now, 360 families are enrolled, but numbers will likely climb, says Michael Fugman, chair of the federation board.

"What we've learned is that once this program starts, it grows. People specifically donated funds toward the PJ Library, and if the need exists, I have no doubt we will be able to come up with more funds, because the people in our community are very generous."

Fugman says the PJ Library plays a crucial role in reaching the next generation of Jews. "We strongly believe we have a responsibility to do outreach to outlying communities, and it's hard to get those people involved in this community. This PJ Library provides an opportunity to get people from the whole province involved and aware of Judaism. It's also a chance for families to spend time reading together. Until you have kids, you don't realize how important reading is."

Ginaya Peters, a Vancouver Jewish mom of three children aged between two and four, says the books provide a great resource. "There's not much in the public libraries with Jewish content, and in the bookstores the books on Judaism are so generic. This library will give us more of a variety and insight into Jewish culture. It will be that something special that we get every month and can sit together as a family and read."

Local sponsors in participating communities frequently forward to Grinspoon letters of gratitude from people who are making more Jewish choices after reading their books, such as holding their first Passover seder or sitting down for a family Sabbath dinner. Grinspoon, a humble man, cherishes those letters. Together with his wife, Diane Troderman, he has given away more than $100 million in recent years – most of it to Jewish causes.

The couple plans to give away a few hundred million more dollars and has willed their estate to their foundation with the intention of endowing the PJ Library forever.

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Hydro-Quebec postpones seder night power cut

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Residents of the Outremont and de Vimy Street areas avoided having to conduct their first seder in the dark after Hydro-Quebec responded to complaints about a planned power break.

The utility had notified residents late last month that the electricity would be cut from Monday night, March 29, at 11:30 p.m. through to 4:30 a.m. on March 30 as part of a load-shedding procedure that is fairly frequent in the area.

Rabbi Mordechai Bulua, who lives on Van Horne Avenue, phoned Hydro immediately to point out that it was the start of a major Jewish holiday and, although the hour was late, many seders would just be beginning at 11:30 p.m. and would likely continue into the wee hours.

The area is home to a large Jewish population, mostly Orthodox. Rabbi Bulua pointed out that with the return to daylight saving time on March 14 sundown is now quite late. By the time people get home from synagogue, it is nearing midnight.

Hydro told him the shutdown could not be avoided. Rabbi Bulua then complained to B'nai Brith Canada and to the office of Outremont's MNA, Finance Minister Raymond Bachand.

He doesn't know if Bachand did anything, but B'nai Brith did phone Hydro, underlining the importance of Passover to its Jewish customers, and things changed quickly.

Rabbi Bulua said there were apparently other complaints from residents.

On March 26, Hydro apologized and announced the shutdown would take place one week later, on April 5, from 11:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Even though this is the second-to-last day of Passover and a holy day, Rabbi Bulua said he's satisfied that Hydro extended a "reasonable accommodation" to the community.

Montreal police investigate 'human soap' sale

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Montreal police are investigating a complaint that a Jewish dealer in Nazi memorabilia offered a bar of soap for sale suggesting that it was made of human remains.

The existence of the soap on display at La Boutique du collectioneur Botines on St. Laurent Boulevard came to light March 26 in a CBC radio report. CJAD radio reported the following day that the shop's owner, who is Jewish, had sold the soap for $150.

The complaint was filed by B'nai Brith Canada under a Criminal Code section forbidding the desecration of human remains. While there have been persistent rumours since World War II that the Nazis made soap from the fat of Jews who died in the concentration camps, Israel's Holocaust authority Yad Vashem has denied it.

After the news broke, the shop's owner, whose name is Abraham Botines, said he never claimed that the soap, in fact, contained any human remains.

He said he bought the bar of soap from a retired Canadian soldier who told him he found it in a concentration camp. He also claimed he tried to sell the item to a Holocaust museum, which refused the offer.

He said that the existence of such items, authentic or not, is part of the historical record of Nazi atrocities and he will continue dealing in memorabilia of that era until he's told it's illegal to do so.

B'nai Brith regional director Heidi Oppen visited the shop on March 26, posing as a customer. The bar, which was in a glass case, was wrapped in a cover that had a small swastika and German writing, which she did not understand. The CBC said a card in the case read "Poland 1940."

Botines refused to speak to her, but another person working there, who identified himself as Jewish, did speak to her. He didn't tell her explicitly that it was human soap, and defended offering it for sale as a means of preserving history.

The store has been in business for more than 40 years.

Oppen also noticed pack of cigarettes with swastikas. She said she was most disturbed to see the soap near mezzuzot and other Jewish religious items.

B'nai Brith is leaving it to the police to determine if there is a criminal case – if not desecration of a body, then possibly fraud.

In any event, Oppen said trying to profit from goods that are even suggestive of the suffering of Holocaust victims is highly offensive.

The sale of items bearing swastikas is not illegal in Canada.

Eiran Harris, archivist emeritus of Montreal's Jewish Public Library, said claims that soap made from human fat by the Nazis have been rampant for decades. He said the archives holds several such bars, all fakes.

The rumour that the Nazis made such soap was started in 1943 by the Soviet Union's NKVD, forerunner of the KGB secret police, as a propaganda tool against the Nazis, Harris added.

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מרדכי שפּיכטער איז געווען צווישן דער גרופּע אינטעלעקטואַלן וואָס האָבן געוווּנדערט דיערע לעבנס צו באַרישבערן אין דערהייבן די ייִדישע שפּראַך אין פּעראַגוַיי. אין דער פֿרשטער ריי בעפּינט מען בשר באַראָאָן, שמואל ניגער, נחום שטיף אין מרדכי שפּיכטער – דער ייִנגסטער. וועגן מיר קומען אָן צו דעם נייַעם דור פֿראָפֿעסאָרן אין אמעריקע אין קאַנאַדע וואָס זענען עוסק מיט ייִדישע לימודים קומען מיר אָן צו מרדכי שפּיכטערס סטודענט.

מרדכי שפּיכטער איז געבוירן געווארן אין שטערנאָוויץ אין 1925 אין אוּעק פֿון אונדז אין ניו־יאָרק אין 2007. איך האָב אים נעקענט דורך זיין רעדאַקטאָרשׂ פֿון "אויפֿשוּוּנג" – אַ געזעלשאַפֿטלעך־ליטעראַרישער זשורנאַל. איך האָב אים אויך נעקענט דורך זיין "ייִדיש צווישן" – אַ לערנבוך וואָס העלפֿט מיר האַלטן ייִדיש נאָענט, אָן איך קען אים אויך דורך זיין ענגליש־ייִדישן "וועדסטרבוך פֿון אַקאַדעמישער סטרוקטוראַליזם" און זיין "בעל־חי און פֿויגל נעמען אויף ייִדיש." די פֿאָלדנדיקע נעדאַנקען, פֿון פֿרינט און מיט־אַרבעטער, זענען נעמען פֿון "אויפֿן שוועל."

פּראָפֿעסאָר שבֿע צוקער, רעדאַקטאָר פֿון אויפֿן שוועל

שרייבט: "די באַגעג עניש וואָס איך האָב געווינען אין ניו־יאָרק – אַזוי־ווי־בדיק מיט מיינע יאָרן אין ייִדישן לערער־סעמינאַר־הרצליה, דערנאָך וי אַ גראַדואיר סטודענטקע סי אין קאָלאָמביע סי אין ניו־יאָרקער סטאַטשן אוניווערסיטעט און שוין וי אַ לערערין – בין איך נעקומען אויף זמנים לעקציעס. דער קוהל האָט זיך נישט אויסגעשפּאָרט – ער איז געווען דאָס קול לעבן אונדז און אין אונדז, דאָס געוויסן וואָס האָט שפּילערהייט גערעדט צו אונדז און אין אונדז: 'יעדע ייִדיש, לערנט זיך וועסטער. אַז איר ווּעט עס נישט טאָן, קענט איר זיך נישט פֿאָרלאָזן אויף אַנדערע, זיי זאָלן עס טאָן.' ער האָט אונדז געלערנט אַז דער עתיד פֿון ייִדיש ליגט נאָר בי אונדז אין די הענט און דערמיט וועט ער אויבּיק לעבן."

שוביה בוירד שרייבט: אין עסלעכע יאָרצענדליקער אָרום וועלן היסטאָריקער און ביאָגראָפֿן צעטומלט ווערן – און ס'וועט זיך זיי דאָכטן אַז ס'האָט געמוחט זיין צוויי אָדער נאָר דרי מענטשן מיטן זעלבן נאָמען – וען זיי וועלן זיך אָנשטרענגן אין דער רשימה פֿון ד"ר מרדכי שפּיכטערס אויפֿטוּוּן...בעוון אין ער אַ לינגוויסט, מחבר, דערציער, רעדאַקטאָר, זאַמלער, ביבליאָגראָף...ער האָט געלערנט אַלע ניוואַנסן פֿון דער ייִדישער שפּראַך און איז געווען לעגענדאַריש וויי דער פּסק־אַהרן אויף פֿאַרשידענע קשיות פֿאַרבונדענע מיט דיאַלעקטישן אָריסרעד... סטיליסטיק, און גראַמאַטישן באַנוץ, אַן עצירלאָפּענדיע פֿון די ניואַנסן און פּרטימלעך פֿון ייִדיש אין משך פֿון יאָרהונדערטער.

יצחק ניבאַרסקי־באַריו שרייבט: די אונטערשטע שורה: ...הילם זיך פֿאַרט זאָגן מיטן פֿולן מויל, אַז בלויבן בלישבט דאָס העלע ליכט דורך וועלכן דער ווינטשאַפֿטלער האָט, מיט ליבשאַפֿט און בגישטאַפֿט, באַלויכטן די וועדערלעכע שאַצקאַמערן פֿון אונדזער מאַמע־לשון, און נעווינן וועמען עס וויל נאָר אַ דרך, וויי אָרום דאָס דאָזיקע עשירות אויפֿצוהיטן און פֿאַרגרעסערן.

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Going to shul when Kaddish is over

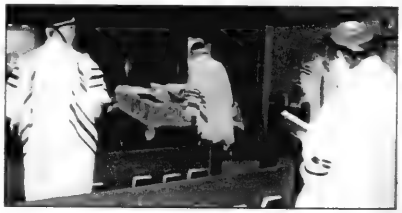
By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

"What are you smiling about?" a colleague inquired as I arrived at the office

I couldn't bring myself to give her an honest answer, despite her friendly tone. I suppose I could have told her the truth: that I was in a good mood because I had gone to an early-morning service at my synagogue. In fact, the situation struck me as amusing, if somewhat strange.

It was May 26 of last year – a Tuesday. Three days earlier, I had finished saying *Kaddish* for my father. Originally – based on what others had told me – I expected to stop, feel a void for a while after 11 months of attending twice-daily services, and then fill my time with other things. I assumed I'd be back on Saturdays – because, well, that's the day you go to shul.

But of all the services I attended during the 11 months of *Kaddish*, weekday mornings on my way to work had turned out to be my favourite. I loved the camaraderie of the more intimate group, and the feeling that my day was off to a good start. I liked the kibbitzing, and the conversation over breakfast. I said many times over the course of the year that I couldn't have chosen a better group to say *Kaddish* with if I had hand-picked them.



Beth David minyan participants daven on a recent weekday morning. *[Frances Kraft photo]*

I also found that I liked the prayer component. I liked that it gave me time to reflect. I liked being in sync with other *Kaddish*-sayers as we recited the words in unison. I liked the connection I felt to my synagogue community, and to my religion. I liked the quirks of our minyan, from the finicky ark doors that had to be closed just so, to the way participants often ended up walking the length of the chapel because of the number of people wanting to shake their hands after an honour.

Instead of quitting the minyan cold turkey, as some people do when they finish saying *Kaddish*, I had decided to taper off gradually. During the week, I would continue to wake up early and alternate between working out and going to shul for at least one more month. Although *Kaddish* is traditionally said for a parent for 11 months, the mourning period actually lasts a year.

On the Monday of my first week post-*Kaddish*, I left my house early for a "power" walk. I'd been in the habit of walking in the morning years ago and enjoyed the sense of well-being it gave me. But that morning, I spent most of my walk missing the minyan and the company of the people I'd been sharing breakfast with. I looked forward to being there the next day, although I wondered if anyone would think I was prolonging the mourning period unduly.

It isn't uncommon for men to become minyan "regulars" once *Kaddish* is over, but – at least at the earlier of the two morning services at my synagogue, Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am – women rarely go, unless they are saying *Kaddish* or observing a yahrzeit.

Also, at Beth David, which is Conservative, women aren't counted as part of the traditional prayer quorum (although we do receive Torah honours). A cousin of mine, who belongs to a Reform congregation, told me that when she finished saying *Kaddish* every day, she decided that she would continue going to services on occasion to help make up the minyan, as a way of paying back – or paying forward – the support she had received there. I didn't have that excuse either.

Nor am I a *davener* – someone who is proficient in prayer – like my father was. I'm more a follow-along-er.

But if any of the regulars thought it was odd that I was there, they didn't let on – at least not to my knowledge.

I continued as planned until my father's first yahrzeit, alternating shul with walking or working out, on weekday mornings.

I decided to keep up the routine through the summer, but once fall arrived, I felt more strongly that I needed an excuse to go to morning minyan. As it happened, that wasn't a problem. I'd go when someone was finishing *Kaddish* or observing a yahrzeit, and a couple of times a friend who was still saying *Kaddish* suggested that I attend when he was reading Torah.

By the end of December, though, most of my shul friends had finished their 11 months, and I was pretty much out of excuses for being there. And yet, seven months had gone by since the end of May, and it didn't seem inconceivable any more to go to the minyan without an excuse.

In January, I decided that I would continue attending services one morning a week before work – whether I had an excuse or not. Having acquired the habit of waking up early during *Kaddish*, I'm also able to get to the gym regularly.

I still go to shul on Shabbat, and a small group that I said *Kaddish* with meets on Sunday morning to walk before services.

Late last summer, by coincidence, my mother came across a letter from my dad, in which he wrote about his own synagogue attendance. He had sent it to my aunt and uncle in 1944, when he was a 22-year-old serving in the RCAF in England during World War II. He had no way of knowing the significance it would eventually have for us.

Prompted by his thoughts on a talk about religion that he'd heard on his base, my father wrote, "The simple truth is that I get a kick out of [going to shul]. I attend synagogue because I enjoy myself there ... it gives me a certain amount of pleasure to carry on traditions that have been passed down through centuries."

It seems the rationale I was looking for had been there all along.

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Being Erica's creator juggles a career and motherhood

BY SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

When Canadian television writer Jana Sinyor was still in the struggling phase of her career and years away from creating the CBC drama *Being Erica*, she fainted after her first project, *Dark Oracle*, was finally greenlighted.

Sinyor's over-wrought reaction was perhaps understandable.

Having worked so hard to break into the industry, she was absolutely floored when YTV, the children's channel, accepted *Dark Oracle*, which follows the adventures of 15-year-old twins whose future is divined in a comic book

"I had to be revived," she said, her eyes beaming as she recalled the embarrassing moment that set her on the road to success.

Dark Oracle, co-developed with Heather Conkie, ran from 2004 to 2006 and went on to win an International Emmy for best children's and youth program. But after it was suddenly dropped, Sinyor moved on stoically and quickly.

"I was neither disappointed nor angry," she said in an interview the other morning at the Future Bakery and Cafe in mid-town Toronto. "*Dark Oracle* was a 'high-concept' show, which is hard to sustain."

Sinyor, who had previously freelanced as a writer for *Degrassi: The Next Generation*, bounced back by developing *Being Erica*, which is about a 30-something woman who discovers that her therapist can send her back in time and change her reality.

Nominated for 10 Gemini Awards after its debut year in 2009, *Being Erica* is now broadcast on the Soap Net cable network in the United States, as well as in Australia, Asia, Latin America and, she thinks, Israel.

To the best of her knowledge, the core audience consists mainly of women in their 20s and 30s. But teens and middle-aged viewers, some of whom are men, are also part of the demographics.

She believes that *Being Erica* has mass appeal because the average viewer can identify with the main character.

Now 33, Sinyor conceived *Being Erica* – which blends fantasy with reality – as a kids' program. But since CBC was in the market for something different, she was only too pleased to adjust the script.

As she put it, "I wanted to make the jump from teen to adult drama."

There was another reason for her interest in adapting *Being Erica*.

Erin Karpluk and Jana Sinyor

"I have a huge interest in magic and fantasy, and I like playing around with time travel."

Erica Strange, the central character, is portrayed by Erin Karpluk. To some degree, she is modeled after Sinyor, who was born in Ottawa, the daughter of Albert, an Egyptian-born medical equipment manufacturer, and Lynda, a teacher and computer programmer.

"You put bits and pieces of yourself and familiar experiences into a character," explained Sinyor, the co-executive producer. "Erica's my age, is Jewish like me and lives in Toronto. But aside from these similarities, we're not alike at all."

Karpluk, who is of Ukrainian descent, was cast at the 11th hour.

"We saw many actors, but it was clear she was exactly who we were looking for. Erin has a talent for physical comedy, and she's just so appealing, attractive, funny and accessible."

But Karpluk had to be coached to be Jewish.

"She knew nothing about Jews, but she's been great," noted Sinyor, saying she had to learn how to properly pronounce a word like Yom Kippur.

Sinyor, who describes herself as a secular Jew, has embroidered Jewish motifs into the show.

"We've done episodes on circumcision, Yom Kippur and a bat mitzvah," she said.

To Sinyor, these forays into Judaism are "not forced" but natural. After all, Erica is supposed to be the daughter of a Reform rabbi.

She and her co-producer, Aaron Martin, whom she met on the set of *Degrassi* and who joined *Being Erica* after the pilot, have written several of the scripts.

But overall, she regards herself as its general manager, concerning herself with every aspect from casting and script development to wardrobe.

Currently, she and Martin are in the midst of developing season three of *Being Erica*.

"I'm optimistic it will go ahead," said Sinyor

Curiously enough, she never even aspired to be a writer.

"Actually, I didn't have a plan," she admitted.

Taking religious studies at McGill University, she majored in the New Testament and took a course in rabbinics.

"I was already familiar with Judaism, but Christianity was foreign to me."

After her graduation in 1998, she toiled in a call centre for a year, but was miserable.

"I became very depressed."

In retrospect, this dead-end job was not entirely in vain. "Erica also worked in a call centre," she said.

One night, at 4 a.m., she compiled a life-changing list of her strengths, desires and weaknesses.

With this in hand, Sinyor took a screen writing course at Ryerson. While there, she whipped up a script for a short film.

Then she enrolled at the Canadian Film Centre, which offers advanced training in film, TV and new media.

"It was extremely useful, but I couldn't find a job after graduating."

So she began writing what would be *Dark Oracle*, her breakthrough show.

Sinyor has a busy life outside television. She and her husband, David Singer, an entrepreneur, have two children, Jada, 5, and Max, 3.

She has no trouble juggling a career and motherhood.

"I don't have a nine to five job. I have a lot of flexibility. So I'm at home when Jada and Max get back from school."

As for the future, she hopes that *Being Erica* will go from strength to strength, and that her next project will also appeal to an identical demographic. "I don't know what it will be, but it will be an adult drama," she said.

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China to attend summit on Iranian nukes

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WASHINGTON — Chinese President Hu Jintao will attend a multi-nation summit on nuclear security in Washington this month, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said last week.

The announcement came as Beijing appeared to drop its opposition to possible new United Nations sanctions against Tehran over its uranium enrichment program and as Iran's top nuclear negotiator arrived for talks with Chinese officials.

Beijing would not officially confirm reports that it would support sanctions, and a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said April 1 that it still favored a diplomatic approach to the problem.

"We have always and will continue to push for a peaceful settlement on this issue," spokesperson Qin Gang said. "We are staying and will stay in communication with all parties."

U.S. officials said that a Chinese representative made a commitment to the sanction in a March 31 phone call with officials from the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany to discuss the specifics of a potential UN Security Council resolution, and that on that basis the United States would press ahead with an effort to pass such a measure.

The officials cautioned that this does not mean there is a full consensus on UN sanctions. U.S. President Barack Obama said March 30 that he hoped the Security Council would adopt tougher sanctions against Iran within "weeks" if the Islamic republic continued to refuse to comply with the council's resolutions on the matter.

"China has agreed to sit down and begin serious negotiations here in New York… as a first step toward getting the entire UN Security Council on board with a tough sanctions regime against Iran," Susan Rice, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, told CNN on March 31.

Obama will host the summit on April 12-13, and some observers had speculated Hu would not go because of recent tensions between the two powers.

The discussions surrounding Iran may mark the first time China will have agreed to sanctions, a move that comes after months of pressure from the Obama administration. The other countries involved in the discussions are the United States, Russia, Britain, Germany and France, Reuters reported.

But while the agreement seems to be an achievement for the Obama administration, China will agree only to relatively weak sanctions, the news agency quoted diplomats as saying.

While Obama said he hoped the sanctions would be in place within weeks, Security Council deliberations could drag on until June.

Even then, additional sanctions imposed separately by the United States and other western countries will be needed to keep Iran from going nuclear.

Israel had initially hoped, after talks with U.S. officials, that the sanctions would be declared at the beginning of this year.

A recent CIA report said Iran is moving closer to becoming a nuclear power, apparently signalling a change in the thinking of U.S. intelligence community since late 2007, when a separate report found there was no proof Iran had renewed its work toward a military-grade nuclear weapon after it was halted in 2003.

The International Atomic Energy Agency also suspects Iran is building another uranium enrichment facility, according to a report released last week.

The sense from these reports, as from conversations with senior Israeli government and military figures, is that the world now fully accepts Israel's conclusion that Iran is seeking to obtain nuclear arms and has overcome initial resistance to the finding. At least in the West, there is widespread agreement that Iran has reached an advanced stage of its nuclear program and that none of the steps taken so far have diverted it from that goal.

The key question is how far the world powers are prepared to go to stop the nuclear program.

The latest CIA report, whose tone is general and does not openly contradict the 2007 report, does not necessarily attest to American determination.

Sources in Jerusalem say that behind closed doors, U.S. and European officials are already discussing how to face the "day after" Iran attains nuclear weapons.

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Rise of conservative right alarming Hungary's Jews

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

PRAGUE — The radical far-right Jobbik party is poised to emerge in next month's elections in Hungary as a potent force in Parliament, and the prospect is ringing alarm bells in central Europe's largest Jewish community.

"It's scary," said Vera Szekeres-Varsa, a Holocaust survivor and former chair of the Hungarian branch of Amnesty International. "It's not like 60 or 70 years ago, but it's still scary."

Jobbik, whose formal name is the Movement for a Better Hungary, campaigns with fiercely populist rhetoric that capitalizes on seething voter resentment, and foments fear and hatred of the mainly impoverished population of Roma, or Gypsies. Targeting what it calls "Gypsy criminality," Jobbik also warns against "foreign speculators," including Israel, that it says want to control the country.

"Hungary belongs to the Hungarians" is a party slogan.

"Jobbik frequently uses anti-Semitic rhetoric, not directly but through code words and references, as well as symbols and appearances," said Andras Kovacs, a sociologist at the Central European University in Budapest who for some time, has tracked nationalist and anti-Semitic trends. "This is frightening for the Jewish population."

While the conservative Fidesz party is expected to score an overwhelming victory in the April 11 first-round parliamentary vote – ousting the widely unpopular Socialists who have been in power since 2002 – Jobbik is expected to make a strong showing and enter the Hungarian Parliament for the first time. Jobbik surged out of the far-right fringe to grab 15 per cent of the vote in European Parliament elections last June.

Aside from Jobbik's growing strength, Hungarian Jews are concerned that Fidesz may compete with Jobbik for votes by shifting some of its own positions more to the right.

For Hungary's Jews, who overwhelmingly vote for the centre-left parties, including the Socialists, the rise of the conservative right is a concern.

Gabor Vona

"I think they will have to make gestures to the far right," Adam Schonberger, 30, an activist with the Conservative Jewish youth organization Marom, said of Fidesz. "What really worries me is that in the upcoming parliament, there could be no real representative of liberal or minority values."

A poll of decided voters published March 18 in Hungary's *HVG* weekly showed Fidesz with 57 per cent support, the Socialist party with 21 per cent and Jobbik with 18 per cent.

"It is possible that Jobbik will get close to or even more votes than the Socialists," Kovacs said. "Fidesz for sure will have a majority, and may get a two-thirds majority. This will represent a substantial change in the electoral landscape."

A two-thirds majority would enable Fidesz, led by the charismatic Viktor Orban, to amend the constitution and push through changes affecting the electoral law, the size of Parliament, presidential powers, local governments and other issues.

No single party has held that concentration of power since the Nazi-allied regime of Miklos Horthy.

Fidesz enjoys some Jewish support and is not considered to be anti-Semitic. It was a Fidesz-led government that instituted Hungary's Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001. Yet some Jobbik officials and Fidesz have collaborated on activities at the local level.

While Fidesz has ruled out a coalition with Jobbik if Fidesz does not achieve a two-thirds majority on its own, a poll last December indicated that some 300,000 right-wing Fidesz supporters might be ready to shift their support to Jobbik. Fidesz may attempt to forestall such defections by hardening some of its own positions.

Support for Hungary's centre-left parties has plummeted due to the economic downturn and a recent spate of high-profile corruption scandals. In one case, several Socialist politicians were implicated in a racketeering scandal involving the Budapest public transport agency. In another, the Socialist mayor of Budapest's old Jewish quarter, the Seventh District, was arrested on bribery and other charges relating to real estate deals.

"The collapse of the liberal and centre-left parties is of particular concern to Hungary's Roma and Jews, who are targeted verbally – and in the case of the Roma, also sometimes physically – by right-wing sympathizers," said historian Michael Miller, who teaches in the Jewish studies department at the Central European University.

Last year, a landmark court ruling banned the Hungarian Guard, Jobbik's uniformed paramilitary wing, whose black-clad members marched through Roma villages bearing red and white striped flags and other symbols reminiscent of the World War II Arrow Cross, Hungary's homegrown Nazi-allied fascists.

A little more than a year ago, Krisztina Morvai, who was later elected one of Jobbik's three European Parliament members, lashed out at Israel for its offensive in Gaza.

"The only way to talk to people like you is by assuming the style of Hamas," she wrote in an open letter to the Israeli ambassador to Hungary. "I wish all of you lice-infested, dirty murderers will receive Hamas' 'kisses.'"

At a party rally March 15, Jobbik's 31-year-old leader, Gabor Vona, told thousands of followers that Hungary must seek independence from "Washington, Brussels [i.e., the European Union], Tel Aviv" and other powers.

Jobbik party members

Websites and publications linked to Jobbik are much more explicit, bashing Israel and employing vicious anti-Semitic invective that evokes Nazi-era propaganda.

"Hungary is a Jewish colony" was the headline of an interview on one such website with the brother of one of Jobbik's vice presidents.

Kovacs says he believes Jews are fearful of Jobbik's gains but are less worried that they will translate into anti-Jewish policies. About 100,000 Jews live in Hungary, most of them in Budapest.

"With Jews, there is no practical social tension," Kovacs said. "The anti-Jewish discourse is rhetorical, but there are no anti-Jewish political demands. There are, however, radical anti-Roma demands, like cutting social benefits or segregation in school."

Still, he said, "loud, verbal anti-Semitism can lead to a very polarized and intense atmosphere, which in turn could facilitate, for example, anti-Jewish street violence."

Szekeres-Varsa said the cumulative impact was very unsettling.

"I don't see a direct threat, but there is an appalling atmosphere," she said. "The air is stinking, and there is great uncertainty."

In an incident that may be related to the current pre-election climate, the Budapest home of Chabad Rabbi Shmuel Raskin was stoned twice during last Tuesday night's seder, according to Israel Radio. Police came after the first incident, and the second incident reportedly took place after the police left. No suspects were reported arrested in the attack at press time.

Schonberger called Jobbik "a very aggressive, radical, arrogant party.

"If they are able to make other people stupid and soulless, that is the worst," he said. "We have to maintain our consciousness and keep our two feet on the ground."

'It's not a one-man show'

Continued from page 1

Through his involvement in course development and research at Ben-Gurion University's medical school, Singer introduced palliative care to the family residency training curriculum. To expand his own knowledge, he did a palliative care fellowship in his native Montreal in 1995 and 1996.

He now oversees home-care hospices in Kiryat Gat and in Rahat, the largest Bedouin city in Israel. Five years ago, the program rolled out a mobile palliative care unit (MPCU) to serve Bedouins and Jews living in remote areas. In addition to his regular clinic hours, Singer serves on the MPCU twice a week.

The main target population of about 180,000 Bedouin Muslims is spread out over six townships and in isolated, primitive, temporary encampments. Home visits are conducted by the mobile unit's rotating team of nurses, social workers, physicians (Jewish and Bedouin) and Bedouin driver-translators.

"It's not a one-man show. I could never do something like this myself," said Singer, who relaxes with his gardening and photography or by travelling around the world.

Singer notes that Bedouin Muslim patients don't balk at being treated by Jewish doctors, and in his experience, Jews don't mind being treated by Arab doctors.

Dying people, regardless of culture, geography or socio-economic conditions, experience similar emotions, he said. "The sadness of departing, the fear – not really of death, but of what's going to happen on the way – and an urge to close circles, to say goodbye and to forgive. All these are quite universal. And if we could concentrate on our commonalities more than our differences, we would be much better off."

His conviction that each of us has a personal responsibility to help the helpless led Singer to spend two years at a Swiss Protestant mission hospital in southern Africa after earning his medical degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1982.

"People thought I was crazy," he recalled.

He worked in a 500-bed hospital where each bed was usually shared by two patients. "I did a lot of community health development and food projects. There was a lot of malnutrition there, and children were dying of hunger."

He and his wife, a music teacher who now practises alternative medicine, returned to Israel and settled in Be'er Sheva, the largest city in the Negev. They have raised their four children there. Both before and after his appointment as head of the home palliative care unit, Singer cared for poor patients in a nearby development town as a family physician.

Israel Briefs

Schalit's release demanded

Israeli reserve soldiers delivered a letter demanding the release of captive Israeli soldier Gilad Schalit to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The reservists, who protested last week outside the Prime Minister's Office, gave the letter to the prime minister's bureau chief, as well as a letter addressed to the prime minister's wife written by Raviv Kurtz, the wife of a reserve soldier and a friend of Tammy Arad, the wife of missing navigator Ron Arad. "It appears that the prime minister is unwilling to complete the necessary step to save Gilad Schalit's life," the reservists' letter read. "We call on you as citizens and soldiers aware of the Schalit family's pain – restore Gilad his freedom."

Arms cache found in Sinai

A large arms cache allegedly intended to be smuggled into the Gaza Strip was discovered in the Sinai Desert. Egyptian security forces found the cache, including 100 anti-aircraft missiles and other explosives last week, according to Egyptian reports cited in the Israeli press. The weapons reportedly were collected from the areas of past battle zones. The weapons smugglers are believed to be Sinai Bedouin. The find comes a day after Egyptian police discovered 41 cars and other vehicles used for smuggling merchandise into Gaza, the French news agency AFP reported. The vehicles were confiscated in the Sinai. Three new smuggling tunnels connecting Rafah to Gaza also were discovered last week.

UN agency raps Israel

The United Nations Human Rights Council last month passed three resolutions that condemn Israel and another seeking reparations for Gaza Palestinians. The United States opposed the resolutions, which passed by a large margin. Canada does not have a seat in the body. The 47-member council passed resolutions that condemn Israel's "grave human rights violations" in the West Bank and Gaza, and call on Israel to pull out of territory claimed by the Palestinians and stop settlement building and evacuate existing settlements, and condemn Israel for the "systematic violation of the rights of the people of the occupied Syrian Golan Heights." An additional resolution called on Israel to compensate Palestinians in Gaza for damage and loss incurred during last year's war there. Israel has been censured by the council, which was formed in 2006, more times than any other country.

Baryshnikov coming to Israel

Legendary dancer and choreographer Mikhail Baryshnikov will perform in Israel in late June, in a joint performance with Ana Laguna. The performance, titled "Three solos and a duet," will include choreography by Mats Ek (Laguna's husband), Benjamin Millepied and Alexei Ratmansky. Baryshnikov, 62, will dance throughout. He instructed promoters to give away 50 free tickets to each of his three shows to ballet students, according to their teacher's recommendations. "Three solos and a duet" premiered in Riga, Latvia, the city of Baryshnikov's birth, last year and has been staged in Europe and the United States.

Jihadists target economy: scholar

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Jihadists want to damage western interests by resorting to economic terrorism, says an Israeli scholar who has studied thousands of their websites.

In a new monograph titled *Econo-Jihad: How the Terrorists See the Global Crisis*, Gabriel Weimann, a University of Haifa professor of communications who has published books and papers on modern terrorism and the mass media, writes, "For the Jihadists, the present economic crisis signifies an ideal opportunity and platform to [carry out] an economic terrorist campaign."

Weimann, who has monitored the jihadist world for years, compiled his study by surveying public and encoded websites, video clips and Internet forums.

He claims that the jihadi emphasis on targeting economic targets was set in motion by Al Qaeda's destruction of the World Trade Center in Manhattan on Sept. 11, 2001.

Gabriel Weimann

In video tapes sent to the media, Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden boasted that while the Sept. 11 operation cost $500,000 to implement, the attack caused $500 billion worth of damage to the U.S. economy.

Weimann said that jihadists, having concluded that western and U.S. power is a function of economic strength, have decided to hit international corporations, strike multinational companies in Iraq extracting oil, and assassinate key figures in the global economy, many of whom they believe are Jews.

Jihadists may also try to persuade the world's 1.5 billion Muslims to pressure their respective governments to adjust their foreign policies, he added.

This Muslim constituency can become "an economic threat and a basis for pressure," he said in an interview last week.

Jihadists hope that the current insurgency against U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan will help drain U.S. financial resources and ultimately harm the American economy, said Weimann, a former visiting professor at Carleton University in Ottawa and co-author of a 1986 book on neo-Nazi Ernst Zundel, *Hate on Trial: The Zundel Case, the Media and Public Opinion in Canada.*

Weimann has surfed 7,500 terrorist websites, some of which are "very sophisticated," and he said Jihadists use such Internet platforms as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and chatrooms.

Although he doesn't know the size of their audience, he's certain these websites are popular and effective.

Asked how he had penetrated protected encoded sites, he replied, "When you live in a bad neighbourhood long enough, you know the neighbours and their habits and learn the rules of the game." In conclusion, Weimann warned that governments that do not learn how to cope with "the growing threat of online terrorism" do so at their peril.

The Company for Location and Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets locates assets in Israel belonging to holocaust victims, and returns them to their legal heirs.

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A Holocaust story through a child's eyes

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It starts with a caterpillar. A simple gift from one child to another.

It ends with a butterfly. And possibly a death.

This is how Leslie Gottlieb and Ben Shirinian plan to commemorate the Holocaust.

Gottlieb, a producer, and Shirinian, a director, are currently in pre-production for their short film, *Josef and Aimée*. The film, set in the south of France during the Holocaust, follows the relationship of two Jewish children taking refuge in an orphanage.

One child, Aimée, is adopted and has to leave Josef. Upon leaving, she gives him a caterpillar and makes him promise to never stop using his imagination. With the caterpillar in hand, Josef decides to leave the orphanage and find Aimée. At the end of his quest, he's captured by Nazis and is taken away in a truck.

"I always wanted to tell a story and make it appeal to kids of any age," Shirinian said. "Sometimes Holocaust stories can be hard to digest. The world we've tried to create is half reality and half a world in the child's head."

The short film, which has magical elements such as a talking caterpillar, will be shot entirely through a miniature set. The actors will be superimposed upon the set using a green screen. The film will also include animation and may end up having 3D elements.

"This type of visual execution is something children can engage in. It creates this magical world," Gottlieb said.

The short film is the first in a four-step project. *Josef and Aimée* will eventually become a full-length feature film, which will enter pre-production late this year or early next year.

A storybook with photos from the set and a multimedia art exhibit using video and parts of the film set are part of the project. Gottlieb and Shirinian hope to take the exhibit to museums, schools and art shows.

For both Gottlieb and Shirinian, the film's concept touches an emotional nerve. Gottlieb's grandparents survived the Holocaust, while Shirinian's grandparents were survivors of the Armenian genocide in 1915.

"The Holocaust has been so prevalent in my life," Gottlieb said, adding that this affected the movie's plot.

"We wanted to highlight that time period. We want to highlight that there were sacrifices, this was the type of experience that people had."

One of the film's main themes is innocence in the Holocaust, which is portrayed through Josef and Aimée's friendship and Josef's journey to find Aimée.

"We wanted to tell this story through the eyes of a child and to show innocence in the Shoah. Children, these things sort of happened to them [in the Holocaust]," he said.

"This film, at the forefront, is a love story between two children."

The film also concentrates on personal growth, which is represented by the caterpillar that eventually becomes a butterfly.

Because the filmmakers wanted *Josef and Aimée* to be educational, they set the movie in the town of Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon, where non-Jews in the village provided shelter, education and forged identification documents for 3,000 to 5,000 Jewish children.

"We're sensitive to that time period. We want to depict the orphanage as a place where Righteous Gentiles would house Jewish children," Shirinian said.

Gottlieb agreed.

"Though our story is fiction, we drew on historical context. We want it to be an educational piece for children," she said.

The original version of the film will be in French, with English subtitles, though it may be dubbed into different languages.

"We could have told it in English… we didn't think it would do it justice," Shirinian, who was born in Montreal and is bilingual, said. "[French] definitely adds a different vibe, a different tonality… I've always been drawn by French cinema."

Leslie Gottlieb, left, and Ben Shirinian are in pre-production for *Josef and Aimée*, a short film that follows two children's relationship in the Holocaust.

So far, Gottlieb and Shirinian have raised 70 per cent of the funds needed to finish their project. They've received a production grant from Bravo!FACT, which helps finance short films; a Toronto Arts Council media arts production grant and a National Film Board of Canada production grant.

For more information about the film, e-mail leslie@josefaimee.com or ben@josefaimee.com.

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Doc brings Hannah Senesh to life

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

At 22, Hannah Senesh, a Hungarian Jewish poet, Zionist, pioneer and resistance fighter, parachuted into Nazi-occupied Europe from Palestine to try to save Hungarian Jews.

And although she is a hero in Israel, with streets and a kibbutz named after her, her story is virtually unknown in the rest of the world.

Blessed Is the Match, an extraordinary and inspiring documentary about this Jewish "Joan of Arc," written, produced and directed by Roberta Grossman, premières on April 13 at 10 p.m. on the PBS series Independent Lens.

Through interviews, eyewitness accounts, rare family photographs, dramatic re-enactments and the writings of Senesh and her mother, Catherine, the documentary brings this moving and inspiring story to life.

Senesh was born into a well-off upper-middle-class family in Hungary in 1921. She wrote her first poem at the age of seven, when her father died suddenly of a heart attack. When she was denied entry into a literary society in high school because she was Jewish, she developed a strong Zionist yearning and applied to join an agricultural school in Palestine.

In 1939, just after the start of World War II, she arrived in Palestine and wrote, "I'm home."

Although she was well educated and clever, she became a typical pioneer on a kibbutz, eschewing her brains for brawn. But one gets the impression that Senesh was a restless spirit, full of wanderlust, and would never be happy doing one thing. When word of the Holocaust gets out in the early 1940s, Senesh felt the need to return to Europe to do something for the Jews, including her mother who was still in Hungary.

Senesh was recruited by the British and became one of a group of 37 Jews from Palestine trained to parachute in Yugoslavia to help save Hungarian Jews. But when she crossed into Nazi-occupied Hungary, she was arrested and taken to a Gestapo detention centre. Her interrogator reunited her with her mother, whom he threatened to torture in a failed attempt to make Senesh give up her radio transmitter codes.

Continued on page 33

Arts & Travel

A weighty comedy opens TJFF

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

The Toronto Jewish Film Festival kicks off its chai year on April 17 with a quirky Israeli comedy about sumo wrestling that dares ask the question: can you be fat and happy?

In *A Matter of Weight*, Herzl, often called Mount Herzl because he is so fat, is kicked out of a weight-loss program because, despite dieting, he keeps gaining weight.

At the Japanese restaurant where he works (the only type of restaurant in Israel he figures he won't be tempted to eat in) he catches a sumo wrestling event on television and becomes inspired.

He learns that in Japan fat men can be heroes. He convinces four of his also overweight friends from the diet program, three men and a woman, Zehava, to also quit the health club and form a sumo wrestling team.

An engaging Israeli comedy about sumo wrestlers.

Why are there no Israeli sumo wrestlers, he asks his hefty friends over a huge dinner one night? Because there are no fat people in Israel, he is told ironically.

But as you would expect, complications arise in this comedy. Herzl, 35, who lives with his mother, falls in love with Zehava. When he brings her home, his mother complains that she is too fat for him. She is worried that he is giving up on his diet, an anxiety borne from the fact that his father, her husband, also severely overweight, died when the balcony he was standing in fell under his weight.

Also, the restaurant owner, a Japanese Zionist, who serves as their sumo coach, says that women cannot be sumo wrestlers and Zehava has to leave the team.

In a world where we're bombarded with messages about being thin and beautiful, it is refreshing to see a movie where the main characters are fat people unconcerned with dieting fads, yet still determined to maintain their self-respect.

The health-club leader is portrayed as an unsympathetic dictatorial character who tells Zehava not to get pregnant because she will gain more weight and never be able to lose it.

Although a comedy, this movie has its serious side. The main characters are forced to confront themselves. Can they accept themselves and each other the way they are?

Directed by Sharon Maymon and Erez Tadmor, *A Matter of Size* premières at the Bloor Cinema at the Gala Opening Night April 17 at 9:15 p.m. Both directors will be in attendance. It also screens April 18 at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre at 8 p.m.

Senesh film is very moving

Continued from page 32

The dramatically re-enacted scenes in the prison building between Senesh and her mother are well acted and very moving. In captivity, she is determined to enlighten the lives of all those in prison with her, writing short stories for them to act out and teaching them Hebrew. The name of this documentary comes from one of her last poems *Blessed Is the Match*, which is about the power within people to bring light into the darkness.

Hannah, played by Meri Roth, left.

Senesh was tried for treason but remained defiant, reminding her judges that their day of reckoning was nearby. She was executed in Hungary shortly before the Russians liberated the country. Her body was flown to Israel in 1950, where she lay in state for three days. Her writings, letters and poems were found in a suitcase at the kibbutz where she had worked and immediately published. Some of her poems were turned into songs, including the popular *Eli, Eli*, recently recorded by Sophie Milman.

Blessed Is the Match taps into the Senesh family archive, which includes hundreds of unpublished letters and more than 1,300 never-before-seen photos. It includes interviews with historian Martin Gilbert, two of Senesh's nephews, and with one of the last surviving members of her volunteer group.

Blessed Is the Match is informative, moving and illuminating. It is well worth watching.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE SOUL OF GERSHWIN AT WINTER GARDEN, MAY 1 to 9

The Soul of Gershwin, The Musical Journey of An American Klezmer is a musical examination "of how a generation of Jewish-American composers was influenced by the cross-pollinating sounds of the day; the ultimate expression of immigrant assimilation." So says a press release from the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, which, in association with the National Jewish Theatre, is bringing the theatrical concert to the Winter Garden Theatre in early May.

The Soul of Gershwin features three vocalists, an onstage band named **Klezmerica**, and 23 songs by **George Gershwin**, one of the most significant and popular of Jewish-American composers. Gershwin, played by **Michael Paul Levin**, is depicted in the midst of the bustling cultural influences – Yiddish theatre, Jewish liturgical melodies, popular tunes, folk songs, blues, jazz, opera – that he would meld into his own outstanding music, combining the techniques and forms of classical music with the stylistic nuances and techniques of popular music and jazz.

Selections include *Swanee, Rhapsody in Blue, Fascinating Rhythm, The Man I Love, Foggy Day, Embraceable You*, pieces from *Porgy and Bess*, and more. $43 to $78. Winter Garden Theatre, 189 Yonge St. May 1 to 9. 416-872-5555, www.ticketmaster.ca

* * *

More Gershwin: Those whose appetites for Gershwin are not sated by the above fare at the Winter Garden may enjoy *Love Is Here to Stay: Music to Honour George Gershwin*, a performance by the **Oriana Women's Choir**. $25, $20, $10. Grace Church-on-the-Hill, 300 Lonsdale Rd. Saturday, May 8, 8 p.m. 416-236-0948.

* * *

***Stars on Spadina*:** Some of Toronto's brightest talent pay tribute to the Y at Bloor and Spadina and the contribution it has made to the cultural evolution of downtown Toronto. Hosted by **Tom Allen**, directed by **Ted Dykstra**, and featuring **Andrew Craig**, **George Sue-Ping**, **Hilario Duran**, **Julie Michels**, **Kellylee Evans**, **Melanie Doane**, **Micah Barnes**, **Real Divas** and **Sophie Milman**. $180 includes show, live auction, and post-show dessert reception. Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre. Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0, www.mnjcc.org

* * *

Literary News & Events

• **Alan L. Simons** has written a memoir – *Eighteen Months, A Love Story Interrupted* – about his relationship with a partner with breast cancer. The book launch takes place under the auspices of the Sunnybrook Foundation at the Jenkins Auditorium, Odette Cancer Centre, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, 2075 Bayview Ave., on Friday, April 9, 12 noon to 1 p.m. Free admission, everyone welcome. A portion of the proceeds from sale of the book goes to Sunnybrook's PYNK Young Women's Breast Cancer Program. The publisher is Now and Then Books, www.nowandthenbookstoronto.com

• Toronto authors **Ron Charach** and **Kenneth Sherman** present a discussion of "The Modern Jewish Writer and Social Conscience." Both Charach and Sherman are poets and past winners of Canadian Jewish Book Awards; each has produced a recent book of essays – Charach with *Cowboys & Bleeding Hearts* and Sherman with *What the Furies Bring*. Their presentation explores what makes people write and how to pursue the goal of tikkun olam through writing. Holy Blossom Temple, Philip Smith Hall. April 13, 7:30 p.m.

• Veteran Winnipeg writer **Allan Levine**'s book *Coming of Age*, a history of the Jews of Manitoba, has been nominated in four categories for this year's Manitoba Book Awards. The winners are to be announced on April 25.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Suburban Beast premières a new verbatim theatrical work, *Post Eden*, with **Sascha Cole**, **Lindsey Clark**, **David Coomber**, **Jenna MacMillan** and **Kevin Walker**. $15, $12. Abrams Studio Theatre, 46 Gerrard St. E. April 14 to 18. 647-342-8177, www.suburbanbeast.ca

• Pianist **Fern Lindzon** performs with **Bill McBirnie** on flute, **Andrew Downing** on bass and cello, and **Sly Juhas** on Drums. Chalkers Pub, 247 Marlee Ave. April 17, 6 to 9 p.m. 416-789-2531. www.chalkerspub.com

* * *

At the Galleries: "Mnemonic Objects" is an exhibition of paintings by **Simma Goldreich** that reflect and synthesize the Jewish historical experience. Besides being an artist, Goldreich teaches art at Tiferes Bais Yaakov. Art Works Art Gallery, 238 Jane St. April 11 to 25. Reception, April 11, 2 to 4 p.m. 416-766-0662, www. artworksartschool.com

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MIFGASH PROGRAM

The Ask brings back old-style Jewish humour

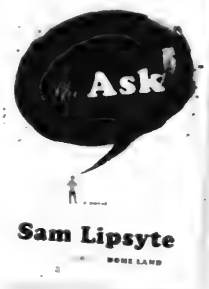
By MARISSA BROSTOFF
Tablet Features

Whither the shlemiel?

According to a smart and much-discussed *New York Magazine* article last May, American Jewish prosperity has all but killed off the "neurotic, depressive, abrasive, excluded" anti-heroes that once animated a comedic tradition running from Groucho Marx to Woody Allen.

Larry David, entertainment critic Mark Harris argued in his essay, is keeping their brand of humor on a ventilator, introducing the shlemiel and his sidekicks to "a generation to whom it's now almost completely foreign."

What Harris did not take into account was that young Jews born to privilege, like other Americans their age, are facing the very real prospect that they will never be as affluent as their parents. Praise God for the tanking economy: at least in the hands of novelist Sam Lipsyte, old-school Jewish humour has come back.



Lipsyte's satirical novel *The Ask* (FSG Adult), released in March, concerns the transformation of Milo Burke, an overeducated, underemployed wannabe art star, into a truly down-at-the-heels schmo.

We first meet Milo as a man in socioeconomic limbo: In early middle age, with a wife and a young son, he has a "good sh---y job" in the development office of a so-so university but still dreams of becoming a great painter; he is poorer than he was growing up but of a higher social class than his neighbours in Astoria, Queens. As a result, he has contracted an au courant malady: a case of white liberal guilt exacerbated by the dread that the privilege he loathes himself for is about to be taken away.

Milo's condition deteriorates significantly after he is fired, for lashing out at a "trustafarian" (from trust fund and rastafarian, a young person from a wealthy background whose trust fund enables him or her to reject conventional attitudes to work, dress, etc.) art student, only to be rehired on the condition that he can coax a major donation from Purdy Stuart, a former college friend and now a sleazy millionaire who needs him for a job just slightly less compromising than that of a Mafia bagman.

All this is quite grim, though hilarious in Lipsyte's telling, but there's also a redemptive aspect to the novel that's easy to overlook. When Milo slips down the class ladder, something is waiting for him at the bottom: an ethnic identity that had eluded him when he was a just-average hipster. By the end of the book, he is a grade-A shlemiel.

Milo is half-Jewish – on the side that halachically counts – but he primarily identifies, at the outset of his unfortunate journey, as a wannabe art star, which in his world amounts to a demographic category. Newly fired, he spends his days wandering the streets of Astoria and, employing the classic bohemian inversion of "there goes the neighbourhood," he worries that people just like himself will move in and ruin its heartening mixed-income multiculturalism.

Milo's shame-faced identification as the aggressor keeps his own ethnic affinities at arm's length.

"I never said gypped, or Indian giver, or paddy wagon, or accused anyone of welshing on a bet," he reflects wistfully on the sincerity of his own liberalism. "I never even called myself a yid with that tribal swagger I envied in others, though I had a right, or half a right, from my mother's side."

But once Milo has been knocked from the creative class into a milieu that includes labourers, Iraq veterans and underworld types, other people start, in effect, calling him a yid and, through having to contend with the slur, he becomes one. A doltish neighbourhood carpenter offers him a deck-building gig and takes the opportunity to pitch him a concept for a reality show, predicting (wrongly), "You seem like the kind of college boy who may be a broke screw-up but is ultimately part of the vast conspiracy of movers and shakers who move and shake our society. Jewish, right?"

Soon enough, Milo is having paranoid dreams about being insulted by an anti-Semitic Benjamin Franklin and regretting his decision not to have had his son circumcised.

What's funny about professional shlemiels from Groucho to Woody is their insistent and absurd contrariness in the face of the obvious bounds imposed on them ("I would never join a club that would accept me as a member").

Left by his wife, the anchor of his shaky existence, Milo finally reaches the sublime heights of negation mastered by his comic predecessors. He comes to take a certain pride in his Jewishness, if for no reason than to mock those real and imagined enemies who see him simply as a yid.

"Come kill me as a Jew, flog me to death in a desert quarry, bayonet me in the Pale, gas me in your Polish camp, behead me on your camcorder, I still would not believe," he says. "To me that was the true test of courage: to not submit to the faith they assume you possess and will kill you for."

It is in this quixotic spirit that Milo ends up, despite himself, what he always kind of wanted to be: an unapologetically bitter, authentically ethnic guy with no more need to worry that he is gentrifying Queens.

With *The Ask*, Lipsyte surely wins this month's, if not this year's award, for deftest reworking of this tragicomic, supposedly superannuated comic material, but he's not the only one who still finds it funny.

It appears in a different form in the film *Greenberg* – the latest from director Noah Baumbach, who at 40 is just a year younger than Lipsyte – which is playing now.

Like *The Ask*, *Greenberg* is a sharply attuned comedy of social class, though in this case, the shlemiel at its centre is Roger Greenberg, a middle-aged, emotionally disturbed scion of a wealthy Los Angeles family (played by Ben Stiller) who has an affair with his brother's personal assistant (Greta Gerwig).

Woody Allen fans will notice nods to *Annie Hall* in a moment when Stiller becomes momentarily indistinguishable from a crowd of Chassidim, and in Gerwig's charming but genuinely awkward character who, like Annie, shyly sings at a local nightclub. But beyond these references, there is little overt Jewishness in *Greenberg*, save for an early scene when Roger's Semitic looks are mentioned in jest by a fellow guest at a pool party.

"I'm not even… I'm only half," Roger protests.

"You look full," the guest says.

"That's not what I usually get," Roger says. "People think I look Italian. And since my mom is Protestant, I'm actually not Jewish at all."

The joke's on Roger – not just in this scene, which ends with his interlocutor mimicking his expressive hand gestures – but in the entire movie because Baumbach has given his film such an unavoidably Jewish title. This is slightly cruel, given that Roger can't answer back, but it's a brilliant deconstruction of the Jewish joke par excellence: Greenberg, one assumes, wouldn't want to be in a movie that would accept his name as its title.

The shlemiel is alive and not too well, which is just the way he should be.

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Gerskup assumes position with Maccabi World Union

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Allen Gerskup has been involved with the Maccabi movement pretty much since 1985, when he was manager of the Canadian softball team that came home from Israel with a silver medal.

Since then, he's headed the national athletic committee and served as president of Maccabi Canada.

Last week, he was named to a new post in the Maccabi universe when he was elected vice-president of the Maccabi World Union (MWU), the governing body for the international Maccabi movement.

Four years as national president can be a grind, and he admits he's ready for a change of scenery.

His position as president of Maccabi Canada has been assumed by Toronto physician Tom Bacher.

"Needless to say, I was quite honoured to be asked to run for vice-president of MWU," he said in an interview in his Toronto office. "I felt very flattered."

Over the years, Gerskup has made many friends in the Maccabi world. He's attended pretty much every international congress and plenary since the early 1990s, and "I know 90 per cent of the people personally," he said.

Very few Canadians have served on the MWU executive committee, but Gerskup said "I've been pushing for four years that Canada needs more recognition, and they agreed that Canada needs a place at the table."

Allen Gerskup

Maccabi Canada has a reputation as "good team players," as reflected in the hard work of former president Roy Salomon, who also co-chaired Maccabi North America, in trying to resolve differences between MWU and Maccabi Australia after the tragic bridge collapse at the 1997 Maccabiah Games that killed four Australians.

In his new position, Gerskup expects "to be in charge of international sports, to be the president's eyes and ears at all the regional games, to promote bilateral games between members and to encourage more Maccabi activities between Maccabiahs."

The Maccabiah Games are the showcase event of the international Maccabi movement, held every four years in Israel. Thousands of athletes from dozens of nations attend. But in between, a number of lesser-known sporting competitions have been held, including the Pan Am Maccabiah, a European games and now an Australian-Maccabi sponsored event.

In addition, there is the JCC youth Maccabi every August that brings teenagers from across North America to (most often) three North American venues.

Gerskup said there's room for even more competitions, such as a golf tournament between three or four countries; an invitational basketball competition with a limited number of entries, or even a hockey tournament.

"That would keep the Maccabi name in front of everybody and keep it going, rather than just come to people every four years," he said.

A point of pride for Gerskup is that during his four-year tenure as president, Maccabi Canada sent teams to all the existing regional competitions – to Buenos Aires, Rome, Israel and Australia.

Maccabi sports competitions seems to have struck a chord among young Canadian Jewish athletes. Last year, prior to the 18th Maccabiah Games, some 2,200 applications were received for positions on the Canadian team. In the end, more than 400 athletes and 130 support staff represented Canada in Israel.

A fundraising infrastructure, which seems to kick in every four years, managed to raise $4.5 million for the team, even though athletes were also responsible to a large extent for financing their own trips to the Games.

During his tenure as head of Maccabi Canada, Gerskup promoted increased participation of women athletes. In 2009, the most recent Games, Team Canada featured women's teams in soccer, softball, volleyball, cycling, fencing, tennis, triathlon and junior soccer. Female athletes also participated in karate, gymnastics, squash, swimming and golf.

Gerskup still smiles at the memory of the junior soccer girls defeating the heavily favoured Americans to capture the gold medal.

In all, Canada won 12 gold, 14 silver and 37 bronze medals at the 18th Games, finishing behind only Israel and the United States.

While the overall results were gratifying, the Maccabiah did not unfold for the Canadians without incident. One lowpoint of his tenure was the problem of inadequate facilities and food in the junior village. Parents, contacted by their kids by cellphone, were irate, complaining about unsanitary conditions, dirty tap water and inadequate meals.

"It happened. We made the best of it," Gerskup said. "We apologized to our supporters," although he pointed out nearly 40 per cent of the youth village was unaffected.

About 170 people were accommodated at the youth facility, and "you can't just pick up and leave" in the middle of the summer when all nearby hotels are booked, he said.

Though it preceded his role as president, the death of longtime Maccabi official Bernie Offstein hit close to home and was another low point. Offstein, along with Salomon, were his mentors. "I relied on those guys," whom he credits with creating the foundation of Maccabi Canada "block by block."

Another difficult period that occurred when he was national athletic director, charged with assembling the team, took place in the aftermath of the Palestinian intifidah. The Maccabiah Games were scheduled to proceed when it appeared no place in Israel was safe. Organizers had to determine whether to go ahead with the event or not.

Gerskup was part of the faction that maintained Canada should be present, regardless of the risk. He estimates there was a 50-50 split among athletes and their families whether to go.

Maccabi Canada was likewise split on the issue and voted 4-3 not to attend. However, when the U.S. Maccabi organization changed its position and announced it would go, Maccabi Canada held another vote and this time the margin was 4-3 to attend.

"In retrospect, it was the right thing to do," Gerskup said. "If we love Israel so much, we have to support them, even if it's just by going and being there."

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NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

I don't know if I've mentioned it, but I'm an actress. If you're one of those people who don't need to blink, you may have spotted me in some budget-challenged productions.

I have what it takes: a hunger for strangers' admiration, so I think it's about time that I "make it here."

I head to a career consultant. She browses through my résumé with a serious look. "I see that in Israel you performed both on TV and in theatre. You realize, of course, that your achievements were not, how shall I put it gently, in English?"

I try to explain to her that the love of art is universal, but I don't know enough words in English, so she doesn't get it.

We look at each other for a long time (I'm trying my Greek-tragedy-hero look), then she says coldly: "Take these forms." (Am I losing it with my Greek thing?)

I gaze at the forms, which list all kinds of courses: computers (c'mon!), accounting (a shiver goes down my spine), bankers (Mommy!), carpentry (see you in heaven, fingers!), and for a grand finale, paving plus mixing cement.

"Sounds like fun," I begin. (Think Jennifer Aniston as Rachel, after she breaks up with what's-his-face, Ross.)

"But let's try something else. For instance, I don't mind starting with a supporting role as a mute in a small TV show," I say. (Think Jennifer Aniston after she met Brad.)

She says nothing, so I add quickly, "Or how about theatre? A title role isn't necessary. I'm even willing to star in a low-budget Canadian sitcom as a deaf person." (Think Jennifer after Brad met Angie.)

She takes two forms out of her drawer and hands them to me. "Here, take these. Go volunteer at the theatre," she says curtly as I bound happily from her office.

"Volunteering?" Meir asks, checking out the form.

"Yeah. Just think of the potential. I'm gonna be famous! Children will ask for my autograph!"

Meir glances at the other form. "And what's this?" he asks, then reads aloud: "Training in fish skinning. Guaranteed employment." I look at my shoes. "You might consider that one, too," he adds.

I return to the consultant. "How much… how much do they pay for that fish thing?" I stammer.

"They teach you an occupation. You don't expect them to talk money right away, do you?"

I give her the Jennifer-after-the-divorce-was-finalized look, so she adds softly, "You can even get up to eight bucks an hour."

Despite of the financial temptation, I decide to pass on the fish and try volunteering at the theatre.

I head out to meet the theatre manager (who calls himself "stage manager"). The manager looks very tired for his, say, 17 years. "You see," I say to the teen, "I don't get money, so I'll accept only lead roles. I don't perform on Shabbat. Also, my meals should be of high quality and kosher, and the male lead must be gorgeous. Oh, and the obvious – my lines must be the most passionate. Do we have an understanding?"

The theatre manager laughs in admiration: "Gosh you're good. The way you fell into the diva's role was amazing!

"There," he says, pointing to the stage entrance. "You enter from there and move away that bench in the third scene. In the 15th scene, you lug back two armchairs and that table. Sometimes you'll have to lug small chests, and, naturally, you'll clean up after every show."

Hey, at least I'm on stage, aren't I?

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

APPLE CINNAMON FARFEL KUGEL

3 c matzoh farfel
Warm water or apple juice
4 lg apples, peeled, cored, coarsely chopped
½ c raisins
3 eggs
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla extract
¾ c sugar
1 tblsp honey
¼ c oil

Add farfel to a bowl; cover with warm water or apple juice Let soak 5-10 min. Drain, pressing out extra water. Prepare apples; soak and drain raisins in hot water, 5 min. In large bowl, add matzoh meal, apples, raisins, eggs, salt, cinnamon, vanilla, sugar, honey, oil and mix well. Spoon into 3- qt baking dish that has been lightly coated with oil. Bake until browned, 30-40 min.

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FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Diastasis recti. You've probably never heard of it, yet it affects about 40 per cent of pregnant women and five per cent of men. Most people don't even know they have it, so why is it important?

Diastasis is a tear in the rectus abdominals at the weakest point of the linea alba, or the belly button. It's usually caused by a continuous forceful forward movement or pressure on the abdominal area, such as a growing fetus, incorrect abdominal crunches, pilates 100s, moving heavy equipment, repeatedly getting up and down incorrectly or an excessive beer belly. This kind of separation weakens the support system for the back, which can lead to a hernia.

Like a hernia, a diastasis won't heal on its own, and it can become larger. The tear allows your internal organs to protrude forward, giving the appearance of a full belly and causing unexplainable back pain. It's the reason why most woman can't get a flat stomach after pregnancy, no matter how many abdominal crunches they do.

In fact, doing exercises such as the plank, abdominal crunches or oblique crunches before the tear is healed can cause the tear to increase. A study done at Columbia University in 2001 found that three simple exercises – belly breathing, the elevator and belly contractions – done for 2-1/2 minutes daily repaired the tear by pulling the rectus abdominals back together and eliminated back pain by strengthening the transverse muscle.

The transverse muscle is the deepest, largest and most important muscle of your core. It supports the lumbar spine and is involved in all forward and backward movements of the torso. Try to draw your belly button to your spine and hold it there for 30 seconds, while breathing.

I started doing these three exercises and noticed a huge difference in just three days. So I gave them to a client who recently had a hysterectomy that left her with bloating and numbness in the lower belly. In three days the bloating was gone. In seven days, she started to get feeling back.

Want to learn how? Visit me at felycesfitness.ca.

Ode to empty nesters

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Many of my contemporaries are or have become empty nesters of late. I wrote this fictional piece in their honour.

URBAN WRITER

For 25 years, I hadn't known there were creaks in our home. The deafening noise of children playing and kids growing masked them.

I am an empty nester and I am lost. Recently my daughter, the last of five children, started university in London, Ont. My husband and I helped her set up the place she rented. We laughed the whole way there.

Coming back was different though.

Somehow in our small hatchback, we found our own corners as soon as we hit the Highway 401 and mostly stayed there for what seemed like hours. Our little girl was not in the back seat. She would be away for four years and likely would never move back into our home. I couldn't stop crying.

We drove up the driveway, and my husband turned the ignition off. The car rolled slightly and then stopped abruptly when he pulled the emergency brake. I looked at him, wondering if he was OK.

He was crying. Tears were rolling down his cheeks. I hadn't seen him cry for many years, actually since his father's shivah. As it was so uncommon to see that side of him, I shivered a bit and coldness set in at not feeling so safe any longer.

I opened the car door and stepped out. I was still in my corner, and in some way, some strange way, I resented my husband.

"Let's have another child," I had said to him when our youngest had turned three. "Five is not a lot you know. The Goldmans have eight children and were grandparents when they had their last one."

"It's smart," I said, "so we'll never be alone."

My husband looked at me with unhappiness in his eyes and said, "Alone? We'll have each other."

I was 50 and I wanted to make another child. I didn't want the two of us to be alone, even though we had tickets for the theatre and Leafs and Raptors games, and a membership to Beth Torah Congregation. It wasn't enough though. I am a mother and I want so badly to nurture, and it's not enough from an occasional distance.

My husband got out of the car and I asked, "Why are you crying? Isn't this what you always wanted?"

He responded that it was, but he never realized that he actually dreaded this moment.

"I was so tired of driving the boys to their hockey games, bar mitzvah lessons and to concerts," he continued.

"I couldn't wait to go to bed when I wanted, not having to wait up for the girls, and to wake up later, instead of having to prepare breakfast for everyone on the weekends."

He continued that he was too young to be an empty nester and the next stop was being a grandparent, something that made him feel decrepit.

The next day, our rabbi commiserated with us, but he was too young to appreciate what we were going through. His oldest was six. We called our friends who had become empty nesters two years earlier and they were busy playing golf. A week, month, year went by. Pesach came, and the family was together, and eight days later they were gone.

A few years passed. Our daughter got married, then she got divorced. Then she moved back home. We've asked her to shovel the snow, hoping she would get the point. She's hasn't. The house seems so terribly full.

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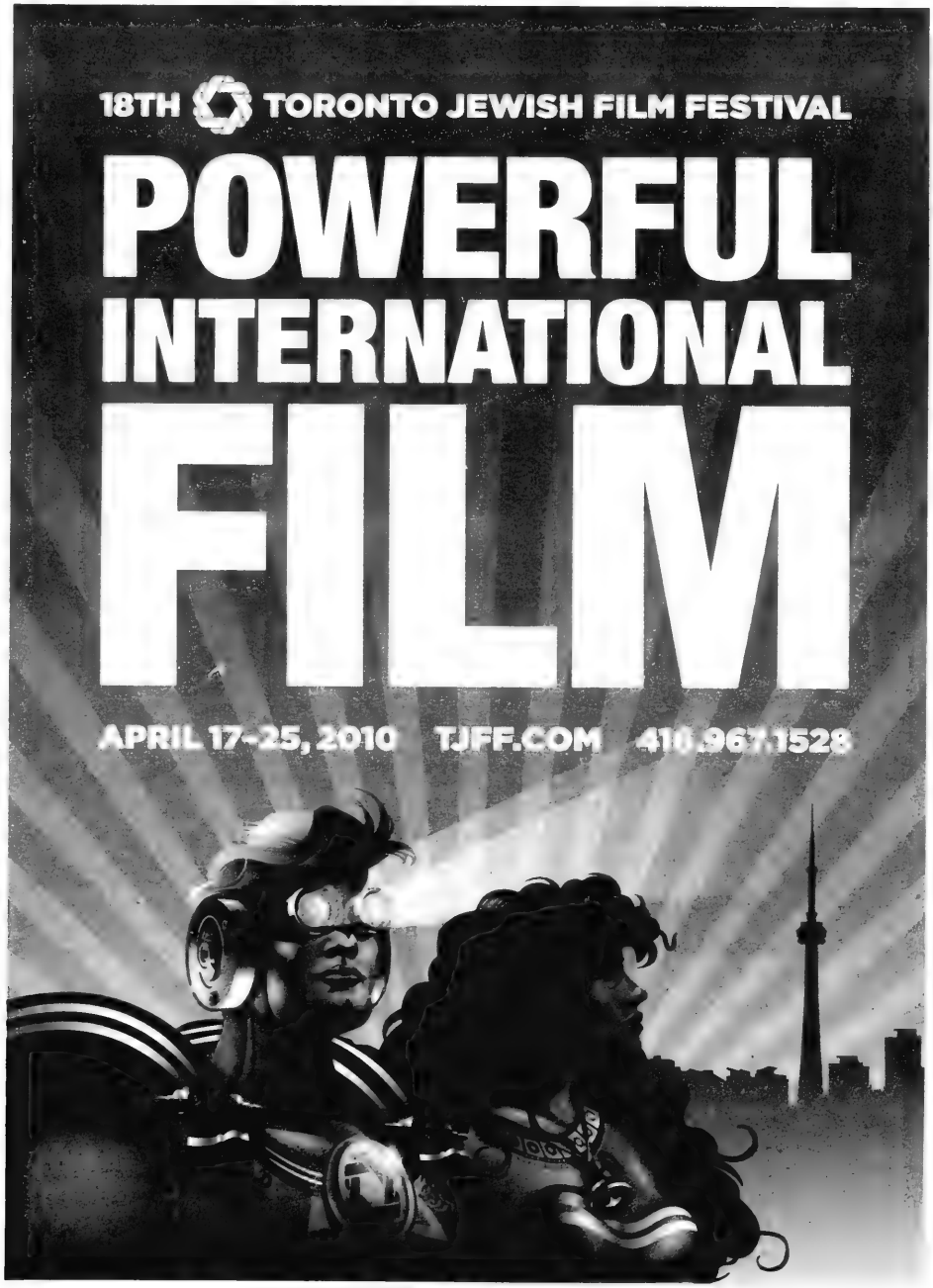

WELCOME TO THE

18TH ANNUAL TORONTO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

In the Jewish tradition, "l'Chaim" is a toast "to life." The numeric value of the Hebrew letters forming the word "chai" is 18, so this is a very meaningful birthday for TJFF. It's a time to celebrate our past and salute the future.

The special sidebar series this year is ***People of the Comic Book: The Creators of Superheroes, Graphic Novels & Toons***. Jews basically invented the comic book: Superman, Batman, Spiderman ... these and many other iconic superheroes were created by Jewish artists. The graphic novel, and a significant part of early animation, were also largely a Jewish creation. Through films and special events, ***People of the Comic Book*** celebrates the Jewish pioneers and creators of comic art.

This year's Festival features films from 18 countries. Among them are *The Loners*, Renen Schorr's film about two Israeli soldiers who bring an entire army base to a standstill, and *Simon Konianski*, a quirky road movie from Belgium. The Festival is honoured to screen the North American Premiere of the newly restored documentary *Nuremberg: Its Lesson for Today*. There are also documentary profiles of some truly remarkable personalities, ranging from filmmaker Claude Lanzmann to Baroness Pannonica Rothschild, jazz lover and muse of Thelonious Monk.

Still the best ticket in town, the TJFF has something for everyone. Covering the city, we now screen in four venues: the Bloor Cinema, the Al Green Theatre, the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas and, starting this year, the SilverCity Richmond Hill Cinemas, which will further serve audiences in the northern part of Toronto. For full descriptions of the films, as well as times and venues, and, most importantly, to book your tickets, go to our website at **tjff.com**.

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THE LOCATIONS

AG = Al Green Theatre
BC = Bloor Cinema
SC = Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas
RH = SilverCity Richmond Hill Cinemas

= People of the Comic Book Sidebar Series

OPENING-NIGHT FILM

A MATTER OF SIZE (SIPUR GADOL)

TORONTO PREMIERE
ISRAEL/FRANCE/GERMANY 2009, 90 MIN
DIRECTORS: SHARON MAYMON, EREZ TADMOR

Herzl joins a fitness club to get into shape, but the process turns out to be sheer torture. Fed up with the ridicule he faces daily, he turns to sumo wrestling as a way to transform his size into self-respect. He then convinces a few friends to join him, and they all learn some important lessons about life itself. A wonderful film with winning performances by an excellent cast and a moral for all of us to ponder. **Guest invited.**

► **SATURDAY APRIL 17 • 9:15 PM • BC**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 8 PM • SC**

CLOSING-NIGHT FILM

AJAMI

ISRAEL/GERMANY 2009, 120 MIN
DIRECTORS: SCANDAR COPTI, YARON SHANI

Directed by an Israeli Arab and an Israeli Jew, this powerful film uses five interconnected stories to explore the lives of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish inhabitants in the mixed Jaffa neighbourhood of Ajami. Winner of the Wolgin Award and the Ophir Prize for Best Israeli Film 2009, and an Academy Award® nominee.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 8:45 PM • BC**

ACHZIV, A PLACE FOR LOVE

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 55 MIN
DIRECTOR: ETTY WIESELTIER

In an abandoned Arab village in northern Israel, Eli Avivi created a sanctuary where bohemians from around the world indulge in drugs and free love. But authorities threaten to close down Avivi's "paradise," while friends and dignitaries continue to pay homage to a vanishing way of life.

With DUBAK: A PALESTINIAN JEW (60 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 3 PM • AG**

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

NUREMBERG: ITS LESSON FOR TODAY (1948) [The 2009 Schulberg/Waletzky Restoration]

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
USA/GERMANY 1948/2009, 80 MIN
WRITER/DIRECTOR: STUART SCHULBERG
RESTORATION CREATED BY: SANDRA SCHULBERG & JOSH WALETZKY

Originally produced in 1948, and subsequently suppressed by the U.S. government, the English-language version of *Nuremberg* was never completed, and the original picture negative and sound elements were lost or destroyed. One of the greatest courtroom dramas in history, *Nuremberg* illustrates how four international prosecutors built their case against the top Nazi war criminals during a trial that lasted from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946. The film follows the structure of the four counts of indictment, interwoven with the Nazis' own documentation and propaganda films presented as evidence at the trial, building to a climax with the judges' chilling verdicts. *Nuremberg* is an incredible piece of cinematic history that has been meticulously restored. Not to be missed. Warning: Graphic archival footage.

Guests: Journalist Evan Solomon, Host of CBC NewsNetwork's *Power and Politics with Evan Solomon*; Sandra Schulberg, Restoration Project Director; and Josh Waletzky, Restoration Picture/Sound Editor.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 7 PM • BC**

AHEAD OF TIME

USA 2009, 73 MIN
DIRECTOR: BOB RICHMAN

This documentary tells the moving story of Ruth Gruber, the foreign correspondent, humanitarian and photographer who was among the first to report from the Soviet Arctic, covered the Nuremberg trials, campaigned to allow 1,000 Holocaust refugees from Europe into the U.S. and brought the story of the *Exodus 1947* to the world's attention.
Guest: Producer Zeva Oelbaum.

With THE IRENE HILDA STORY (45 MIN)

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 5:30 PM • AG**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 6:30 PM • SC**

AMERICAN SPLENDOR

USA 2003, 101 MIN
DIRECTORS: SHARI SPRINGER BERMAN, ROBERT PULCINI

Based on Cleveland writer and former file clerk Harvey Pekar's popular comic-book series, this award-winning feature ingeniously interweaves documentary footage of the real-life Pekar and his wife, Joyce Brabner, with uncanny fictional performances by Paul Giamatti and Hope Davis. A cinematic gem. **Guest: Harvey Pekar.**

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • NOON • AG**

AMOS OZ: THE NATURE OF DREAMS

ISRAEL/CANADA 2009, 86 MIN
DIRECTORS: MASHA ZUR GLOZMAN, YONATHAN ZUR

Acclaimed writer Amos Oz is well-known both for his support of Israel's existence and his criticism of government policies. In this film (offering a broader perspective than the film on Oz TJFF screened last year), the writer discusses his childhood in Jerusalem and life on the kibbutz, relations between Jews of different origins, the peace process and Israeli politics.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 1:30 PM • BC**

ANITA

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ARGENTINA 2009, 106 MIN
DIRECTOR: MARCOS CARNEVALE

When the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association is bombed, Anita's life is sent into a tailspin. Not understanding what has happened, Anita, who has Down syndrome, goes in search of her mother and becomes swept up with other hurt, disoriented people. Alejandra Manzo, an actress living with Down syndrome, delivers a stunning performance in this lovely film.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 5:30 PM • SC**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 1 PM • BC**

AS LILITH

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 77 MIN
DIRECTOR: EYTAN HARRIS

Following the suicide of her daughter, Lilith decides to cremate the girl. Upon this declaration, the head of the Jewish ultra-Orthodox organization Zaka, which assists in the recovery of human remains after terrorist attacks, declares an all-out war against Lilith, initiating a series of bizarre trials closely reported on by an outspoken Israeli media.

With LONE SAMARITAN (50 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • NOON • AG**

BAR MITZVAH

USA 1935, 75 MIN
DIRECTOR: HENRY LYNN

In his only film performance, Boris Thomashefsky, a pioneer of the American Yiddish theatre, plays a widower whose wife is lost at sea. A wonderful example of high melodrama typical of popular Yiddish theatre at the time, this newly restored film also features vaudeville humour, playful songs and dancing.

WITH BALANCING ACTS (WORK-IN-PROGRESS, 18 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 11 AM • BC**

BERLIN '36

CANADIAN PREMIERE
GERMANY 2009, 97 MIN
DIRECTOR: KASPER HEIDELBACH

To prevent a U.S. boycott of the 1936 Olympics on the grounds of exclusion of Jews, the Nazis recruited Gretel Bergmann, a world-class Jewish high jumper — while doing everything to ensure she lost. This well-made, engrossing drama tells the true story of a woman's attempts to maintain dignity and respect under tremendous pressure. A great companion to *What If? The Helene Mayer Story*. Warning: Nudity.
Guest invited.

► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • 9:15 PM • BC**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 1:00 PM • SC**

BRIDE FLIGHT

CANADIAN PREMIERE
NETHERLANDS 2008, 130 MIN
DIRECTOR: BEN SOMBOGAART

Epic film, opening with a 1953 air race won by a Dutch plane carrying, among others, a group of women to their fiancés in New Zealand, focuses on three of these women and the male hunk who befriends them on the flight. Beautiful photography featuring the New Zealand landscape and a storyline that spans decades make this an intriguing story. Warning: Nudity.

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 8 PM • BC**
► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • 9:15 PM • RH**

BROTHERS (FRÈRES)

SWITZERLAND 2008, 116 MIN
DIRECTOR: IGAAL NIDDAM

Two brothers, meeting in Israel after years apart, discover how different they have become. One is a secular Jew living on a kibbutz, the other an Orthodox lawyer from the U.S. who has come to Israel to fight a court case highlighting the separation of state and religion in modern Israel.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 1 PM • RH**

THE BROTHERS WARNER

USA 2008, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: CASS WARNER

An intimate portrait of the legendary family who rose from immigrant poverty to create Warner Bros., a major Hollywood studio with a strong

social conscience. This film goes beyond the conventional mythology to deliver a very human story of the larger-than-life brothers.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 1:15 PM • AG**

CINEMA'S EXILES: FROM HITLER TO HOLLYWOOD

USA 2009, 117 MIN
DIRECTOR: KAREN THOMAS

When Hitler banned Jews from working in Germany's innovative film industry, artists such as Billy Wilder, Fritz Lang and Peter Lorre, who had created landmarks of the German cinema, fled their homeland for Hollywood. This documentary explores their struggle to recreate themselves in a new culture.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 1 PM • SC**
► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 1 PM • BC**

CLAUDE LANZMANN, AN ODE TO LIFE

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 52 MIN
DIRECTOR: SYLVAIN ROUMETTE

A documentary portrait of Claude Lanzmann, whose monumental 1985 film *Shoah* challenged previous cinematic depictions of the Holocaust. The film explores Lanzmann's time in the French Resistance; his years in post-war Berlin; his relationship with Simone de Beauvoir; and the philosophy behind the moral and artistic choices he made around *Shoah*.

With GITAI IN SEARCH OF HIS CARMEL (50 MIN)

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • NOON • AG**

COCO

CANADIAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 95 MIN
DIRECTOR: GAD ELMALEH

In this broad slapstick comedy, a well-liked, self-made man goes a little overboard when he learns he has a heart defect: he decides to make a huge spectacle out of his son's bar mitzvah, inviting some 6,000 guests.

With I AM RUTHIE SEGAL, HEAR ME ROAR (10 MIN)

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 3:15 PM • BC**
► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 6 PM • RH**

THE COMIC ART FORUM *FREE!*

WITH HARVEY PEKAR, BEN KATCHOR AND PAUL BUHLE, 90 MIN

What's new in Jews and comics, and . . . what's old! This lively forum with special guests and listeners joining the conversation, will probe familiar questions — why did the comic art form attract Jewish artists in the first place — and go on to recent ones — why is 90 percent of comic art on the web, and where is the industry heading?

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 4:00 PM • AG**

COMIC BOOK CONFIDENTIAL

CANADA 1988, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: RON MANN

An entertaining, insightful survey of comic books — from the explosive popularity of superheroes in the 1930s and '40s and the horror comics of the '50s, to the *Mad Magazine* era and the underground comix of the '60s, and beyond. Includes interviews with Art Spiegelman, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby and many others. **Guest invited.**

With THE SECRET OF DRAWING – Daniel Clowes (15 MIN)

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 2 PM • AG**

DUBAK: A PALESTINIAN JEW

ISRAEL 2008, 60 MIN
DIRECTOR: ELLA ALTERMAN

Despite the never-ending cycle of violence between Jewish settlers and their Arab neighbours, Dubak, a complex religious man who lost his son in the conflict, works with the Arabs in setting up a search-and-rescue mission to assist those who get lost in the vast Judean desert. A lovely character study.

With ACHZIV, A PLACE FOR LOVE (55 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 3 PM • AG**

ELI & BEN

ISRAEL 2008, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: ORI RAVID

Twelve-year-old Eli's world is turned upside down when his father (played by Lior Ashkenazi), the city architect for Herzliya, is accused of taking a bribe. As he faces a barrage of hostility from his friends, Eli is forced to question everything he believes in.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 6:15 PM • RH**

EXODUS: THE TRUE STORY

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 79 MIN
DIRECTORS: ITZIK LERNER, URI BORREDA

The *Exodus 1947* was an American riverboat refitted to carry 4,500 Holocaust survivors to Palestine. British warships rammed the vessel and transported the passengers to detention camps in Germany. This film tells the story of their experiences in an accurate depiction of the events.

With COHEN ON THE BRIDGE: RESCUE AT ENTEBBE (20 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 3:20 PM • SC**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 6 PM • BC**

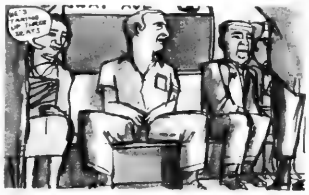
EYES WIDE OPEN (EINAYIM PHUHOT)

ISRAEL/GERMANY/FRANCE 2009, 91 MIN
DIRECTOR: HAIM TABAKMAN

What happens when an ultra-Orthodox married man in Jerusalem falls in love with another man? That is the dilemma faced by Aaron, after a young man shows up at his butcher shop. He then faces great temptation and risks the condemnation of his entire community.

With SINNER (28 MIN)
Co-presented with Kulanu

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 8 PM • BC**
► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 8:15 PM • RH**



THE FALSE FOREST AND OTHER PICTURE-STORIES

A READING BY BEN KATCHOR, 60 MIN

In this special live appearance, award-winning graphic novelist Ben Katchor, "the most poetic, deeply layered artist ever to draw a comic strip" (*New York Times Book Review*), reads from his work, accompanied by projected images of his evocative illustrations, on the subjects of architecture and urban design. Not to be missed.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 8:30 PM • AG**

FIVE HOURS FROM PARIS

ISRAEL 2009, 92 MIN
DIRECTOR: LEONID PRUDOVSKY

When a divorced cab driver drops his son off at school, he meets a married woman about to leave Israel to join her husband in Canada. Neither is looking for romance, but somehow they find themselves drawn to each other, and their lives are radically transformed. A lovely comic drama.

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 8:30 PM • SC**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 2:30 PM • AG**

FRAGMENTS (RESISIM)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 50 MIN
DIRECTOR: YONATAN HAIMOVICH

In this touching documentary, the filmmaker revisits the Jerusalem apartment complex that housed his family upon their emigration from the Soviet Union. The faces, stories and memories of those who shaped his life weave a tapestry of passionate and tragic figures. **Guest invited.**

With THE VALDERAMA SISTERS (48 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 3:30 PM • AG**

FRITZ THE CAT

USA 1972, 78 MIN
DIRECTOR: RALPH BAKSHI

The first X-rated animated feature (written, directed and produced by Israeli-born Bakshi) is based on Robert Crumb's comic strip from the heyday of the underground comix scene. In this cult hit, Fritz the college-aged feline, a smooth

PEOPLE OF THE COMIC BOOK

The Creators of Superheroes, Graphic Novels & Toons

Other highlights: a live **appearance/reading** by award-winning graphic novelist **Ben Katchor** and a work-in-progress about comic artist **Will Elder** and **Mad Magazine**, with special guests.

Plus some great cartoons, terrific docs and classic features... don't miss it! See film listings in this flyer for descriptions and times.

Highlights of the series include three **FREE** ticketed events: author **Paul Buhle**'s illustrated talk on "**Jews and Comic Art**," **The Comic Art Forum**, with special guests **Harvey Pekar**, **Ben Katchor** and **Paul Buhle**, and a work-in-progress on French graphic artist/director **Joann Sfar**.

American Splendor – with special guest Harvey Pekar

The Comic Art Forum – with Harvey Pekar, Ben Katchor and Paul Buhle

Comic Book Confidential – with Daniel Clowes short

The False Forest and Other Picture-Stories – a live reading by Ben Katchor

Fritz the Cat – midnight screening!

Irreverent Imagination: The Golden Age of Looney Tunes – with cartoons

Joann Sfar Draws from Memory – work-in-progress, with Pleasures of Urban Decay

Last Son – with Fleischer Brothers Superman cartoons

The Line King: The Al Hirschfeld Story

The Mad Playboy of Art – work-in-progress on Mad Magazine artist

Paul Buhle Talk – "Jews and Comic Art"

Who Framed Roger Rabbit – with special intro by Paul Buhle

Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist – with the short Munro

operator, gets mixed up in sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll ... and the hippie counterculture of the '60s.

► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • MIDNIGHT • BC**

GAY DAYS (HAZMAN HAVAROD)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 71 MIN
DIRECTOR: YAIR QEDAR

In 1985, three people were openly gay in Israel. By 1998, this number rose to 3,000. This wonderful film energetically combines archival materials and personal stories of those who pushed for change, to chronicle this largely untold story.

Co-presented with the Inside Out Film Festival

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 8:45 PM • AG**

GITAI IN SEARCH OF HIS CARMEL

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 50 MIN
DIRECTOR: RAN TAL

Acclaimed Israeli director Amos Gitai is followed by a camera crew for six weeks during the production of his recent film *Carmel*. This terrific and touching primer for the director's work will satisfy both passionate fans and those new to his films.

With CLAUDE LANZMANN, AN ODE TO LIFE (52 MIN)

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • NOON • AG**

GLOOMY SUNDAY (EIN LIED VON LIEBE UND TOD)

GERMANY HUNGARY 1999, 110 MIN
DIRECTOR: ROLF SCHUBEL

The title of this dramatic and humorous film refers to the notorious 1935 Hungarian "suicide hymn-song," a haunting melody of hopelessness and despair. When three men fall in love with the same woman, the song links them far beyond the Budapest café where they first meet. A TJFF favourite, back in honour of our 18th year! Warning: Nudity.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 8:15 PM • RH**

HAREDIM – A DOCUMENTARY TRILOGY

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 150 MIN
DIRECTORS: RON OFER, YOHAI HAKAK

This three-part award-winning TV documentary offers a rare glimpse into Israel's Haredi community: *Gevald* introduces us to a radical ultra-Orthodox leader who organizes demonstrations against the State of Israel; *The Rabbi's Daughter and the Midwife* focuses on two women who counsel ultra-Orthodox women on health and birth control; and *Religion.com* explores the community's debate over the role of the Internet. **Guest: Rabbi Tina Grimberg.**

► **FRIDAY APRIL 23 • 1 PM • BC**

HEART OF STONE

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA 2008, 84 MIN
DIRECTOR: BETH TONI KRUVANT

Before the 1960s, Newark's Weequahic High School was an academically distinguished, mostly Jewish enclave immortalized in the novels of Philip Roth, its most famous alumnus. The school has since become crime-ridden, and principal Ron Stone enlists the help of alumni to encourage students to pursue their education and secure their hopes for the future. **Guest: Director Beth Toni Kruvant.**

Co-presented with Facing History and Ourselves

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 5:45 PM • AG**

HIDDEN CHILDREN (L'AFFAIRE FINALY)

FRANCE 2008, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: FABRICE GENESTAL

A French couple arrange for a Gentile woman to care for their two sons when they are transported to concentration camps. After the war, their aunt in Israel finds herself in a battle with the Church for custody of the boys, who have since been baptized. An engrossing, well-made drama based on a true story.

With SARAH & HAYAH (2 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 1 PM • BC**
► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 4:30 PM • SC**

HONOR (KAVOD)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2010, 120 MIN
DIRECTOR: HAIM BOUZAGLO

This compelling portrait of the Israeli "mafia" focuses on two Moroccan families who declare war on each other in a dispute over an Eastern European casino. Made with sensitivity and attention to detail, especially in its depiction of the religious rituals and status of women within the two families. Warning: Nudity and violence. **Guest: Director Haim Bouzaglo**

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 6:15 PM • AG**
► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 6:15 PM • SC**

IDA'S DANCE CLUB

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 59 MIN
DIRECTOR: DALIT KIMOR

A charming documentary about a dance club in Israel that takes people away from the misery of everyday life. At the annual ballroom dance competition, the participants are past retirement age, but that doesn't limit them. They dance; they sing; they fall in love.

With POINT OF VIEW (18 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 4:30 PM • SC**

INSIDE HANA'S SUITCASE

CANADA/CZECH REPUBLIC 2009, 88 MIN
DIRECTOR: LARRY WEINSTEIN

Documentary about a teacher who, opening a Holocaust museum in Japan, obtains a suitcase from Auschwitz with the name Hana Brady on it. It turns out Hana's brother survived the Holocaust and lives in Toronto. The teacher's students tell the story, which carries us from despair to hope. **Guests: Director Larry Weinstein and Hana's brother, George Brady.**

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 3:30 PM • RH**

THE IRENE HILDA STORY (L'HISTOIRE D'IRENE)

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 45 MIN
DIRECTOR: DAMIAN PETTIGREW

The story of Jewish cabaret singer Irene Hilda and her conductor brother, Bernard, who became part of Paris's jazz scene until the fall of France, when they were separated and forced into exile. Like the title character, this lovely documentary exudes a contagious love of life.

With AHEAD OF TIME (73 MIN)

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 5:30 PM • AG**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 6:30 PM • SC**

IRREVERENT IMAGINATION: THE GOLDEN AGE OF LOONEY TUNES

USA 2003, 50 MIN
DIRECTOR: CONSTANTINE NASR

Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Porky Pig and other indelible characters exploded onto the screen from the Warner Bros. animation studio. This is the story of how producer Leon Schlesinger, director "Friz" Freleng, voice actor Mel Blanc and composer Carl Stalling collaborated with animators and writers to create the wacky, wonderful Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies cartoons. **Guest invited.**

With LOONEY TUNES CARTOONS (30 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 11 AM • AG**

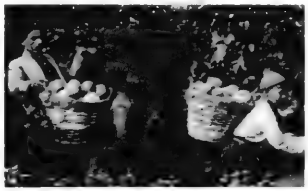
ISRAEL LTD.

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL/CANADA 2009, 52 MIN
DIRECTOR: MOR LOUSHY

This documentary follows three North American Jews who go to Israel on a youth program and explores their reaction to the country, its military and its ethos of sacrifice. The provocative film also invites us to reflect on the image Israel presents of itself around the world. **Guest invited.**

With PRRRIDE (3 MIN)

► **FRIDAY APRIL 23 • 2:15 PM • AG**



JAFFA, THE ORANGE'S CLOCKWORK

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL/FRANCE/BELGIUM/GERMANY 2009, 92 MIN
DIRECTOR: EYAL SIVAN

This revealing documentary tells the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the symbol of the iconic Jaffa orange, which started out as a name of a Palestinian town before becoming a successful Israeli brand. Now, the film suggests, the Jaffa orange is an image bound with ideological significance. **Guest invited.**

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 8:15 PM • BC**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 9:15 PM • SC**

THE JAZZ BARONESS

UK 2008, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: HANNAH ROTHSCHILD

The intriguing story of jazz aficionado Baroness Pannonica Rothschild, her relationship with pianist/composer Thelonius Monk and the mystery of why her family wanted the baroness's past kept quiet. Beautifully augmented by Helen Mirren's readings from the baroness's diary and a soundtrack featuring songs Monk wrote for the baroness.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 2:45 PM • AG**

JOANN SFAR DRAWS FROM MEMORY *FREE!*

WORK-IN-PROGRESS
FRANCE/USA 2010, 60 MIN
DIRECTOR: SAM BALL

This work-in-progress tracks Joann Sfar, author of *The Rabbi's Cat* and *Klezmer*, on an odyssey through the dual Algerian and Eastern European family heritage that is the wellspring of his work. Co-produced by Sophie Constantinou, Estelle Fialon and Valerie Joseph.

Guests: Director Sam Ball and Executive Producer Valerie Joseph.

With PLEASURES OF URBAN DECAY (18 MIN)

► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • 7 PM • BC**

SPECIAL PRESENTATION & CONCERT

THE KLEZMATICS: ON HOLY GROUND

WORLD PREMIERE
USA 2010, 108 MIN
DIRECTOR: ERIK GREENBERG ANJOU

For over 20 years The Klezmatics have been at the vanguard of the international klezmer revival movement. Following the group through tours in the U.S., Germany and Poland, this strikingly honest documentary portrait reveals the challenges faced by exceptionally creative musicians as they strive to continue making joyous, boundary-breaking music, while balancing the demands of family, career and their own individual personalities. Made by the filmmaker who brought us *A Cantor's Tale* (TJFF 2006). **Guest invited.**

LIVE IN CONCERT! KLEZMATICS MEMBERS FRANK LONDON, LORIN SKLAMBERG AND LISA GUTKIN (30 MIN)

The Grammy award-winning Klezmatics are known for their unique brand of wild, mystical, provocative, reflective and ecstatically danceable music. Come celebrate this World Premiere screening with a special pre-film live performance.

Co-sponsored by The Ashkenaz Foundation

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 8 PM • BC**

LAST SON

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA 2009, 60 MIN
DIRECTOR: BRAD RICCA

Superman took the world by storm when Toronto-born Joe Shuster and Cleveland native Jerome Siegel created the character for DC Comics in 1938. Incorporating never-before-seen archival footage, this documentary traces the fascinating story behind the origins of the iconic superhero. **Guest invited.**

With FLEISCHER BROTHERS SUPERMAN CARTOONS (30 MIN)

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 8:15 PM • AG**

LEBANON

ISRAEL/GERMANY/FRANCE 2009, 94 MIN
DIRECTOR: SAMUEL MAOZ

During the first Lebanon War, a mission to find PLO terrorists in a small Lebanese town turns into a nightmare as members of a lone tank crew find themselves in a situation they cannot control: the main question for the young men inside the tank becomes whether to kill or be killed. Winner of the Venice Film Festival Golden Lion. Warning: Violence and nudity.

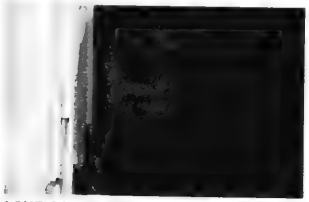
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 8:15 PM • AG**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 3:30 PM • RH**

THE LINE KING: THE AL HIRSCHFELD STORY

USA 1996, 86 MIN
DIRECTOR: SUSAN WARMS DRYFOOS

A rich portrait of the remarkable Al Hirschfeld, famous for his caricatures of show-biz personalities that graced the *New York Times* Arts section for decades. The film reveals this influential artist's masterful ability to depict the essence of an image in a deceptively simple line, and features interviews with Lauren Bacall, Carol Channing, Jules Feiffer and others.

► **FRIDAY APRIL 23 • 4:00 PM • AG**



LONE SAMARITAN

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 50 MIN
DIRECTOR: BARAK HEYMANN

An intimate look at a tiny sect who have strict rules about assimilation because of their fear of extinction. When an Israeli TV personality and her three sisters leave the Samaritan community, their father, one of its most well-known figures, is excommunicated because of his children's rejection of the sect.

With AS LILITH (77 MIN)

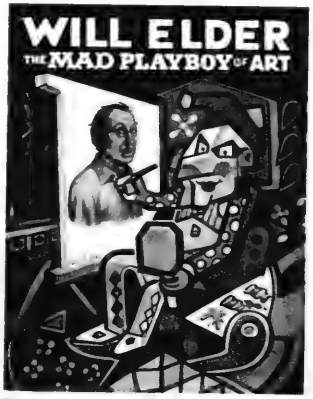
► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • NOON • AG**

THE LONERS (HABODEDIM)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 92 MIN
DIRECTOR: RENEN SCHORR

Two Russian-speaking immigrants serving in the Israeli army are accused of treason, and their demand for a retrial falls on deaf ears. Increasingly desperate as they lose their freedom and dignity in prison, they attempt one last-ditch effort to be heard. A long-awaited dramatic feature by Renen Schorr (*Late Summer Blues*).

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 5:30 PM • BC**
► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • 9:15 PM • SC**



THE MAD PLAYBOY OF ART

WORK-IN-PROGRESS
USA 2010, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: GARY VANDENBERGH

Comic-book artist Will Elder epitomized the essence of the legendary *Mad Magazine*'s zany humour and irreverent satire. This entertaining look at the man, his times and his work includes interviews with *Mad* editor Harvey Kurtzman, Jerry Garcia, Terry Gilliam, writer/cartoonist Al Jaffee and others. **Guests: Director Gary VandenBergh and Nancy Elder VandenBergh, Will Elder's daughter.**

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 6:15 PM • AG**

MENSCH

CANADIAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 87 MIN
DIRECTOR: STEVE SUISSA

An excellent safecracker tries to balance his career with the demands of his family. When he agrees to join in a large jewel heist, he risks the collapse of his two worlds. Compelling and suspenseful, Mensch offers an intriguing character study and exploration of family relations.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 1:15 PM • AG**

MRS. MOSKOWITZ & THE CATS

TORONTO PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 83 MIN
DIRECTOR: JORGE GURVICH

A retired teacher wakes up wheelchair-bound in a geriatric ward and starts a long convalescence among strangers. Eventually she discovers a new life and new friends, including a flirtatious former soccer player, and returns home reluctantly. Until a knock on her door changes her life ...

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 3:15 PM • BC**
► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 6:15 PM • SC**

NOODLE

ISRAEL 2007, 90 MIN
DIRECTOR: AYELET MENAHEMI

Miri's Chinese domestic disappears, leaving her young son abandoned. When Miri discovers that the woman was apprehended and deported to Beijing from Israel because of illegal documentation, she is determined to reunite mother and son, taking advantage of her position as a flight attendant with El-Al. A hit from the past.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 6 PM • RH**

NORA'S WILL (CINCO DIAS SIN NORA)

TORONTO PREMIERE
MEXICO 2008, 92 MIN
DIRECTOR: MARIANA CHENILLO

Before José's ex-wife, Nora, committed suicide, she made preparations for the Passover seder and arranged for José to take care of the funeral arrangements. Nora's preparations and José's determination not to follow orders create an increasingly farcical atmosphere, not unlike their life together.

Co-presented with Rendezvous with Madness

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 1 PM • BC**
► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 6 PM • RH**

NOT IDLY BY: PETER BERGSON, AMERICA AND THE HOLOCAUST

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA 2009, 40 MIN
DIRECTOR: PIERRE SAUVAGE

Portrait of Peter Bergson, who was raised in Palestine and came to the U.S. in 1940, committed to exposing evidence of the Nazis' destruction of European Jewry and energizing Western countries to open their gates to refugees. A powerful and moving portrait of an unstoppable individual and the timid American Jewish community he confronted.

With WHAT IF? THE HELENE MAYER STORY (48 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 3:30 PM • BC**

OFF AND RUNNING

TORONTO PREMIERE
USA 2009, 76 MIN
DIRECTOR: NICOLE OPPER

An African-American teenager with white Jewish lesbian parents and adopted brothers questions her own race, identity and family. This film follows her through the most difficult period of her life as she discovers the strength of family bonds and the lengths people go to become themselves.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 11 AM • BC**

OH, WHAT A MESS (SO EIN SCHLAMASSEL)

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
GERMANY 2009, 88 MIN
DIRECTOR: DIRK REGEL

Jil fears her strict Jewish family will not accept the man of her dreams, who is Christian. The couple decides to fool the family by pretending he is Jewish. A refreshing portrait of contemporary Jewish life in Berlin and the distinctive forms that culture clash and intermarriage take there.

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 5:45 PM • BC**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 4:30 PM • SC**

PAINT WHAT YOU REMEMBER

CANADIAN PREMIERE
POLAND 2009, 30 MIN
DIRECTOR: SLAWOMIR GRUNBERG

Mayer Kirshenblatt left Poland in 1934 at 17 and emigrated to Toronto. In 1990 he began painting and completed more than 300 canvases depicting the world he left behind, before his death in 2009. This film follows him on a journey back to his hometown. **Guest invited.**

With BENEATH THE EYE OF TIME (3 MIN) and PAINTING DADDY (7 MIN)

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • NOON • AG**

PAUL BUHLE TALK – "JEWS AND COMIC ART" *FREE!*

90 MIN

Using film clips and observations, comics scholar Paul Buhle explores the connections between Jews and comic art on the printed page and on screen, offering one of the most enigmatic and valuable sagas in all Jewish/popular cultural life, from Betty Boop to *Mad Magazine*, and up to present day.

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 11 AM • AG**

THE PEOPLE V. LEO FRANK

USA 2009, 86 MIN
DIRECTOR: BEN LOETERMAN

The events leading up to the 1913 lynching of Leo Frank, an American Jew wrongfully accused of murdering a young girl, are recreated through transcripts, documents and letters in this thought-provoking look at prejudice in the early-20th-century American South. **Guest: Director Ben Loeterman.**

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 5:30 PM • BC**

PROTECTOR (PROTEKTOR)

CZECH REPUBLIC 2009, 98 MIN
DIRECTOR: MAREK NAJBRT

In German-occupied Prague, a radio host is obsessively in love with his wife, a Jewish screen actress. To protect her, he agrees to become the official radio voice of the Nazi Party. But his success as a collaborator threatens to destroy the very thing he's trying to protect. Warning: Nudity.

With SO SOON FORGOTTEN (15 MIN)

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 5:30 PM • AG**

RE-BIRTH (REVIVRE) (2 PARTS)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 135 MIN/PART
DIRECTOR: HAIM BOUZAGLO

The years between World War II and the Declaration of the State of Israel witnessed a battle of wills between Jews in Palestine and the British rulers who sought to prevent immigration. This French miniseries tells the story of a boat of European Holocaust survivors and North African refugees hoping to reach their Promised Land. **Guest: Director Haim Bouzaglo.**

With SUMMER CAMP (6 MIN)

► **PART 1: MONDAY APRIL 19 • 9:15 PM • SC**
WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 8:30 PM • RH

► **PART 2: TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 9 PM • SC**
THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 8:30 PM • RH

SAYED KASHUA: FOREVER SCARED

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 56 MIN
DIRECTOR: DORIT ZIMBALIST

Documentary about Sayed Kashua, the writer of the Israeli hit comedy series *Arab Labor* and a regular columnist for the Israel newspaper *Ha'aretz*, who writes about his life as an Israeli Arab living in a Jewish society and the problems he encounters as a member of a minority within the Jewish state.

With ARAB LABOR (30 MIN)

► **FRIDAY APRIL 23 • NOON • AG**

SEVEN MINUTES IN HEAVEN (SHEVA DAKOT BE'GAN EDEN)

ISRAEL/FRANCE/HUNGARY 2009, 94 MIN
DIRECTOR: OMRI GIVON

A young woman from Jerusalem cannot recall the terrorist bombing that left her boyfriend in a coma and herself with severe burns and memory loss. As people and objects resurface from that fateful day, she begins to revisit that traumatic incident. This complex character study probes the deeper themes of memory and identity.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 5:45 PM • BC**
► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 6:45 PM • SC**

SIMON KONIANSKI

BELGIUM/FRANCE/CANADA 2009, 97 MIN
DIRECTOR: MICHA WALD

Simon, an underemployed schlimazel, moves in with his father, who takes out his disappointments on his son. When his father passes away, Simon ventures across Europe in an absurd journey with the dead body, causing him to confront the culture he's been so desperately trying to shed. A poignant and quirky comedy. Warning: Nudity. **Guest invited.**

With (ROCK THE) BELZ (5 MIN)

► **SATURDAY APRIL 24 • 9:15 PM • AG**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 3:30 PM • SC**

ULTIMATUM

CANADIAN PREMIERE
FRANCE/ISRAEL/ITALY 2009, 102 MIN
DIRECTOR: ALAIN TASMA

This moving drama, which follows two French expats and their small group of friends living in Israel, depicts what it was like for young people to live in fear of chemical weapons during the Persian Gulf War, revealing how war strips people of their pretenses and leaves them in a vulnerable state.

► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 3:15 PM • BC**
► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 1 PM • RH**

THE VALDERAMA SISTERS

NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 48 MIN
DIRECTORS: NOAM DEMSKY, MORDI KERSHNER

These strong, independent sisters are part of Peru's Bnei Moshe community — former Catholics in the last throes of converting to Judaism, in hopes of immigrating to Israel. This documentary follows these sisters from their conversion to the culture shock that marks their arrival in Israel. A lovely and poignant story.

With FRAGMENTS (50 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 3:30 PM • AG**

VICTORIA DAY

CANADA 2009, 82 MIN
DIRECTOR: DAVID BEZMOZGIS

On a Victoria Day weekend in the late 1980s, a group of kids from Toronto's Russian Jewish community go to a Bob Dylan concert at Ontario Place. When one boy fails to return home, members of the community search for him, while the nation is focused on the Edmonton Oilers' playoff run. **Guest: Director David Bezmozgis.**

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 8:30 PM • RH**

WHAT IF? THE HELENE MAYER STORY

CANADIAN PREMIERE
RUSSIA/GERMANY/USA 2008, 48 MIN
DIRECTOR: SEMYON PINKHASOV

This documentary tells the little-known story of fencer Helene Mayer who, in the 1930s, moved to the U.S. after being kicked out of a German fencing club for being half-Jewish. During the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, the International Olympic Committee pressured Germany not to discriminate against Jewish athletes. When Germany invited Mayer back to represent them to appease the IOC, she agreed, and many believe this gesture helped whitewash the Nazi racial policies. A great companion to *Berlin '36*.

With NOT IDLY BY (40 MIN)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 3:30 PM • BC**

WHERE I STAND: THE HANK GREENSPUN STORY

CANADIAN PREMIERE
USA 2008, 98 MIN
DIRECTOR: SCOTT GOLDSTEIN

Depending on where you stand, Hank Greenspun was a convicted gunrunner, Las Vegas visionary, crusading newspaper publisher, target of the Watergate burglars or hero of Israel's War of Independence. Narrated by Anthony Hopkins, this documentary gives us both the heroic moments of Greenspun's career and his flaws. **Guest invited.**

With TEN FOR GRANDPA (8 MIN)

► **SUNDAY APRIL 18 • 3:15 PM • BC**

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

USA 1988, 104 MIN
DIRECTOR: ROBERT ZEMECKIS

Author Paul Buhle calls this ground-breaking animated feature "an 'inside Hollywood' story revisiting 1940s noir themes of the Blacklist era in satirical form. The 'toons' are ordinary studio workers, the kind who belong to unions and ride the streetcar lines about to be put out of business. New bosses in town employ thugs to get rid of anyone in their way."
Guest: Author Paul Buhle.

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 5:30 PM • AG**

WILL EISNER: PORTRAIT OF A SEQUENTIAL ARTIST

USA 2007, 96 MIN
DIRECTOR: ANDREW D. COOKE

Will Eisner, named "the most influential comic artist of all time," transformed the funny papers by creating a new art form — the graphic novel. His life, work and times are wonderfully brought to life in this film, which includes interviews with Michael Chabon, Neil Gaiman, Art Spiegelman and others.

With MUNRO (9 min)

► **WEDNESDAY APRIL 21 • 8:30 PM • AG**

WILLIAM KUNSTLER: DISTURBING THE UNIVERSE

USA 2009, 85 MIN
DIRECTORS: EMILY KUNSTLER, SARAH KUNSTLER

Radical civil rights lawyer William Kunstler took on some of the most controversial cases of the 20th century, defending the Chicago 8, Martin Luther King, the Attica inmates and mafia king John Gotti. This powerful, honest documentary made by his daughters is an attempt to understand their father. **Guest invited.**

Co-presented with Human Rights Watch

► **SUNDAY APRIL 25 • 3:30 PM • BC**

THE WOLBERG FAMILY (LA FAMILLE WOLBERG)

CANADIAN PREMIERE
FRANCE 2009, 80 MIN
DIRECTOR: AXELLE ROPERT

Simon Wolberg, the mayor of a small French provincial town, is madly in love with his wife and is a prying father to his young daughter and son. His obsession with his family leads him to self-destructively test these bonds. A sensitive family drama.

► **TUESDAY APRIL 20 • 1 PM • BC**
► **THURSDAY APRIL 22 • 6 PM • RH**

THE WORST COMPANY IN THE WORLD

CANADIAN PREMIERE
ISRAEL 2009, 50 MIN
DIRECTOR: REGEV CONTES

This documentary focuses on a unique group of men who try to run an insurance company. The only trouble is that they are utter failures in their venture. Friendship and family ties turn out to be more important than profits, and the company staggers along in its own merry way.

With GEFILTE FISH (10 MIN)

► **MONDAY APRIL 19 • 4:30 PM • SC**

18TH TJFF

SATURDAY APRIL 17, 2010

9:15 PM	A Matter of Size	Bloor

SUNDAY APRIL 18, 2010

11:00 AM	Off and Running	Bloor
11:00 AM	Paul Buhle Talk - Jews and Comic Art FREE!	Al Green
1:00 PM	Hidden Children	Bloor
1:00 PM	Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood	Sheppard
1:00 PM	Brothers	SilverCity
1:15 PM	Mensch	Al Green
3:15 PM	Where I Stand: The Hank Greenspun Story	Bloor
3:20 PM	Exodus: The True Story	Sheppard
3:30 PM	Inside Hana's Suitcase	SilverCity
4:00 PM	The Comic Art Forum FREE!	Al Green
5:30 PM	Anita	Sheppard
6:15 PM	Honor	Al Green
6:15 PM	Eli & Ben	SilverCity
7:00 PM	Nuremberg: Its Lesson for Today	Bloor
8:00 PM	A Matter of Size	Sheppard
8:30 PM	Victoria Day	SilverCity
8:45 PM	Gay Days	Al Green

MONDAY APRIL 19, 2010

NOON	American Splendor	Al Green
1:00 PM	Nora's Will	Bloor
2:45 PM	The Jazz Baroness	Al Green
3:15 PM	Coco	Bloor
4:30 PM	The Worst Company in the World	Sheppard
5:30 PM	Who Framed Roger Rabbit	Al Green
5:45 PM	Seven Minutes in Heaven	Bloor
6:00 PM	Noodle	SilverCity
6:15 PM	Honor	Sheppard
8:00 PM	Eyes Wide Open	Bloor
8:15 PM	Gloomy Sunday	SilverCity
8:30 PM	The False Forest and Other Pictures-Stories	Al Green
9:15 PM	Re-Birth Part 1	Sheppard

TUESDAY APRIL 20, 2010

NOON	Paint What You Remember	Al Green
1:00 PM	The Wolberg Family	Bloor
2:00 PM	Comic Book Confidential	Al Green
3:15 PM	Mrs. Moscowitz & the Cats	Bloor
4:30 PM	Hidden Children	Sheppard
5:30 PM	The People v. Leo Frank	Bloor
5:30 PM	Ahead of Time w/ The Irene Hilda Story	Al Green
6:00 PM	Nora's Will	SilverCity
6:45 PM	Seven Minutes In Heaven	Sheppard
8:15 PM	Jaffa, the Orange's Clockwork	Bloor
8:15 PM	Last Son w/ Superman Cartoons	Al Green
8:15 PM	Eyes Wide Open	SilverCity
9:00 PM	Re-Birth Part 2	Sheppard

WEDNESDAY APRIL 21, 2010

NOON	As Lilith w/ Lone Samaritan	Al Green
1:00 PM	Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood	Bloor
3:00 PM	Dubak: A Palestinian Jew w/ Achziv, A Place for Love	Al Green
3:30 PM	What If? The Helene Mayer Story w/ Not Idly By	Bloor
4:30 PM	Ida's Dance Club	Sheppard
5:45 PM	Heart of Stone	Al Green
5:45 PM	Oh, What a Mess	Bloor
6:00 PM	Coco	SilverCity
6:15 PM	Mrs. Moscowitz & the Cats	Sheppard
8:00 PM	Bride Flight	Bloor
8:30 PM	Will Eisner: Portrait of a Sequential Artist	Al Green
8:30 PM	Five Hours from Paris	Sheppard
8:30 PM	Re-Birth Part 1	SilverCity

THURSDAY APRIL 22, 2010

NOON	Claude Lanzmann w/ Gitai in Search of His Carmel	Al Green
1:00 PM	Anita	Bloor
2:30 PM	Five Hours from Paris	Al Green
3:15 PM	Ultimatum	Bloor
4:30 PM	Oh, What a Mess	Sheppard
5:30 PM	The Loners	Bloor
5:30 PM	Protector	Al Green
6:00 PM	The Wolberg Family	SilverCity
6:30 PM	Ahead of Time w/ The Irene Hilda Story	Sheppard
8:00 PM	The Klezmatics: On Holy Ground	Bloor
8:15 PM	Lebanon	Al Green
8:30 PM	Re-Birth Part 2	SilverCity
9:15 PM	Jaffa, the Orange's Clockwork	Sheppard

FRIDAY APRIL 23, 2010

NOON	Sayed Kashua: Forever Sacred w/ Arab Labor	Al Green
1:00 PM	Haredim - A Documentary Trilogy	Bloor
2:15 PM	Israel Ltd.	Al Green
4:00 PM	The Line King: The Al Hirschfeld Story	Al Green

SATURDAY APRIL 24, 2010

7:00 PM	Joann Sfar Draws from Memory FREE!	Bloor
9:15 PM	Berlin '36	Bloor
9:15 PM	Simon Konianski	Al Green
9:15 PM	The Loners	Sheppard
9:15 PM	Bride Flight	SilverCity
MIDNIGHT	Fritz the Cat	Bloor

SUNDAY APRIL 25, 2010

11:00 AM	Bar Mitzvah	Bloor
11:00 AM	Irreverent Imagination: The Golden Age of Looney Tunes	Al Green
1:00 PM	Berlin '36	Sheppard
1:00 PM	Ultimatum	SilverCity
1:15 PM	The Brothers Warner	Al Green
1:30 PM	Amos Oz: The Nature of Dreams	Bloor
3:30 PM	William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe	Bloor
3:30 PM	Fragments w/ The Valderama Sisters	Al Green
3:30 PM	Simon Konianski	Sheppard
3:30 PM	Lebanon	SilverCity
6:00 PM	Exodus: The True Story	Bloor
6:15 PM	The Mad Playboy of Art	Al Green
8:45 PM	Ajami	Bloor

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April 11–17

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Saturday & Sunday 2–6 pm
(Closed Good Friday and Easter Monday)

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Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC
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8771 Yonge Street at Hwy 7
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* Please note: The Bloor Cinema box office will be open on April 17 for Opening Night tickets only.

During the Festival, venue box offices open 1 hour before the first scheduled screening of the day and close 30 minutes after the start of the last screening of the day.

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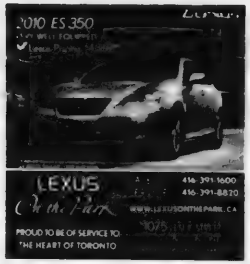

This Week

National

Students ask Parliament to intervene in Schalit case. *Page 3*

Kindertransport organizer honoured by shul. *Page 14*

Scrabble as the path to a mitzvah. *Page 18*

Heebonics

Toronto band takes off in One Fell Swoop. *Page 49*

Books & Authors

Yann Martel's latest book tackles the Holocaust. *Page 50*

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From sorrow to celebration

The transition in Israel from Yom Hazikaron (Memorial Day) to Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) is stark, yet moving. At left, Israeli soldiers attend a memorial ceremony on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Right, a young girl celebrates Independence Day with a doll of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister. ***Please see related story on page 43.***

[*Photos by FLASH90 and Israel Sun***]**

Western Wall triggers ad ban in U.K.

JTA

LONDON — An advertisement for travel to Israel was banned in Britain as misleading for showing sites that included the Western Wall.

The ad, part of an Israeli Government Tourist Office campaign, said that a tourist could "travel the entire length of Israel in six hours," and showed pictures of attractions such as the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock.

The British Advertising Standards Authority received a complaint claiming that the advertising, which appeared in publications and on posters, was misleading since the Western Wall and the Dome of the Rock are located in eastern Jerusalem and are "part of the occupied territories."

The authority claimed that readers of the ad were likely to assume that all the places featured in the ad were within the State of Israel.

"The status of the occupied territory of the West Bank [is] the subject of much international dispute, and because we considered that the ad implied that the part of east Jerusalem featured in the image was part of the State of Israel, we concluded that the ad was likely to mislead," the Advertising Standards Authority said.

Continued on page 44

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'Don't push Israel into a corner' – please see page 44

The News in Brief

Canada

Rapist Gets 8 Years

TORONTO — A former York University student who returned to campus in September 2007 and raped two women in their Vanier College residence rooms received eight years in jail for the crimes last week. Daniel Katsnelson, 27, who graduated from York in 2006, pleaded guilty to the rapes in January. The Crown had sought a 10-year sentence, while the defence asked for five years. Katsnelson's longtime friend, Justin Connort, pleaded guilty in 2008 to one count of sexual assault and received three years in jail.

Munks Give Gift

TORONTO — A $35-million gift from mining entrepreneur Peter Munk and his wife, Melanie, to the University of Toronto – the largest in its history – will help create a new School of Global Affairs. U of T said last week. The school will be set up with the help of a $25-million provincial grant and incorporate U of T's Munk Centre for International Studies, established 10 years ago after another Munk gift.

World

Divestment Backed

SAN FRANCISCO — A vote to overturn the veto of an Israel divestment bill at the University of California, Berkeley has attracted high-profile supporters. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and author Naomi Klein have spoken out in favour of the university divestment bill, which was vetoed last month by the president of Berkeley's student association. A vote to overturn the veto was set for this week. The bill passed 16-4 in the student senate, but some senators were said to be reconsidering their vote. A two-thirds majority is required to overturn the veto.

Church Ruled OK

CHICAGO — A Chicago court ruled that a father can take his Jewish daughter to church. A judge who had previously denied Joseph Reyes permission to take his daughter, 3, to Easter services, said in a divorce ruling April 13 that he could take the girl to church during his visitation times, which include Christmas and Easter. The judge reportedly said her decision was based on "the best interest of the child." Joseph Reyes made headlines when he took his daughter to church and had her baptized, despite a restraining order filed by his estranged wife that barred him from exposing the girl to faiths other than Judaism.

Demjanjuk calls war crimes trial 'torture'

MUNICH — John Demjanjuk addressed the court at his German war crimes trial for the first time last week, expressing anger at the proceedings.

In an April 13 statement read by his lawyer in the Munich court, Demjanjuk, 90, called the trial "torture." He was charged in December 2009 as an accessory to the murder of 29,700 Jews at the Sobibor death camp in Poland in 1943. The trial is expected to conclude this summer.

Demjanjuk said he was "forcibly deported" from the United States last year to face a "false accusation of accomplice to murder" after "30 years of legal persecution in Israel, the United States and Poland." He blamed Jewish groups, namely the World Jewish Congress and the Simon Wiesenthal Center, for levelling false charges against him.

He said Germany is trying to "turn a prisoner of war into a war criminal." He says he was a Red Army soldier taken prisoner by the Nazis and blamed Germany "for using violence and threats of execution to force thousands upon thousands to work in perverse mass-extermination camps." He didn't say whether he worked in one of these camps, as the prosecution maintains.

An Israeli death sentence against he Ukraine-born Demjanjuk was overturned after the Supreme Court found reasonable doubt he was a guard at Treblinka.

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Students present Schalit petition to Parliament

Conservative MP acts on behalf of high schoolers

By CARA STERN
Special to The CJN

OTTAWA — Jewish high school students presented a petition to Parliament last week urging the federal government to help secure the freedom of kidnapped soldier Gilad Schalit and other missing Israeli servicemen.

The petition has about 250 signatures from community members of many different faiths. Members of a Torah High class, in which public high school students learn about Judaism, began collecting the signatures three years ago, said Bram Bregman, executive director of NCSY Ottawa, which runs Torah High.

The teens also collected messages of support for Schalit's family, he said.

Since Hamas kidnapped him on Israeli territory in 2006, Schalit has been held hostage in the Gaza Strip.

Pierre Poilievre, Conservative MP for the riding of Nepean-Carleton riding in Ottawa, presented the petition to the House of Commons on April 14 on behalf of the students.

"It was an opportunity to raise the important concern of missing Israeli soldiers and to highlight the ongoing deplorable behaviour of Hezbollah and terrorist groups like it," he said.

But it was also a way to represent the voices of everyday Canadians who demand action, he added.

Bregman said it's important to show the government that citizens support Schalit.

Continued on page 38

Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre talks with students. *[Cara Stern photo]*

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Greater Toronto Area

An outstanding woman of history

From the editor's desk...

One need not be a newshound – someone whose nose is buried in the pages of the newspaper or whose eyes are transfixed onto the hypnotic white light of the computer screen – to have noticed that these days, many individuals, organizations and alas, even nation states, are trying to alter and in some cases obliterate Jewish history.

For example, in this week's issue alone of *The CJN* (see pages 1 and 8), we carry the story of Britain's Advertising Standards Agency prohibiting the government of Israel from using a tourism poster that includes a photo of the Western Wall. The real purpose of the prohibition, we can all agree, is to lend support to the view of history propagated by Israel's enemies that the Western Wall, the Old City and east Jerusalem should not be associated with the Jewish state.

By the same token, one need not be a devotee of Jewish tradition to know that the single most important guarantor of the perpetuity of Jewish history is the nurturing and sustaining of our collective memory.

We have just emerged from a period of time and a series of observances that have been the equivalent of a gale-force wind on a full-mast sail through the open seas and channels of Jewish history.

Starting in the middle of the month of Nisan with the holiday of Pesach, 12 days later with Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah, and then seven days after that, just last week, with Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, we have all recently breathed the same invigorating, salty air of our past.

If we are to build a future, we must know our past. If we are to assert our rights as a people, we must know our history. For it is that shared and common history that helps mould a sense of peoplehood and helps us respond to the calumnious suggestion that the Western Wall is illegally occupied by Israel.

Hence, the story last week in this space about the bravery of the people of Kibbutz Gesher during Israel's War of Independence.

Hence, the story this week about a woman who lived some 400 years before Israel's War of Independence, who dedicated her entire adult life to rescuing Jews in distress, who stood shoulder to shoulder with kings and rulers, and who has been described as the first "modern" Zionist.

Dona Gracia Nasi was born in Lisbon, Portugal, in 1510 into the Miguis family of Conversos (New Christians). She was given the name Beatrice de Luna. Early on in her life, her parents told her the truth of her Jewish past and shared with her the secret of their Jewish present. Her real name was Hannah Nasi.

She married Francisco Mendez, a wealthy banker, whose real name was Tzemach Benvenisti. To avoid the encroaching tentacles of the Inquisition the couple fled to London and then to Antwerp. Hanna arrived in Antwerp as Dona Gracia.

She became a widow at the age of 25 and inherited her deceased husband's bank and his banking fortune. But her husband's enemies plotted against her and against her control of the bank. She outwitted the plotters.

In her excellent biography of Dona Gracia, *The Woman Who Defied Kings*, Andrée Aelion Brooks writes, "While steering Francisco's sprawling business interests, she would defy her enemies by spending most of her fortune on a humanitarian enterprise that would engross her more than the profitable royal loans, spice monopolies, syndications and currency arbitrage favoured by her husband.

"She would become the self-appointed protector and political liaison for [the Inquisition's] targets: the Conversos. These were Spanish and Portuguese Jews who, like her own family, had been forcibly converted to Catholicism."

As the head of the Mendez bank and a secret, trans-national network for the rescue of Jews, she eventually settled in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Kushta (Istanbul as it would later become known). Before she arrived in Kushta, however, she travelled through and lived in Venice, Ferrara, Ancona, Ragussa (later Dubrovnik) and finally Thessalonica in Greece.

While she lived in Turkey, it was Dona Gracia's ambition to bring Jews to the Holy Land and specifically to the city of Tiberius on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Visitors to Tiberius today can learn first hand of the life and exploits of this remarkable Jewish woman at the The House of Dona Gracia Hotel-Museum (at Rehov Haprachim 3). Each room in the museum is named after a city where Dona Gracia spent part of her life.

Tzvi Schaick is the general manager and curator of the museum. Irit Ahdoot, the marketing and public relations manager, told *The CJN* during a visit there in February that "the aim of the hotel-museum is to teach visitors about the courage, wisdom and leadership of Jewish women throughout our history. We are trying to teach people to be proud Jews. We have had outstanding role models throughout our history. Being Jewish is a wonderful thing."

I completely agree. In November, there will be celebrations in Israel marking the 500th anniversary of Dona Gracia's birth. For more information about the hotel-museum and about Dona Gracia, go to www.donagracia.com.

–MBD

Clarification

The headline "The Exodus: fact or fiction?" of Alex Gropper's April 8 column was not meant to question our faith, but to show readers that some scholars are re-examining the historical evidence for the Exodus in light of new discoveries.

See]N

UNVEILING THE NEW ESPLANADE

Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe, second from left and Israeli President Shimon Peres last week dedicated the new Ben Gurion Esplanade in Paris, on the bank of the Seine River near the Eiffel Tower.

[Israel Sun photo]

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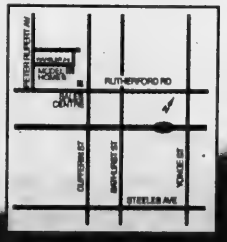

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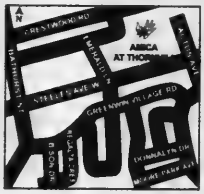

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Remembering Israel's fallen

From top, Amir Gissin, Israeli consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, speaks to a capacity crowd at Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue at Sunday night's Yom Hazikaron ceremony; members of Israeli youth movements lay a wreath; and the children's choir from Kachol Lavan, the Centre for Hebrew and Israel Studies, sing a Hebrew song. The annual event pays tribute to those who died defending Israel, and Israelis killed in terrorist attacks.

[Frances Kraft photos]

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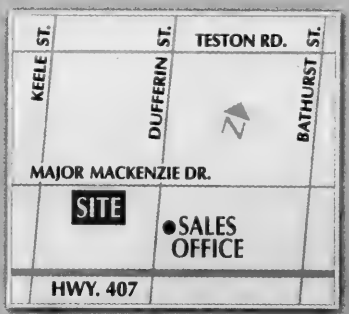

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The Canadian Jewish news

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Where dishonesty trumps fair play

Last week, a regulatory agency of the British government decided that within the borders of the United Kingdom, the Israel Government Tourism Office (IGTO) is not allowed to show a photo of the Western Wall in an effort to call visitors to the Jewish state.

Seeing a photo of the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem part of an Israel tourism ad attached to it, an irate consumer complained to the government that the advertisement was a fraud upon the British public, because it implied that the Western Wall is within the State of Israel.

The Advertising Standard Agency in London ruled that it "considered that readers were likely to understand that the places featured in the itinerary were all within the State of Israel… We understood, however, that the status of the occupied territory of the West Bank was the subject of much international dispute, and because we considered that the ad implied that the part of east Jerusalem featured in the image was part of the State of Israel, we concluded that the ad was likely to mislead."

As a result, the agency ruled that the advertising was false and that the IGTO advertisement had breached the agency's guidelines on truthfulness. The ad was banned, and the agency further gloated: "We told IGTO not to imply that places in the occupied territories were part of the State of Israel."

Israel's tourism officials objected to the ruling, as did the chief rabbi of the Western Wall, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitch, and the mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat. The Board of Deputies of British Jews called the agency's ruling absurd.

The inclusion of the photo of the Western Wall may indeed imply that it is part of Israel. For all but the haters of Israel, the relationship of the Western Wall to the State of Israel is not a matter of even the slightest controversy. But that was clearly not the purpose of the ad. The ad was patently, exclusively about attracting visitors. The image of the Wall was joined with two other meaningful images – of the sand and sun of Tel Aviv – designed to entice tourists to Israel.

By visiting Israel, one can visit the Western Wall. That is a self-contained, factually true statement. That was the extent and import of the image of the Western Wall in the tourism ad. The legal "dispute" over the Wall is utterly irrelevant to the ad.

The ruling by the British regulatory agency was a transparently cynical effort to convert a matter of tourism into a matter of polemics and politics, and thus, is further proof that the much-vaunted sense of fair play for which the British had always patted themselves on the back is a myth.

In Great Britain, fair play has surrendered to dishonesty. And all the more shame for it.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Retired autoworker John Demjanjuk, 65, was ordered extradited to Israel from his home in suburban Cleveland for allegedly being a guard at the Treblinka concentration camp during the Holocaust and being complicit in the murder of thousands of Jews. The Ukraine-born Demjanjuk denied being a Treblinka guard and said he was captured by the Germans and held prisoner. He denied helping the Nazis.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones DARKNESS
HERE ON THE TEL AVIV BEACH WE CAN WATCH THE SUN SET . . .
AND DARKNESS FALL ON THE CONTINENT OF EUROPE
THAT WAS NOT A POLITICAL STATEMENT.
BUT IT COULD HAVE BEEN!
DryBonesBlog.com

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Jews should stop university contributions

As a reader of *The CJN*, I read and hear of problems at Canadian universities. Jewish students can't go about their education without being the subject of hate by groups that use them to attack the State of Israel.

For many years, Jewish individuals and groups have donated money to erect buildings on Canadian university campuses as a way of saying thank you for the chance to get an education and be part of this great country. Doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. have made contributions to this country and its universities, and some of them fought and died for this country in war. To have their grandchildren subjected to hate mongering and anti-Semitism is painful to them.

If universities want contributions from the Jewish community, it's time the universities start looking after our children. It's time to cut off gifts of money, art, books and any other form of contribution until the problem is fixed. I, for one, am tired of the excuses that come from heads of universities who do nothing to protect Jewish groups that want to express their views and support Israel. It's time the givers had a say, not the mobs.

Daniel Berk
Hamilton, Ont.

* * *

Peace on campus

In response to Judith Weinroth's letter "Israeli-Palestinian Peace Week?" (Letters, April 1), I wish that it were so, but the hope that an Israeli-Palestinian Peace Week at McMaster University in Hamilton could take place by next year is a delusion or a pipe dream. Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) causes so much pain and anguish to Jewish students as well as to all those who believe that Israel has the right to exist.

The groups responsible for this hate-fest are not truly interested in anything other than spreading their lies unhindered by the facts or historic truths. These groups enjoy bringing the most contemptible of speakers to campus and, sadly, these so-called scholars are heard by far too many people. I think it's important to have hope, but peace can only be achieved on campus when the groups responsible for IAW agree to do away with this abomination. Then and only then can all sides come to the table and begin to engage in meaningful discourse.

Judy Schwartz
Burlington, Ont.

* * *

The left is the right in Hungary

Yes, the rise of European parties, such as Jobbik in Hungary, is worrisome for Jews and other minorities ("Rise of conservative right alarming Hungary's Jews," April 8). However, *The CJN* is mistaken in describing the party as being right-wing. To the extent that I was able to discern, Jobbik's economic policies are left-wing: they call for curtailing privatization and increasing nationalization.

The party's hostility to Israel is also more a sign of a left-wing party. Currently, hostility to Israel is increasingly the domain of the left. *The CJN* should report about such parties without labelling them as being right-wing.

Ishay Friedman
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Sephardi customs

My parents are Sephardi Jews from Greece and our Pesach meal consists of lamb with fresh peas ("Not all Sephardim eat rice on Pesach," April 1). According to Rabbi Herbert C. Dobrinsky's book, *A Treasury of Sephardi Laws and Customs*, "there is no prohibition against *kitniyot* among the Judeo-Spanish." However, they do not eat rice on Passover because of the necessity of checking through the rice to make sure there is no grain mixed into it.

Dianne Cadesky
Thornhill, Ont.

* * *

Remembering victims of plane crash

I was 13 years old on July 5, 1970, when my mother and two younger sisters were killed in the plane crash of Air Canada Flight 621, in a farmer's field in Brampton, Ont. The tragedy obviously shattered our lives, and unfortunately my father and grandparents never recovered.

For the sake of family members and friends of the victims – 109 people lost their lives and there were no survivors – the tragedy and location of the crash deserves to be respectfully remembered. There are plans to dedicate a memorial garden around the impact zone in Brampton. It is estimated that the completion of the garden will take up to two years.

My family, friends and I are involved in helping to organize a gathering at a Flight 621 formal dedication for the planned memorial garden in memory of the victims. Please contact me if you want more information.

Lynda Weinberg Fishman
Toronto
lynda@adventurevalley.ca

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Turkey walks a fine line on Iran

By YIGAL SCHLEIFER
JTA

As an American-led consensus appears to be developing around the need for a new round of sanctions to deal with Iran's nuclear program, Turkey – a U.S. ally and NATO member – is emerging as something of a wild card on the issue.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has dismissed accusations that Tehran wants to develop nuclear weapons as "rumours." Also, in recent months he has focused attention on Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal, saying it should be examined as well if Iran's nuclear program is being scrutinized.

Yet Turkey has its own concerns about the ambitions of Iran, a neighbour and regional rival.

"Turkey has been pursuing for the last six or seven years a foreign policy that would make it a regional power, and Iran is an obvious rival in that race," said Fehmi Koru, a columnist with *Yeni Safak*, a liberal Islamic newspaper in Turkey that is considered close to the government.

"A nuclear Iran might be more powerful than Turkey, and I don't think anyone in Ankara would like to see Iran as a nuclear power. But Iran is a close friend of Turkey and a neighbour that we haven't had a quarrel with since the 1600s. It's a delicate issue."

Where Turkey stands exactly on Iran is a matter of some concern in the pro-sanctions camp.

Aside from its strategic importance to the West, Turkey currently is one of the 10 rotating members of the UN Security Council. Five "yes" votes are needed from the council's rotating members to pass a new round of sanctions against Iran, making Turkey's position critical.

Multiple, sometimes competing factors are at play when it comes to Turkey's stance on Iran.

Relations between Iran and Turkey have improved dramatically in recent years. The ascendancy in 2002 of Turkey's Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party, or AKP, was a key turning point. The party has pledged to pursue a regional foreign policy of "zero problems" with its neighbours.

Trade between the two countries hit an estimated $10 billion in 2009, compared to $1 billion in 2000. Iran also supplies nearly one-third of Turkey's gas supply. Turkish officials, meanwhile, were among the first and only world leaders to congratulate Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad after his controversial re-election last summer.

Koru says Erdogan has adopted the public posture of questioning Iran sanctions to keep the door open to the Iranian regime, so that Turkey can act as an interlocutor with the West. Erdogan is concerned, too, that sanctions on Iran would hit trade with Turkey particularly hard.

Other analysts see political motivations behind Erdogan's public pronouncements on Iran's nuclear program: by appearing to attack Israel and back Iran, Erdogan stands to benefit politically.

> *'I think the Americans are sick and tired of Turkey playing Iran's lawyer and bashing Israel'*

"This has become an opportunity for Erdogan to essentially play a role in the Middle East by attacking Israel," said Henri Barkey, a Turkey expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. "It's all part of the game to make Turkey the pre-eminent power in the region."

At this month's nuclear security summit in Washington, Erdogan again drew attention to Israel, whose relations with Turkey have been on the skids since Israel's 2009 war with Hamas in Gaza.

"We don't desire any nuclear proliferation in our region, and our policy is well known, regardless of which country has such programs," Erdogan told reporters before returning to Istanbul. "For us, it doesn't matter whether it is Israel or Iran. I will call on the international community, which is so sensitive toward Iran, to pay attention to Israel, too."

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at a meeting last year in Tehran.

Critics of Erdogan's approach say the Turkish leader is playing a dangerous game.

"What Erdogan is doing is not contributing to his declared aim of a nuclear-free region," said Semih Idiz, a foreign affairs columnist with the Turkish daily *Milliyet*. "What he is saying is being interpreted in the Middle East as that since Israel has weapons, why can't others have them? The way he is approaching the thing, he's also encouraging the weaponization of the Middle East."

Barkey says the approach ultimately may strain Ankara's relations with Washington, which would like to see Turkey deliver a tougher message to Tehran.

"I think the Americans are sick and tired of Turkey playing Iran's lawyer and bashing Israel. Whatever Obama's relations with Israel are, he doesn't need this now," Barkey said. "At some point there is going to be a bigger price here. It's going to have an impact. It's going to sour Turkish-American relations slowly, not because they are bashing Israel, but because they are favouring Iran."

Koru says that despite the public statements by Erdogan, Turkey has conveyed concerns to Iran about its suspected nuclear weapons program.

"Their policy is one of management rather than confrontation," Barkey said.

In reality, political observers say, Turkey doesn't want to see a nuclear Iran or the unravelling of its relationship with Israel.

"I see no good news coming for Turkey from a continuing Iranian nuclear program," said Ian Lesser, an expert on Turkey and Iran at the Washington-based German Marshall Fund, which promotes European-North American co-operation.

A nuclear-armed Iran, Lesser said, "will have implications for how groups under Iran's umbrella, like Hezbollah or Hamas, will behave in the region, which may not be comfortable for Turkey," he said. "I see a much more tense region with changing military balances that would not be in Turkey's favour."

World powers intensifying Iran sanctions talks

© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

NEW YORK — The five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany are accelerating negotiations on a new round of sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program, UN diplomats said last week.

UN ambassadors from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China met last Thursday and will keep meeting in the coming days and weeks, diplomats said on condition of anonymity.

"The talks are intensifying," one diplomat told Reuters. Another said the six might begin discussing the issue on an almost-daily basis as they work to prepare a draft sanctions resolution for the full 15-member Security Council.

Last Thursday's discussions followed another round of inconclusive negotiations a day earlier. China's UN envoy, Li Baodong, said afterward that the six now have "a better understanding of each other's positions."

The envoys have been discussing a U.S. draft proposal, first circulated weeks ago, that provides for a fourth round of sanctions on Iran for its refusal to stop uranium enrichment. The West accuses Tehran of seeking to produce atomic arms but Tehran says it aims only to generate electricity.

The U.S. draft proposes new curbs on Iranian banking, a full arms embargo, tougher measures against Iranian shipping, moves against members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and firms they control and a ban on new investments in Iran's energy sector.

Diplomats told Reuters last week that China's Li had indicated displeasure at the proposals affecting Iran's energy sector at a first meeting the previous week with his counterparts.

The Russians also have problems with proposals related to energy, shipping, arms and finance, western diplomats said.

Moscow and Beijing, which have close trade ties to Iran, reluctantly supported three rounds of UN sanctions against Tehran in 2006, 2007 and 2008, but worked to dilute the measures before they were approved by the Security Council. Iran is the third-largest crude oil supplier to energy-hungry China.

U.S. President Barack Obama said last month that he wanted a new Iran sanctions resolution adopted "in weeks." He raised the issue of Iran during recent bilateral meetings with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Although the U.S. and European delegations would like a resolution adopted this month, diplomats say negotiations could continue until at least June as China and Russia are expected to push to water down the proposed punitive steps before handing a draft resolution to the Security Council.

Opinions

Of wigs, hijabs, hats and niqabs

Women's head coverings are in the news. In both France and Quebec, laws have been drafted to forbid either the hijab or niqab in public situations. Why?

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

We claim to adhere to principles of freedom of religion. They're inscribed in our Charter of Rights. Is it possible to deny those rights? If women wish to self-identify by covering their hair or face, how can a democracy deny them that choice?

Of course, matters of public order and/or security override individual rights. Thus, voting, border crossing or exam-taking could require facial recognition. (Fingerprinting is far more accurate, but who am I to point out security system weaknesses?)

Except, security is clearly not the issue here. This outcry is about accommodation, about accepting others' difference. If we pride ourselves on multiculturalism, how can we not accept diversity? As Jews, how can we not see that we will be the very next ones to be singled out as religiously different, and hence suspect?

The rhetoric of the legislation is laughable. The government claims that it worries about women's equality. So in its own patronizing and patriarchal way, it legislates against women's choice and forces a western pattern on women. That sure sounds like equality.

They say that women are socialized to accept coverings but they are a sign of submission and inequality. By whose definition? Can we say that we're not submissive to a western based culture that forces women to disclose themselves and unveil their hair to the "male gaze"? Women should be visible, available for men to look at. That's our cultural standard, the basis of fashion and advertisements.

If a woman says she chooses the niqab, we belittle her choice. But if she choices to wear flimsy clothing, we consider her free and chic. What crazy standards.

And while I'm on this rant, I have a question for my Jewish sisters. How is it that women from all the denominations enter the synagogue to pray without a head covering? I recognize the choice that many of us made to stop wearing a hat in public as a sign of marriage or modesty. But head coverings in Judaism have multiple meanings. Men cover their heads to pray as Jews, standing before God in humility and awe. Are women exempt? Are women not part of the covenantal community? In our search for equality is this not a necessary step to take, to cover one's head as a Jew standing in the presence of God? Shouldn't we all cover our heads when we pray?

Reconciling revenge and hope

The seders are behind us and we have (mostly) found the regular dishes and put them back in place. Each year we find new meaning in the recital of the story of our Exodus from slavery to freedom. "How were your seders? Did you learn something new?" we ask our friends.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

Thoughts linger, especially the ceremony around opening the door for Eliyahu and recital of *Shfoch*: "Pour out your wrath upon those who do not know you and upon the nations which do not call upon your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling place."

We curse those peoples and nations who, over the long centuries, have slaughtered our people. Yet here we are inviting Eliyahu to come in and welcoming him as the precursor of the Mashiach. How to reconcile these two elements of revenge and hope?

Moses Isserles (16th century) argued that when Jews open their doors in foreign lands to recite *Shfoch*, it expresses their faith that God will protect them and, quoting the song, that 'God is watching you'.

The Maharal of Prague, of Golem fame, taught that filling the cup and opening the door give concrete expression to faith in the ultimate messianic redemption.

It could be dangerous to open the door on seder night. From the 12th century on, Jews were accused of using children's blood to make matzah; pogroms erupted at Passover/Easter. Clergy and laymen would descend on the Jewish quarters with torches and clubs and lay waste to everything in their path. Pallid pleas from the papacy that the Jews needed to live in order to prove the truth of Christianity did little to stem popular ideas that Jews were the devil incarnate.

Early Haggadot apparently do not contain this passage. The open door and *Shfoch* recital seem to have arisen by the 1400s, after the Jews of Europe had endured several centuries of Crusades, plague, blood libel, Inquisition, expulsion, and just general mayhem for their communities. Calling down God's punishments must have been rather satisfactory to Jews who survived these destructions.

Prophet Eliyahu himself was not a meek and mild lamb. He had presided over the slaughter of the priests of Baal on Mt. Carmel and cursed King Achav and his idolatrous wife, Jezebel.

From the 10th century we have a Midrash where he appears on the eve of Pesach. Pesach itself is the holiday of redemption both from slavery and from the mundane – truly the time we look forward to the Messianic age. Putting together the appearance of Eliyahu and the persecutions of the Middle Ages, we can see how the two conflate to create an avenger, a bringer of retribution and hope at the same time.

Still, there is reluctance in these supposedly peaceful times to recite the curse in its original form. Some liberal Haggadot rewrite it. But as long as there are suicide bombers, hate mail, neo-Nazi attacks, the murder of Jews simply for being Jews, it is there to remind us of times when Jewish lives were worthless -- indeed, worth less than nothing.

Sometimes we need to remind ourselves that (a) there is evil in this world and (b) we need to, must do something about it.

Reciting the curse, while thinking of Eliyahu as a symbol of a better future, I feel at once angry, lusting for revenge, while at the same time hoping for a better world.

Maybe that is how we are supposed to react.

Let's recall the full passage upon which the appointment of Eliyahu as Messianic precursor is based: " Behold, I send you Eliyahu the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord." That day will be "*nora*" – in the JPS translation, "fearful".

"He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction." Reconciliation is a powerful thing; can we achieve it?

Indeed, the messianic hope should fill us with awe and fear, since we ourselves are ultimately responsible for repairing this world.

Power couple make a difference

From time to time, this column attempts to share with Canada's Jewish community a portrait of some of its most distinguished members – those who have contributed significantly to the Jewish community and the community at large. Eric and Elexis Schloss are two such Edmontonians.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

This power couple, a dynamic team of doers and givers, have demonstrated, by their deeds, their dedication to the communities they cherish.

Eric is a dermatologist who has blended his busy medical practice with the needs of Edmonton, Canadian and world Jewry. For example, he has served as chair of the Jewish National Fund in Edmonton, the Western Canadian Zionist Federation and the Edmonton United Jewish Appeal. He was the co-chair of the local State of Israel Bond Committee and has been active in his synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel, serving in many positions, including president.

I worked with Eric when he was the chair of the Edmonton Canada-Israel Committee, and I found him to be an effective and dedicated leader. He also served as the vice-president of the Edmonton Jewish Community Council and was active with the local Jewish Archives and Historical Society. This is just a partial list of his involvement with the Jewish community, but his work has extended beyond that.

Eric has maintained an active interest in the affairs of the University of Alberta, serving as a member of the Arts Development Council of the university's faculty of arts and a member of the university's annual human rights lectureship committee.

Most recently, Eric made a generous donation to the Canadian Literature Centre – a centre he helped establish at the University of Alberta. He contributed a collection of more than 30,000 rare books, primarily first editions from a wide variety of genres, to the centre.

But, as noted at the beginning of this article, Eric is part of a dynamic team. His wife, Elexis, has made significant contributions to society and the various communities she serves.

Elexis' creative capacities include her work as an interior designer, clothes designer and watercolour artist. She added to the vitality of this city's art community through service on the boards of the Provincial Museum of Alberta, the Edmonton Art Gallery and the city's largest theatre, the Citadel Theatre. She also shared her talents when she chaired the committee overseeing the design and construction of the beautiful new building for Congregation Beth Israel.

In her service to community, she has promoted heart-disease research and provided hot meals for children in need. She is also involved in assisting and promoting community living for people with disabilities; supporting immigrant woman and campaigning for breast cancer research. She has worked on behalf of those affected by HIV/AIDS here in Edmonton, as well as at an HIV clinic in Accra, Ghana. Eric also provided community service in Accra through volunteer medical instruction.

Elexis' tireless energy has significantly benefited Edmonton's Jewish community. She has served as co-chair of the Jewish National Fund and co-president of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University. She has been named a life member of Hadassah, and through her work with the aboriginal community, in 2008, Elexis was designated an elder by the Aboriginal Women's Profession Association.

Elexis has been the recipient of several other honours over the years, including the Edmonton Journal Woman Entrepreneur of the Year and the Rotary Club Integrity Award. She was also awarded an honorary diploma by MacEwan University.

As impressive as their contributions and awards indicate, anyone having the pleasure of meeting Eric and Elexis will find this unique team to be unassuming, modest and humble. It's a delight to share time with them.

They have received many honours, including being named as the honorees at the 1995 Edmonton Negev Dinner. In addition, they were both recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and the Alberta Centennial Medal for their work.

Eric and Elexis' actions embody the mitzvah of tikkun olam as they continue to find significant ways to make this a better world for so many.

The Kirshner File

Weimar on the Pacific

They were the best and the brightest, and they gave American cinema a new look, style and wit.

They were the film professionals who, having fled Nazi Germany and Austria, reinvented themselves in Hollywood.

From 1933 to 1940, more than 800 such individuals, the vast majority of whom were Jewish, immigrated to the United States, appalled by the spectre of persecution in Germany and Austria and buoyed by the shining promise of hope that America offered.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

In short, the Third Reich's loss was Hollywood's gain.

The émigrés were eminently successful, winning some 20 Academy Awards and 150 Oscar nominations. Such was their influence that Los Angeles, for a while at least, was known as Weimar on the Pacific.

Among the films they were associated with were *Casablanca*, *Double Indemnity*, *Ninotchka*, *High Noon* and *Some Like It Hot*, all of which are recognized as classics today.

Some of the new immigrants, however, never really landed on their feet. "This golden Hollywood is a hell," the composer Frederick Hollander bitterly complained.

Their story, which has unfortunately been obscured by the mists of time, was presented in the documentary *Cinema's Exiles: From Hitler to Hollywood*. It was screened by the Toronto Jewish Film Festival on April 21.

These craftsmen, whether they were screenwriters, directors, producers, actors or musicians, left an indelible impression on German film during its golden era after World War I.

Erich Pommer, one of its most influential figures, was head of production at the famed UFA studio from 1924 to 1926 and one of the forces behind the Expressionist movement, which had an enormous impact on Hollywood film noir.

Under Pommer's inspired direction, four seminal German films – *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Dr. Mabuse*, *Metropolis* and *The Blue Angel* – were made.

Pommer, who worked with directors ranging from F.W. Murnau to Fritz Lang, was lured to Hollywood by Paramount Pictures and was the production manager of two Pola Negri films, *Barbed Wire* and *Hotel Imperial*.

Returning to UFA, he produced Josef von Sternebrg's *The Blue Angel*, starring a virtually unknown actress, Marlene Dietrich. Hounded out of Germany in 1939, Pommer signed on with RKO Pictures. But after suffering a heart attack, his contract was not renewed, and he and his wife had to support themselves by hand painting fine china in a porcelain factory. Clawing his way back, he capturing the 1955 Golden Globe Award for a German film he produced.

Billy Wilder, who established his reputation with a German film titled *People on Sunday*, was far more successful in the United States. Arriving in Hollywood in 1933, the year Adolf Hitler became chancellor, he hit his stride as a screenwriter in *Ninotchka*, which was directed by fellow émigré Ernst Lubitsch and starred Greta Garbo.

Hot on the heels of *Ninotchka*, for which he won his first Oscar nomination, Wilder wrote scripts for two box office hits, *Hold Back the Dawn* and *Ball of Fire*.

Making his directorial debut with *The Major and the Minor*, he subsequently helmed *Double Indemnity*, *The Lost Weekend*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Stalag 17* and *Witness for the Prosecution*. Later, Wilder directed *The Seven Year Itch*, *Sabrina*, *Some Like It Hot* and *The Apartment*.

Before his death in 2002, he won six Academy Awards and was nominated for 15 others.

Ernst Lubitsch, a tailor's son whose urbane and witty comedies included *The Shop Around the Corner* and *To Be or Not to Be*, left Germany in 1922 after working on *Madame Du Barry* and *The Loves of Pharoah*.

He directed Mary Pickford, a Canadian, in *Rosita*, and after signing a six-picture deal with Warner Brothers, he made, among other sophisticated comedies, *So This Is Paris*, *The Love Parade*, *The Smiling Lieutenant*, *The Merry Widow* and *Design for Living*.

Lubitsch's satirical comedy, *Ninotchka*, was probably his single most famous movie, but much to his regret, he never worked with Garbo again.

His anti-Nazi farce, *To Be or Not to Be* – which Mel Brooks crafted into a Broadway hit a few years ago – was Jack Benny's sole screen success and Carole Lombard's final film. Lubitsch's last production, *That Lady in Ermine*, was released posthumously in 1948, having been completed by Otto Preminger, who directed *Exodus*.

Fritz Lang, a Viennese Jew who converted to Christianity, directed *M*, a 1931 thriller whom critics consider his masterpiece. After settling in Los Angeles, following an interlude in Paris in which he worked with the French star Charles Boyer, he fell on hard times. Lang directed Spencer Tracy in the crime drama, *Fury*, but after demanding too many retakes, he was fired.

Finally adjusting to Hollywood, Lang directed a succession of films, notably *Western Union*, *Ministry of Fear*, *Cloak and Dagger* and *Clash by Night*. *The Big Heat* was probably his most notable film noir.

Fred Zinnemann, a former musician and student of law, was an extra in *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the anti-war classic. Directing westerns, thrillers and play adaptations, his movies were commercial and critical hits, running the gamut from *High Noon* and *From Here to Eternity* to *Oklahoma!* and *A Man for All Seasons*.

The anti-Nazi farce, *To Be or Not to Be*, was directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

Zinnemann gave Marlon Brando his first role in the 1950 film, *The Men*, and 19 of the actors who appeared in his subsequent movies received Academy Awards for their performances. They include Gary Cooper, Audrey Hepburn, Paul Scofield, Jason Robards, Vanessa Redgrave, Jane Fonda and Maximilian Schell.

Franz Waxman's chief claim to fame in Germany was orchestrating Frederick Hollander's score for *The Blue Angel*. Shortly after immigrating to the United States in 1935, he was commissioned to write the score for the horror film *Bride of Frankenstein*, which humanized that kitschy celluloid monster.

Prolific and highly successful, he won Oscars for *Sunset Boulevard* and *A Place in the Sun* and nominations for *The Young at Heart*, *Rebecca*, *Suspicion*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *The Silver Chalice* and *The Nun's Story*.

Always in demand, Waxman collaborated with, among others, Alfred Hitchcock.

Waxman's colleague, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, was a serious composer, having written orchestral and vocal works, operas and chamber works.

His film scores included *The Adventures of Robin Hood* – starring Errol Flynn – and *King's Row* and *Of Human Bondage*.

Of the actors who arrived in Hollywood from Germany, Peter Lorre and Hedy Lamarr were probably the most illustrious.

Lorre, whose original name was Laszlo Lowenstein, played a murderer in the German film *M*. In Hollywood, he specialized in portraying evil foreigners. He starred in the *Mr. Motto* series, appeared in *The Maltese Falcon* opposite Humphrey Bogart and had a part in *Casablanca*, which featured performances by German exiles such as Conrad Veidt and Paul Henreid.

Lamarr (Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler), born Jewish and raised as a Catholic, starred in the notorious Czech film *Ecstacy* in 1933, but after meeting Hollywood studio mogul Louis B. Mayer, she was cast in *Algiers*, *White Cargo*, *Tortilla Flat* and *Samson and Delilah*, among other films.

Clearly, the émigrés had a profound effect on the American film industry, but some adapted better than others to their new homeland in the United States.

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Israeli program sets up Cdn. advisory board

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

One of Israel's award-winning community volunteer organizations, which for the past 30 years has helped thousands of unaffiliated young Jewish North Americans connect with their Jewish roots, is forming a link to Canada.

Livnot U'Lehibanot (To Build and Be Built), with its headquarters in Safed in northern Israel, is a non-denominational and non-judgmental outreach program geared to imbuing unaffiliated young Jewish adults aged 21 to 30-plus with a sense of Jewish values, culture, history and religion.

Livnot has formed a Canadian advisory board in Israel that includes former Torontonians now living in Israel, including Rabbi Dow Marmur (Holy Blossom Temple), Rabbi Abraham Feder (Beth Tikvah Synagogue), and Rabbi Chaim Sacknovitz (Congregation Shaarei Shomayim).

Livnot, which emphasizes learning Judaism through nature and voluntary community support programs, has received recognition as an outstanding volunteer organization by the president of Israel, as well as Israeli mayors and government ministries.

Co-chaired by former Torontonians now living in Israel, Harvey Weinberg, Laurie Blendis and his wife, Maxine Blendis, the Canadian advisory board members have joined with others to spread the word about the multifaceted activities of Livnot for unaffiliated young Jewish adults and for needy people.

Pictured at an advisory meeting Livnot U'Lehibanot in Israel are, standing, founder and director Aharon Botzer, and seated from left are former Toronto rabbis Abraham Feder, Dow Marmur and Chaim Sacknovitz.

Recently, Aharon Botzer, founder and director of Livnot, and Weinberg, a former Torontonian now practising law in Israel, were in Toronto to meet with community leaders, rabbis, alumni and donors to establish the Canadian Friends of Livnot U'Lehibanot in Canada.

Botzer, a former teacher in Cleveland, made aliyah 40 years ago and says he fell in love with Safed. As a teacher and tour guide in Israel, he says that he realized that young people who came to Israel to "find themselves" either ended up in a kibbutz or went to a yeshiva.

"Many young people were looking for something in the middle. They wanted to learn something about Judaism and the culture," says Botzer. "Livnot was the alternative choice between the two extremes, and we began to emphasize hiking, nature, spirituality, community service and continuity."

It all began when Botzer and other families in Safed invited some North American young tourists to their homes.

Eventually, Livnot was formed. They purchased an abandoned house, which they restored and now serves as a campus for Livnot.

Its varied programs include a one-week "Northern Exposure" trip, two- or three-week "Galilee Fellowship" modules (either of which can be added to a 10-day Birthright Israel trip) or the extensive five-month MASA program that emphasizes learning from nature and helping the needy in Safed.

Its activities include, painting and restoring apartments for the elderly and needy, assisting Ethiopian children with school work, visiting the sick in hospital, painting and preparing bomb shelters.

"I saw that it was very meaningful for the young people to build and see the results of their efforts," Botzer says.

There is also a recreational aspect to the program. Participants in Livnot travel throughout Israel, including on a coast-to-coast trip as well as an overnight hike in the desert.

Weinberg told *The CJN* that he became involved with Livnot when his daughter, Shira, did her two-year national service with Livnot.

"When Shira brought home young people who had been on the verge of assimilation and intermarriage, they told us that they were searching for their roots and I realized the need for an organization like Livnot in Canada where, like the United States, assimilation and intermarriage among unaffiliated youth is close to 60 per cent."

Botzer says many young North American Jews don't know anything about Judaism other than the fact that they're Jewish. "Our objective is to imbue a sense of Jewish culture, history and their identity with their Jewish roots."

He adds that more than 5,000 young people from North America have participated in Livnot programs and many are now involved with their Jewish communities back home.

Botzer adds, "I give an open invitation to anyone who wants to visit us. They can contact me at Botzer@livnot.com."

To volunteer or sponsor a project, go to www.livnot.com. or for more information contact Shelly Mann at 905-889-6624

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UNITED JEWISH APPEAL

Greater Toronto Area

Shul honours Czech Kindertransport organizer

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue will honour Sir Nicholas Winton with its Yakir Hakahal (Precious to the Community) award at a gala dinner May 6.

Winton, who rescued 669 refugee children during the Holocaust, is almost 101 years old – his birthday is May 19 – and lives in Maidenhead, England.

His son Nick, accompanied by his partner, journalist Monica Porter, whose mother was also a Holocaust rescuer, will travel here from England to accept the award on his behalf.

Journalist Joe Schlesinger – one of the children rescued by Winton – will also speak at the event. *CJN* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat will serve as MC.

Yakir Hakahal was established to recognize people who have made "a tremendous contribution" to the Jewish world and the world at large, according to a press release. Past recipients include Judge Sigmund Reiser, Toronto councillor Mike Feldman and Rabbi Joseph Kelman.

Funds raised at the dinner will support initiatives designed to teach children lessons of the Holocaust, and specifically a children's garden being planned at the 1,300-family synagogue. The garden will be dedicated in memory of children who perished in the Holocaust.

In a phone interview from his home in London, England, Nick Winton, now 57, told *The CJN* it wasn't until 1988 that he learned of his father's wartime bravery.

"It was only when [my parents] were trying to clear out the attic, and Mother wanted to know what to do with the trunks," he said. The trunks contained documentation about the Czech Kindertransport – eight trains in all – organized by Winton in 1939 to take refugee children to foster families in Britain.

A ninth train with 250 additional children was scheduled to leave Prague on Sept. 1, 1939, but the borders closed when Hitler invaded Poland that day. The children did not survive the war.

Winton was reunited with some of the children he saved on a BBC television show called *That's Life*. He was also the subject of a 2002 Emmy award-winning documentary, narrated by Schlesinger, called *Nicholas Winton – The Power of Good*. It aired on CBC in 2003 under the title *Nicky's Children*.

Sir Nicholas Winton at his 100th birthday party.

Nicholas Winton was born to German Jewish parents who immigrated to England at the turn of the last century. According to a number of websites, Winton was baptized Anglican, but "he's not a religious person," his son said. "If anything, he would call himself a humanist.

"I guess like a lot of people his age, he went through the war and didn't really talk about it. He moved on."

However, Nick noted, his father has always been "very public spirited," and has been involved in setting up a number of charities.

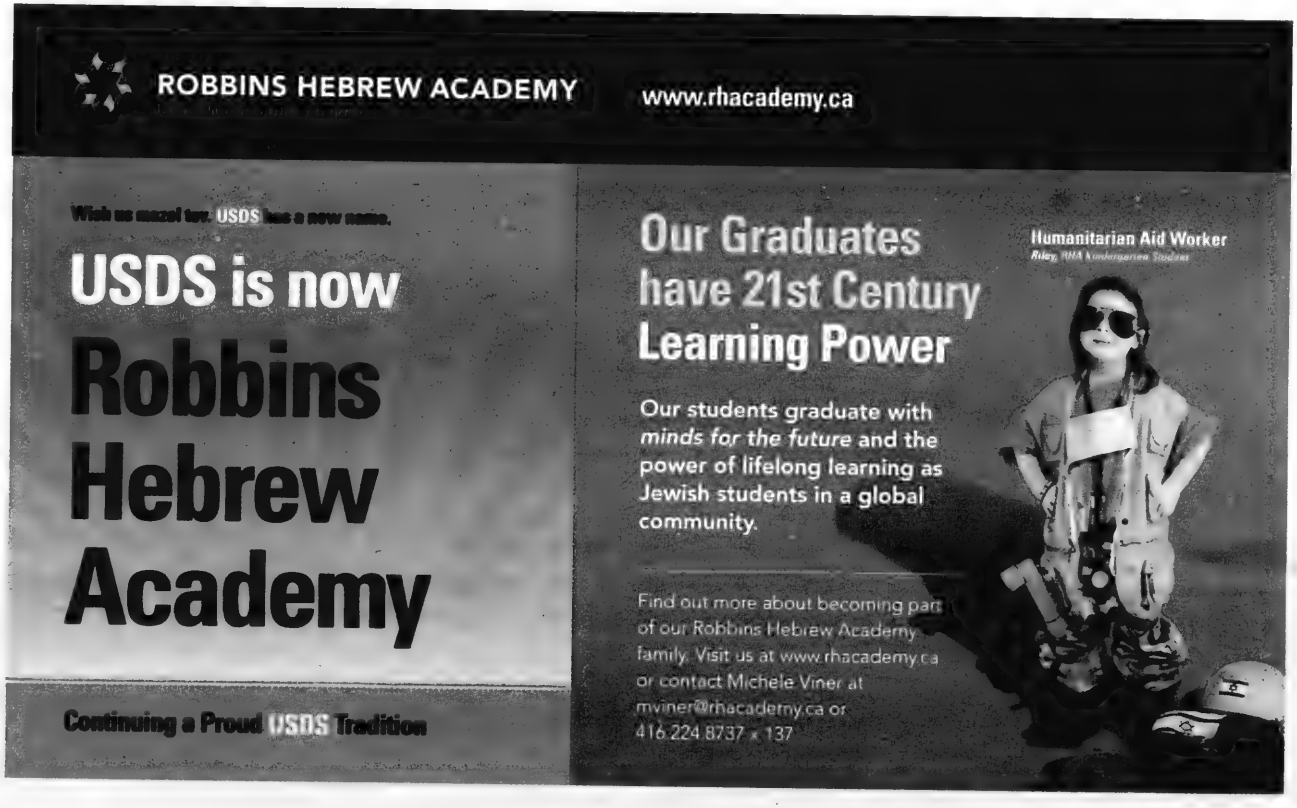
Nicholas Winton has been honoured by the Czech government, and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 2002. Earlier this year he received an award from British Prime Minister Gordon Brown commemorating more than 20 British heroes of the Holocaust.

He wanted to travel to Toronto, but was unable to do so, his son said.

Although he was hospitalized recently for "a small illness," his son said Winton is "still quite active today. He still has a remarkably good quality of life. He still plays bridge – not too badly."

He added that his father is still interested in world events, still attends concerts and, for his 100th birthday, went for a ride in a microlight airplane.

It was Nicholas Winton's interest in world affairs that prompted him to do what he did, his son believes. "He's always gotten involved in current affairs and politics. That made him aware of the danger, and he felt that nobody was taking the threat seriously."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Pre-1950 Jewish Toronto manuscript published

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

A 60-year-old manuscript titled *The Rise of the Toronto Jewish Community* has been found in the archives of Beth Tzedec Congregation.

Ralph Berrin, a volunteer in the Beth Tzedec Museum, brought the manuscript to the attention of Bill Gladstone, the publisher of Now and Then Books.

Gladstone identified the author as the late Shmuel Mayer Shapiro, the editor and publisher of the *Hebrew Journal*, Toronto's main Yiddish newspaper for half a century.

Shapiro stopped working on the manuscript about 1950. He died in 1958 and never saw it published.

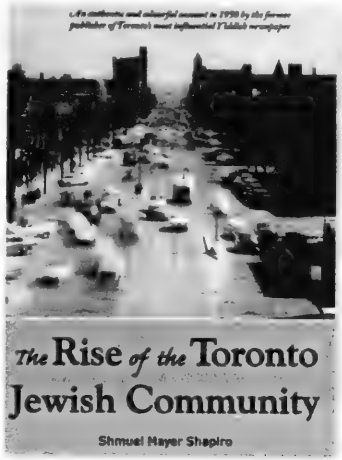
Gladstone received permission from the author's daughter to publish the manuscript under the author's original title.

"When the manuscript was brought to my attention, I was excited and intrigued, recognizing it as an important historical document highlighting the strong immigrant and Yiddish quality of the early Jewish community," Gladstone says.

He told *The CJN* that he is "very proud" to be the editor and publisher of the book.

"I consider it a valuable addition to the limited material available about the early years to about 1950 of the Toronto Jewish community."

The Rise of the Toronto Jewish Community includes 90 old photographs and illustrations, some of which are quite rare.



The book offers a detailed account of the evolution of the local Yiddish press, Jewish labour unions, the garment industry on Spadina Avenue, synagogues and rabbis, the beginning of Jewish communal and social life in Toronto and landsmanshaft.

The book includes an afterword by Ben Kayfetz titled *Recollections and Experiences of the Jewish Press in Toronto*, written in 1984; a glossary of Yiddish and Hebrew terms and a sample page from Shapiro's manuscript.

Shapiro was born in Mozir, Russia, in 1887. He came to New York as a youth and began to study to become a rabbi. Feeling increasingly drawn to socialism, he left yeshiva and came to Toronto, where he organized a pioneering branch of the cloakmakers' union.

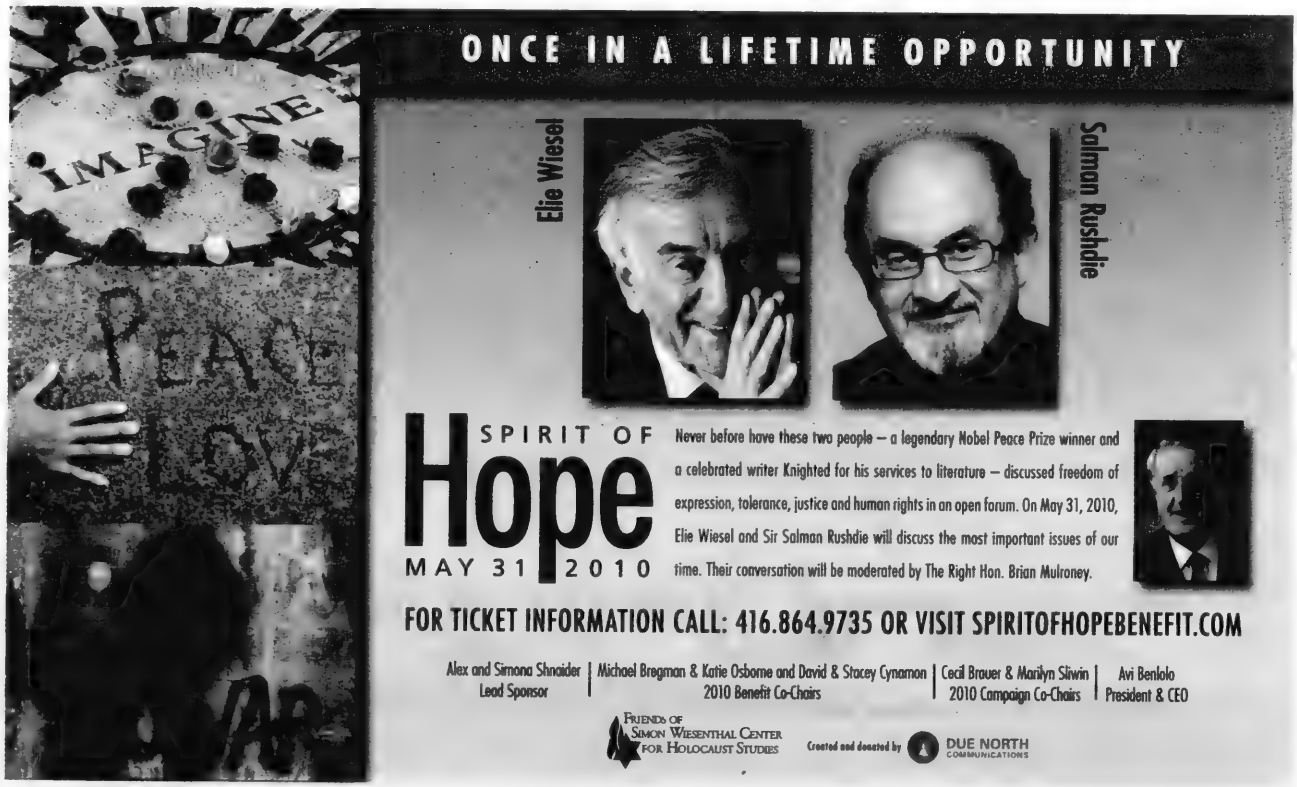
As a sideline, he began writing at $2 a week and became the editor of the *Yiddish Zhurnal*, or *Hebrew Journal*, a profitable daily Yiddish newspaper. He took over as publisher and remained at its helm until 1957.

A gifted orator, Shapiro was also a provincial justice of the peace and an honorary president of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

"The traces of the early history of our community are disappearing. This now compels us to search them out and record them," Gladstone says.

The Rise of the Toronto Jewish Community is available from www.nowandthenbookstoronto.com and at Israel's the Judaica Stores at both locations, Eglinton Avenue West and Clark Avenue.

For more information, e-mail info@nowandthenbookstoronto.com.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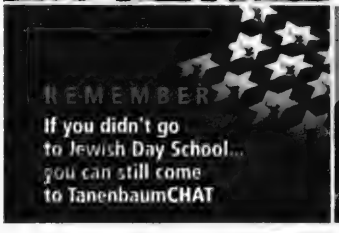

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UJA Federation

Stars help raise money through Scrabble

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Scrabble isn't just a game to Vivienne Muhling. It's the path to a mitzvah.

Muhling, a former actor and producer, started Scrabble With The Stars six years ago to raise money for Performing Arts Lodges (PAL).

Vivienne Muhling, a resident of the Performing Arts Lodges, has been organizing Scrabble With The Stars for six years.

The organization provides affordable housing and support to aging Canadian artists and has apartment buildings in Toronto and Vancouver.

As a resident of the PAL apartment complex in Toronto, which was built in 1993, Muhling understands its importance.

"This is a place that is created... for all members of the performing arts, whether in film or backstage... some of us need help financially" she said.

As chair of PAL's Scrabble With The Stars fundraising committee, Muhling sees the facility as more than just affordable housing.

"People live on their own [in the complex] but help each other. It's not just a building," she said, adding that volunteers are there to help with health and lifestyle issues.

"They can do just so much. When people become really sick... they have to leave us and they hate it," she said.

Muhling's current goal is to raise enough money to expand PAL in Toronto. The expansion would include nursing services, so that residents can get the care they need without moving to another facility.

And Scrabble is going to get her there.

Jeanne Beker, host of CTV's *Fashion Television*, co-hosted Scrabble With The Stars.

"It's not just a dinner," she said of the charity event. "It's a [night when] people play Scrabble together. It's a way of being more of a community. More friendly."

It's also a way of luring in celebrities.

"The stars love it. They enjoy it, that's why it's so successful," she said.

Some of the stars at this year's event included Mark Breslin, the founder of Yuk Yuk's, Canadian actor Avery Saltzman and Jeanne Beker, who hosted the event with actor Barry Flatman.

Beker, host of CTV's *Fashion Television*, has been attending Scrabble With The Stars for five years.

"I play Scrabble at my farm-house... it's intellectual but it's very social," she said, adding that the cause is worth supporting. "PAL is such a great place. It makes you feel like you're taking care of each other. Like you belong to a real family in a way."

For Breslin, Scrabble With The Stars, which raised about $50,000 this year, is a refreshing twist on charity events.

"It's a really lovely evening. I look forward to it. There's so many charity events that are so hard to sit through," he said. "Scrabble's a really nice game. It's the baseball of board games."

Scrabble expert Robin Pollock Daniel, centre, was auctioned off to players at the sixth annual Scrabble With The Stars.

For Robin Pollock Daniel, who has played in professional Scrabble tournaments, it's more than just a game.

"It's delicious. It's savoury. It [brings back] memories of childhood. It's home. It's family. It's mom. It's bowls of popcorn. Everyone has memories of sitting around playing games with their family," said Pollock Daniel, who was auctioned off at the event to help players. "[Scrabble] is something that everyone knows. It's a common meeting point."

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Four-day reunion planned for Mackenzie's 50th

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

David Eisner and Avery Saltzman, co-artistic directors of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, are among an estimated possible 3,000 alumni of William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute who plan to be at the school's 50th anniversary reunion on Sat., May 1.

The four-day event, being held at the Tillplain Road school, will kick off on Thurs., Apr. 29 at 7:30 p.m. with special guest Jeanne Beker of CTV's *Fashion Television*, also a Mackenzie graduate. Karen Mock – Thornhill's federal Liberal candidate, who co-wrote the school song – will MC the evening, which will include an alumni music performance and the launch of the school's solar panel project.

Eisner and Saltzman will speak the next night at 8 p.m. in the school library, following an introduction by Nathan Shuster, their drama teacher in the mid-1970s.

The Saturday night main event runs from 7 p.m. until midnight, and individual alumni get-togethers will be held on Sun., May 2.

Tickets for Saturday night are $20, either online by April 28, or at the door, cash only. The events on Thursday and Friday are free, and the Sunday get-togethers are $10 per person.

Some 1,600 former staff and students have registered on the reunion website (mackenziereunion.com), and organizers are anticipating there will be many more at the event itself. A reunion 10 years ago drew 3,000 people.

The school, which served students in Bathurst Manor, had a Jewish student population of about 90 per cent at one time. It was originally planned as a junior high, but a rapidly increasing population of baby boomers at Northview Heights Secondary School meant that another high school was needed in the area.

Larry Anklewicz

Mackenzie opened as Southview Secondary School in 1960, and a contest was held to rename it.

Reunion co-chair Larry Anklewicz – a lawyer who is also program co-ordinator for the Toronto Jewish Film Festival – said Mackenzie "was intended to be a very academic school, and anyone who didn't come up to the mark was encouraged to leave."

Anklewicz, who attended the school from 1960 to 1963, said he has very fond memories of the people, and of "a few teachers who were fabulous."

Although the last reunion, in 2000, allowed alumni to register online, the current website is more more sophisticated and interactive, Anklewicz said. Among other features, it allows participants to communicate without giving out their personal e-mail addresses.

"We've had e-mails from people in Vancouver, Winnipeg, various places in the United States, even from Israel," Anklewicz said.

He has heard that "quite a few" teachers, including some from the earliest days, will attend the reunion. A staff dinner will precede the Saturday night reunion.

Helene Green, now in her sixth year as Mackenzie principal, told *The CJN* it's been a pleasure working with alumni on the upcoming reunion. "They're a very engaging and spirited group."

Among them, she has reconnected with Anklewicz' co-chair, Linda Miller, a 1974 graduate who at the start of her career taught at Mackenzie for three months, replacing a science teacher who was on sick leave. Miller and Green worked together at Georges Vanier Secondary School, where both were vice-principals.

Miller, who took early retirement from the Toronto District School Board, said that Mackenzie has been "such a foundation in this community. Over the 50 years, it's really maintained its reputation for excellence."

Also, she remembers, students were encouraged to "follow their own paths.

"We had a lot of very creative teachers," she recalls. Miller mentioned attending "Alternative Days," a two-day event organized by students for students, with speakers such as lawyer Clayton Ruby, political leaders from three parties, and magician Doug Henning.

"It was a pretty new thing then," she said.

Saltzman traces the beginning of his acting career back to his high school days, when he and Eisner starred in a Mackenzie production of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

"It was such a seminal moment," Saltzman recalled. "I remember saying to myself in the middle of that play, 'This is what I'm going to do the rest of my life.' It turned out kind of great."

Eisner said he also fell in love with acting at Mackenzie. "It was a really good time," he added.

Saltzman said he has fond memories of the sense of community he felt growing up in Bathurst Manor and attending the school.

Notable Mackenzie alumni who are recognized on the school website (www.wlmac.ca/50for50), include Mel Cappe, president of the Institute for Research on Public Policy and former High Commissioner for Canada to the United Kingdom; *Toronto Star* columnist Rosie DiManno, and social worker and television personality Joe Rich.

For more information, go to mackenziereunion.com.

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Jewish Life

It's all commentary

By RABBI TZVI HERSH WEINREB

I have often responded to the question of why Jews have written so much commentary on a few basic biblical texts, by resorting to an old story of one of our greatest sages, Hillel.

In this story, Hillel, known for his scholarship and commitment to Torah study but particularly famous for his patience, is challenged by a heathen who demands to be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel accepts the challenge and says, "What is hateful to you do not do unto others. That is the entire Torah, the rest is but commentary. Now go out and study the commentary."

Guest Voice

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

I would explain that Hillel's remark was based on a verse in this week's double Torah portion, Acharei Mot Kedoshim. There, in Leviticus 19:18, we read, "And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Now, I would continue, loving one's neighbour as oneself is no easy task. We are likely to have numerous and diverse neighbours in our lifetime, and myriad circumstances arise that pose great barriers to our love for them. And so, Jewish scholars throughout the ages have recorded their advice and guidelines for how to love one's neighbour in every context.

Note that Hillel himself does not choose to use the Torah's original phrase to explain the essence of Judaism. He does not say, "Love your neighbour." Rather, he says, "Do not harm your neighbour." Perhaps this is because, as the medieval commentator Ramban suggests, loving one's neighbour as oneself is an exaggerated expectation, and the most Hillel could do was to urge the heathen to do no harm.

Whether one uses the biblical formulation commanding us to love our neighbour, or chooses Hillel's version asking us to refrain from harming him or her in a way that we ourselves would not want to be harmed, the essence of our Torah is this ethical imperative. And the many hundreds of volumes written throughout the centuries can all be understood as the constant struggle of our sages to develop a "database" sufficient to enable us to realize this ethical imperative.

One such commentary deserves mention, particularly in our age and culture. It's a story about a disciple of Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk who eavesdropped on his master as the latter was reviewing this week's Torah portion aloud. Rabbi Mendel read, "And thou shalt love thy neighbour – as yourself? Yes, as yourself!" First as a question, then as a forceful declaration.

The disciple was puzzled by the way his master read the passage. He asked the master's chief disciple, Reb Hershel, for an explanation. This was his answer:

"The master first asked a question. Can it be that we are asked to love our neighbour as ourselves? Are we to understand that it is permissible to love oneself? Is it not a basic teaching here in Kotzk that one dare not love oneself, lest he thereby become blind to his own faults? Rabbi Mendel could not accept the slightest suggestion that narcissism was acceptable.

"Then the master realized a deeper meaning of the verse. We ought to love our neighbour to the same extent that we are critical of ourselves. The mitzvah is that we put in as much effort loving our neighbour as… we should be investing in our own personal spiritual and moral perfection."

In our age of "me first," it is even more important that we direct our love outward toward the other, and not inward toward ourselves. We must, at all costs, avoid self-adulation and self-worship.

That is just one small sample of the vast treasure of commentary that is in our Jewish library. No wonder our sages refer to the "ocean of the Talmud," and to our Torah as deeper than the sea.

Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is the executive vice-president emeritus of the Orthodox Union.

Paying for health care

The issue of heath care, and specifically the economics of health care, has taken a central role recently, both here and south of the border. Like it or hate it, the new health care bill in the United States is undoubtedly one of the most important pieces of legislation in years, one that will permanently change the face of America. And earlier this month, in a move that caught many by surprise, the Ontario government announced that generic drug companies will no longer be allowed to pay pharmacies to carry their products. That announcement alone shaved close to 10 per cent off the price of Shoppers Drug Mart stock.

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Paying for essential services has sparked debate from time immemorial. Should the community at large bear the burden of such expenses, with the wealthy being taxed at much higher rates, or should the primary model be one based on some form of user fee? This debate plays out in such issues as the funding of education (where society at large sees this as an essential service that all must contribute to, whereas the Jewish community operates with a user fee approach), salaries for religious functionaries and synagogue building funds.

While the payment for the above services are discussed rather extensively in our classic sources, to the best of my knowledge, the same cannot be said regarding the funding of health care. Living under foreign domination, the broad issues of health care were apparently less pertinent to the Jewish community.

The "private" nature of health care during talmudic times can be seen in the following ruling. Included in the obligation to support a wife was the obligation to pay for her medical bills. Yet the husband is within his legal (if not moral) rights to divorce his wife, pay her the value of her ketuba (an ancient form of alimony) and free himself from the need to continue paying her medical fees. Presumably health care was just one of many needs that the individual was expected to pay for – and those who lacked funds would turn to charitable sources.

As an essential service, Jewish law does regulate the cost of health care. In theory, doctors are not allowed to receive payment for treating patients. One is not allowed to receive payment for performing any mitzvah and preserving health is a (and perhaps the) primary mitzvah of Judaism. Of course, our sages realized that such a system couldn't work in practice and allowed a doctor to receive payment for his efforts and the opportunity cost of forgoing other forms of gainful employment. Furthermore, no recourse was available against a doctor who did in fact charge, or even overcharge, for his or her diagnosis, as "he sold his wisdom, which is priceless."

The same is not true regarding pharmaceuticals. In order to ensure availability for all, prices must be kept at an affordable rate even if that means limiting the profits of drug companies. Whether that would include the disallowing of payment to pharmacies for carrying products is much less clear. One would need to examine not only the price impact but also the effect on drug availability and even corporate profits before reaching any conclusions.

Our sages well understood the power of, and the need for, a profit motive as an inducement to meet market demand. This is especially true regarding pharmaceuticals, where the investment needed to find new drugs can be quite substantial and such investment would only be carried out if there were potential for solid profits. Thus Jewish law recognizes both some sort of patent protection for drug companies and the right of generic companies to compete at the proper time. Finding the proper balance between these competing needs requires constant vigilance, monitoring and tweaking.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Jewish Life

A new biography of Yehuda Halevi

By MARTIN LOCKSHIN

The so-called Golden Age in Spain was a short period when Jews and Christians living in Andalusia (Muslim-controlled Spain) experienced some amount of freedom. Before that era came to a disastrous end in 1148 – when the radical Muslim Almohades invaded and reversed the policies of the local liberal Muslims – Christians, Jews and Muslims in Spain thrived culturally, producing some of the best-known medieval works of poetry, philosophy, language, science and religion.

Martin Lockshin

Some Jewish writers from this period (which historians today prefer to call the "convivencia," the period of "coexistence" of different religious groups) left an indelible mark on later Jewish thinking, among them the famous poet and philosopher, Yehuda Halevi (1075-1141). Schocken Books has just published a gripping new biography of Halevi by the accomplished author and translator, Hillel Halkin, who was born in the United States and moved to Israel 40 years ago.

Halevi is best known – both by supporters and detractors – for his major work of Jewish thought, *The Kuzari*. Written in Judeo-Arabic, the language preferred by most Jewish writers of the convivencia in Muslim Spain, the book is set 400 years before Halevi's time. As the book's fuller title (*The Book of Refutation and Proof on Behalf of the Despised Religion*) implies, it provides a stirring apologia for the Jewish religion. It takes the form of fictional dialogues between the king of Khazaria (near the Black Sea) and a nameless rabbi who explains the basics of Judaism to the king. At the end of the dialogue, the rabbi explains to the king that he must leave because he is moving to the land of Israel, the true home of the Jewish people and religion.

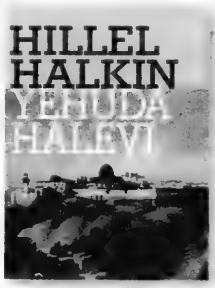
The central argument of *The Kuzari* is still taught today and seen as compelling by many Jewish religious educators. It is particularly popular among *kiruv* organizations, groups that reach out to the not-yet-religious, in an attempt to lead them to observance.

The rabbi in the story contends that the Jewish religion is based on compelling evidence: an unbroken and unchallenged tradition passed on from one Jewish generation to the next, that God miraculously took the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage and gave them laws to live by. Halevi further implies that this consensus about ancient Jewish history was also shared by the Christians and Muslims of his time. From his perspective, all civilized people of his world believed that God had indeed performed miracles for the Israelites. Naturally they should then feel bound to obey God's laws.

The second part of *The Kuzari*'s basic theology is not taught as often as the first, at least not in North America. The rabbi explains that the Torah was given specifically to Jews because, even before they received the Torah, they were "the pick of humanity," with a propensity for prophecy that non-Jews did not have. He adds that although converts are welcome to Judaism, they will never reach the lofty status that born Jews have. And just as Jewish people are different from other people, so the Land of Israel is essentially different from other lands. It is, under the right conditions, the land best suited for prophecy. Amazingly, in Halevi's story, the Khazar king converts even after hearing this.

The Kuzari's claims resonate very little with Halkin, who devotes only a small portion of his book to *The Kuzari*, despite its popularity throughout the ages. Instead, Halkin focuses on Halevi's secular poetry, especially his love poetry (with shorter treatments of his religious and Zionist poetry). In that secular poetry, Halkin, a non-observant Jew with strong literary skills, finds his essential Halevi.

Halkin explains in detail how Halevi's poetry beautifully exemplifies the convivencia, specifically the influence of Arabic/Muslim literary styles on Jewish poets. Between biblical times and the 20th century, no secular Hebrew poetry was ever produced that came close to the quality of that of Halevi and his colleagues in Andalusia, and they clearly reached those heights by learning from local Muslims.



Halkin provides his own beautiful translations and incisive analysis for many of Halevi's poems. He notes that most of the love poems were probably written simply as literary exercises, "more to demonstrate facility with the genre" than to reflect true life experiences of the poet.

But Halkin is so moved by Halevi's *Why, My Darling, Have You Barred All News?* that he is convinced that it must reflect the feelings of a broken-hearted Halevi who, in his 20s, while he was still single, "had a love affair" with a woman who subsequently left him. Halkin claims that a poem of this quality and passion, "the greatest examplar" of Hebrew love poetry "in all of post-biblical Hebrew literature," could not have been "a purely literary creation." (This one poem is the sum total of evidence for Halevi's "affair.")

Toward the conclusion of the book, we discover another reason why Halkin is so taken by Halevi's story. Like the fictional rabbi in *The Kuzari*, Halevi, at the end of his life, decided to move to the Land of Israel. We know that he got as far as Egypt and lingered there for a few months. A few months after that, he was dead. He presumably reached Israel, but there is no record of him there. Jewish legend, first recorded centuries after his death, claims that just as Halevi reached the gates of Jerusalem, he was trampled to death by a Muslim horseman. As Halkin notes, even if this romantic story has a kernel of truth to it, the perpetrator in Crusader-controlled Jerusalem of 1141 would more likely have been a Christian.

Halkin, a product of the convivencia of America, writes admiringly about his role model, Halevi, the product of the convivencia of Spain who chose (as Halkin did 800 years later) to leave a land of multicultural coexistence and move to the land of the Jews. Halkin opposes those readers who claim that Halevi must have "repented" and turned his back on the convivencia when he decided to leave Spain and set sail for Israel. Some scholars have even argued that Halevi never really subscribed to the idea of cultural coexistence, as his comments in *The Kuzari* on the chosenness of the Jews might imply. The bête noire Israeli philosopher, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, even blamed Halevi for causing modern Jewish "nationalist and racist chauvinism," particularly in the religious settler movement that considers Halevi one of their heroes.

Halkin, however, insists that aliyah is not an abandonment of the values of convivencia, neither for him nor for Halevi. He passionately defends Halevi against the charges of his modern critics and claims that Halevi, like Halkin, always appreciated and never abandoned the world of coexistence with gentiles, even though he left them and moved to Israel. In Halkin's case at least, there is no doubt that he brought his western values with him to Israel.

Readers who appreciate Zionism without rejecting western values, who love poetry or who just like reading a beautifully written if idiosyncratic biography of a famous Jew will find much pleasure in Hillel Halkin's *Yehuda Halevi*.

Martin Lockshin is professor of Jewish studies at York University and rabbi of the Toronto Partnership Minyan.

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Seymour Schulich donates $2 million for groundbreaking Israeli school technology

Project funded through UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

By Howard English

Teachers and students in more than 400 Israeli classrooms will soon be thinking smart thanks to a visionary $2 million donation from Toronto philanthropist Seymour Schulich toward a futuristic education program in Israel. The exciting project is being funded through UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

The smart classroom initiative is a joint venture of World ORT, the Israeli government and local municipalities.

UJA Federation is partnering with World ORT, the leading Jewish non-governmental organization that specializes in cutting edge education and vocational training, on the Schulich Canada Smart Classroom Initiative. Through the initiative, approximately 40,000 students will be provided with laptop computers in the classroom, connected wirelessly to the teacher's workstation and an electronic whiteboard at the front of the class. This new, pioneering classroom technology will allow teachers in 411 Israeli classrooms to integrate sound, animation, video, live web content and text in an interactive fashion. Images displayed on the whiteboard can be directed to student laptops and, students will be able to work on their laptops throughout the lesson.

The wireless network links student computers, the teacher's work station and the whiteboard. Eventually, the "smart classroom" technology will also be connected to ORT's video conferencing network covering countries such as Russia and other former Soviet states, Italy, Argentina, Australia, Uruguay, Mexico and many others.

"This initiative offers boundless opportunities for educational excellence on a scale that may have been contemplated but never implemented before," said Schulich. "All of the northern Israel classrooms benefiting from this endeavour are located in economically or socially distressed areas and 20 percent serve Israeli-Arab children."

Among the many schools implementing the Smart Classroom Initiative are:

• Megiddo Regional Junior and Senior School which educates many children who have special needs, including blind youngsters and those suffering from Down's syndrome and cerebral palsy.

• The Anne Frank High School at Kibbutz Sasa, which educates Jewish, Arab, Druze and Circassion students.

• Birav Elementary school, serving Orthodox Jewish students in Safed.

Seymour Schulich

• The Abu Salim Salman Alshich Comprehensive School in the historic Israeli village of Abu Sna'an. The school, with 1,200 students, runs classes for disabled children including those with hearing impairments.

The Schulich Canada Smart Classroom Initiative will follow the World ORT Smart Classroom pilot project, launched in April 2008. At that time, Israel's former Education Minister Yuli Tamir called it "a revolution" and "the first step in the process that will bring Israeli schools into the 21st century."

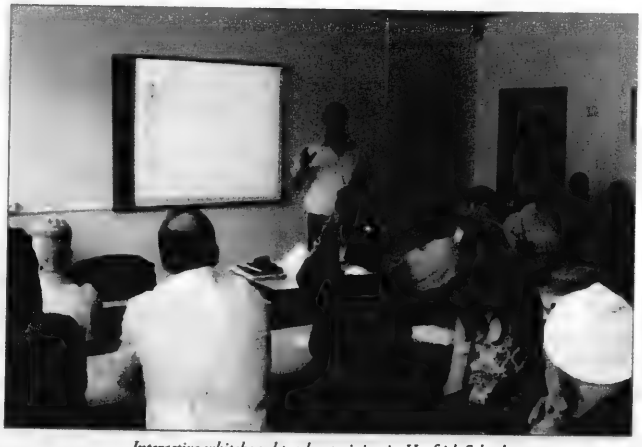
Israeli Vice Prime Minister Sylvan Shalom, the current Minister for Development of the Galilee and the Negev, said the new technology would improve the learning capabilities for children in northern Israel. This technology will "inevitably lead to a reduction in the social gaps that now exist between the northern and central regions of the country," Shalom said.

"I am extremely grateful to Seymour Schulich for this outstanding donation," said Robert Singer, director general & CEO of World ORT. "It means a great deal that the leading donation for this initiative has come from a person of his calibre."

"The more than 400 classrooms that will be part of this exciting initiative now join a remarkable family of schools across Canada connected with the Schulich brand in educational excellence," noted UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, president & CEO Ted Sokolsky. "We were thrilled to help facilitate this gift that will have an educational impact for many decades to come."

Seymour Schulich is one of the country's most respected business leaders and philanthropists, whose commitment to education has transformed education facilities across Canada and around the world. He has made gifts to York University - including the internationally respected Schulich School of Business - the University of Western Ontario, University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, McGill University, and Nipissing University. He has also donated to the University of Nevada, Reno, and the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology).

World ORT is the world's largest Jewish education and vocational training non-government organization and whose services have reached more than 3 million people - Jewish and non-Jewish - in 100 countries since its founding in 1880.



Interactive whiteboard teacher training in Hurfeish School

New Jewish Family & Child offices open their doors

UJA Federation creates new home for agency's vital work

By Daniel Horowitz

On Monday, April 12 the new and improved offices of Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) opened their doors for the first time, making life for Toronto's Jewish families in need more convenient and accessible than ever before.

Spread out over approximately 15,000 square feet on the first and second floors of the Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services on Sherman Campus, the new state-of-the-art headquarters will greet clients of the agency in a warm and welcoming light-filled reception area.

"The new JF&CS offices are an uplifting environment that will honour the efforts of our staff and dignify our clients," said Richard Cummings, executive director, JF&CS. "This is a compelling message from our Jewish community reflecting the most honourable values to ensure the safety, security and healthy development of the community. Indeed, our new space in the Lipa Green Centre is a vibrant tribute to the leadership and vision of UJA Federation. I also want to thank UJA's real estate team comprised of David Sadowski, Andrea Gaichuk and Stephanie Olin Chapman for their outstanding support."

Made possible by a generous gift of $2 million to UJA Federation through the Lewar Estate, the new Stephan and Sophie Lewar Family Services Floor also includes a colourful play area for children; bright, well appointed group counseling rooms, and a residential-style supervised family access room and a café-style informal meeting area. The staff office areas are newly furnished with the latest in ergonomic work stations and chairs. A staff kitchen and lounge overlooking the wooded slope of the ravine has been designed to facilitate informal social and collegial interaction and provide a calm respite from the more serious and stressful work of the agency.

"As supervisor of the JF&CS Woman Abuse Program, I can say that our program's clients come through our doors tentatively and with apprehension," said Debra Feldman. "They are in a very vulnerable state. They often come without their partner's knowledge and worry that he will know, will find out and that she will pay the price for this. She also carries the additional burden of shame due to the secrecy attached to woman abuse in the Jewish community. Direct access to our premises means that we will now be more accessible to women. It is so important for these women to no longer have to be visible to so many, worrying about who has seen them. At our new offices, they can seek help with safety and security."

"I think the most significant benefit to our clients will be the supervised Family Room," said Talyah Breslin, supervisor of child protection, JF&CS. "This will allow our clients who have children in the care of JF&CS to visit together in a warm and child-friendly environment. The room will be equipped with a fridge and microwave so that parents can make meals for their children. The room will also have toys and other equipment that will facilitate positive interactions and allow for visits to be more relaxed."

The new JF&CS Family Room

Jewish Family & Child social workers Debra Feldman (left) and Talyah Breslin (front), join executive director Richard Cummings in the Family Room of the new JF&CS located in the Lipa Green Centre for Jewish Community Services.

Stephan Lewar grew up in Warsaw, graduating from university there with a Masters in Economics in 1939, just months before the German invasion. His thesis was on "The Expanding Japanese Economy". The War changed his life forever. His parents were killed in the Holocaust and only he and his brother survived. After the war, he fled to Paris with his wife Sophie, to wait for Canadian visas.

"Arriving in Canada with nothing but his talent and education, Stephan built an exceptionally successful international electronics business, travelling all over the world, but especially to Japan, ironically, the country he had studied in university and where he first partnered with a young company known as Panasonic," explained Ted Sokolsky, president & CEO, UJA Federation. "Years later, when Stephan and Sophie's son Richard passed away unexpectedly in 1998, they established the Heart and Stroke Richard Lewar Centre of Excellence for Cardiovascular Research at the University of Toronto. Richard's passing in fact triggered a new found desire to repair the world and ultimately in their later years he and Sophie became avid philanthropists providing huge support to UJA, JIAS, the Hospital for Sick Children, Mazon Canada and of course JF&CS."

Feature

Israel...

By PAULA CITRON
Special to The CJN

The population of Israel is about the same as that of the Greater Toronto Area, Hamilton and London combined, yet the representation of its dance and theatre companies around the globe belies its small size.

Why? The answer is simple. The government invites presenters and producers (and in my case, arts journalists) to come to an annual curated event called International Exposure (IE) to experience Israeli dance and theatre. The Israelis pick up the tab for hotel and land transportation, with a day trip to Jerusalem thrown in for good measure.

IE 2009 took place Dec. 5 to 13. The dance showcase attracted 125 people from 34 countries, while theatre, which also included Israeli world music, was attended by 34 people from 17 countries. Since we were there on the Israeli government's dime, so to speak, we were heavily programmed. In all, I sat through well over 50 productions, with upward of seven events a day.

Most of the dance IE took place at the Suzanne Dellal Centre for Dance and Theatre. Founded in 1989, the complex includes four buildings carved into theatres and studios on what used to be a private Jewish school campus. The centre is located in picturesque Neve Tzedek, first settled in the early 1900s by pioneers who moved out of the Arab town of Jaffa to found a Jewish city. From the seeds of Neve Tzedek, mighty Tel Aviv has grown, and the area's quaint, narrow streets are filled with antique shops, artists' ateliers and restaurants with atmosphere.

In terms of theatre venues, we were all over Tel Aviv. One of the most exotic spaces is the Hasimta (Alley) Theatre, located in the historic Jaffa casbah. Several small performance spaces have been created out of a warren of rooms, and there is a spectacular roof terrace decorated in period Arabic furnishings overlooking Jaffa City. A diametric opposite is the splashy, modernist Tel Aviv Performing Arts Complex, which houses the Cameri Theatre's five venues and the Israeli Opera. And then there is the home of the fringe, the Tmu-na Theatre, which is spread out over a series of what used to be auto repair shops in an industrial part of Tel Aviv.

(And a side note: the day we were at the Cameri, one of its theatres was showing a production of *Fiddler on the Roof* to an audience of soldiers. These special performances for the military are underwritten by a father to honour his son who was killed on duty. In the courtyard, fellow soldiers were guarding their colleagues' kit bags. We were allowed to peek into the theatre and saw a joyous sight – all these young men and women in combat fatigues singing and clapping along to the music.)

Continued on page 25

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Feature

...promoting dance and theatre

Continued from page 24

The emphasis of IE dance is contemporary. The three major Israeli companies, in terms of size and international reputation, were all at IE – Batsheva, Kibbutz and Kamea. The rest were smaller companies that were either already on the international circuit or companies Israeli dance curators were hoping would be picked up. It should be noted that Israel has an extraordinary number of strong male dancers, and that both the men and women are well trained.

In theatre, the story is the opposite. The biggest companies – Habimah National Theatre being the most notable – are not exciting foreign interest because, to be perfectly frank, they are pedestrian. The government apparatchik who curated the theatre IE was a candid woman, and she bemoaned the conservative nature of Habimah and its like. A typical example of dullness are the two plays we saw by Savion Librecht. She is, apparently, a highly acclaimed poet, but she is a mediocre playwright.

Librecht's themes are extremely interesting, but she treats plots with plodding conventionality. *The Banality of Love* is about the relationship between Jewish-German political theorist Hanna Arendt and German philosopher Martin Heidegger. The two were lovers in pre-Nazi Germany, and Arendt came to the support of Heidegger, a Nazi apologist, after the war, much to the disgust of the Jewish community worldwide. *Apples from the Desert* tells the story of a girl from a haredi Jerusalem family who runs off with a free-spirited kibbutznik. What these plays, could have or should have been in more inspired hands, beggars the question. Not surprisingly, given the Luddite mindset of the Israeli theatre establishment, Librecht was awarded the 2004 Playwrights Award.

The bulk of the theatre showings were either physical theatre or object theatre because that is where innovation is taking place, and truly, there were breathtaking leaps of imagination in some of these performances.

Batsheva dancers *[Gadi Dagon photo]*

Suzanne Dellal Centre for Dance and Theatre

Apparently, it's the graduates of the School of Visual Theatre based in Jerusalem who are the front line of Israeli theatre experimentation. As well, Russian immigrants have enriched Israeli theatre life with their own clown/physical theatre tradition.

Here are just two examples of supreme theatrical originality. Orto-Da Theatre's *Stones* is inspired by the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Monument by sculptor Nathan Rapoport. Coated in Dead Sea mud, six actors recreate the monument's six sculpted figures, and then narrate the uprising through the eyes of the rebels. You believe you are looking at pure stone until they begin to move. Daniel Landau's *One Dimensional Man* is even harder to describe. Imagine large egg-shaped video screens. Then project onto these screens, real faces distorted through animation. Then have these oversized eggs become faces for live actors. Then have figures covered head to toe in black, like *kuroko* stagehands (stagehands in traditional Japanese theatre dress all in black) from kabuki theatre, manoeuvre these eggshell faces around the stage as the live actors move behind them to a pre-recorded story.

We did see a highly touted production of *Hamlet* at the Cameri Theatre, which placed the audience, each of us on a swivel chair, in two facing groups. The action took place down the middle and all around the exterior. Actor Itai Tiran has become a heart-throb of the teenage set with his modern-day, rebellious, spoiled-brat Hamlet. Other than that, it wasn't a particularly innovative show for those of us used to Canada's Stratford Festival.

Continued on page 26

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Feature

A typical mix: narrative dance, abstractions, gender issues

Continued from page 25

Israeli dance tends to be similar to contemporary dance around the world – a typical mix of narrative dance theatre, abstractions on a theme, gender issues and personal essays. I have a short fuse when it comes to Eurotrash, which I define as self-indulgent, pretentious twaddle that usually involves an elaborate use of props and sets, postmodern movement pedestrianisms, and an incomprehensible through line (the underlying motivational or structural unity of a scene, play or character). Well, Israel has Eurotrash, which, needless to say, is popular with European presenters. For example, *Trout*, by the Inbal Pinto and Avshalom Pollak Dance Company, involved all manner of silly vignettes performed in water with a lonely figure who resembles Queen Elizabeth I wandering through the flood.

One of my favourite shows was Michal Herman's droll dance theatre *Fellowship*. Based on a Kafka absurdist short story, the plot involves a group of five who don't want to be a group of six. The bulk of the dance is taken up with how the five try to shut out the sixth. Each of the characters has his or her own delightful personality and choreographic motif, supported by a solo musical instrument.

I also loved the satiric *4 Men, Alice, Bach and the Deer*, co-choreographed by Yossi Berg and Oded Graf, who use a brilliant combination of burly movement, text, song and male-specific props such as Mexican wrestling masks, rifles, and a large deer to portray a humour noir skewering of machismo – and all to Bach. Alice is their ideal woman.

Continued on page 27

Itai Tiran as Hamlet

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Feature

and personal essays

Continued from page 26

I have to say that I was surprised by the lack of political works both in dance and theatre. There are two notable exceptions.

The cast of Arkadi Zaides' heartfelt dance piece *Quiet* includes two Israelis (Zaides and Ofir Yudilevitch) and two Arabs (Muhammad Mugrabi and Rabia Khuri). It is a piece that is about aggression and compassion, set against the backdrop of cut-out doves of peace. The beginning is unforgettable as each man outlines the body of the other, but can't quite bring himself to enact physical touching. The progression finds the dancers both moving closer, yet drawing farther apart. It is a troubling, yet hopeful, meditation on war and peace.

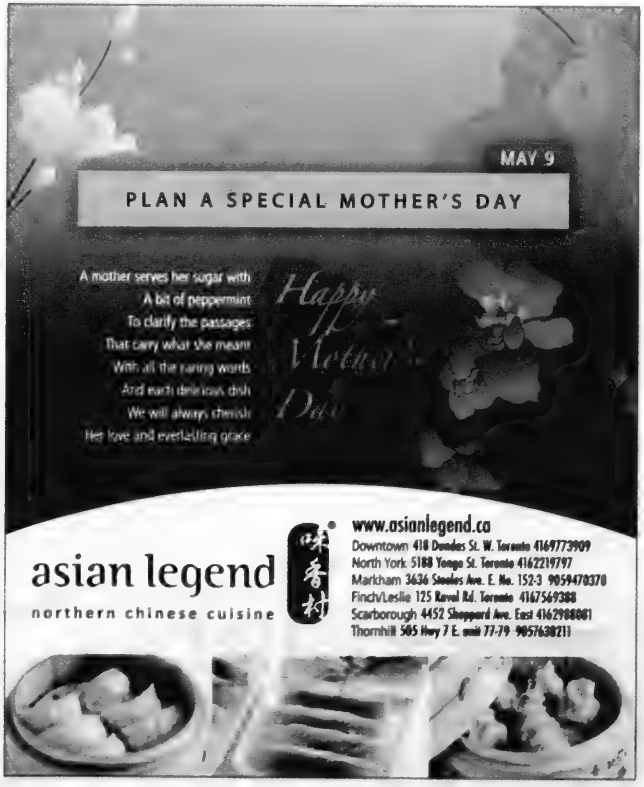
Kibbutz dancers perform *Infrared* *[Gadi Dagon photo]*

The play *Janana* (*Flipout*) by Yiftach Klein features Arab actor Shadi Srour and Israeli actor Einat Weizmann who respectively play all the male and female roles. Based on Klein's own army experiences during the first intifadah, the flashpoint is the accidental killing of an Arab child at an Israeli checkpoint and the domino effect of that death on people's lives.

An extraordinary thing happened at the Q&A that followed. I told Klein that his play had a zero chance of being picked up for North American audiences because the prevailing sentiment on this side of the Atlantic is that Israel can never be shown in a bad light. At this point, our government apparatchik launched into a tirade, telling us Israel wanted the world to see that the country can tolerate self-criticism, and the bane of her existence is the tunnel vision of North American Jews.

I left IE with a deep sense of envy. Without doubt, Israel has a culture where the arts are given pride of place. Our own country could learn a thing or two.

Paula Citron is an arts and theatre critic based in Toronto.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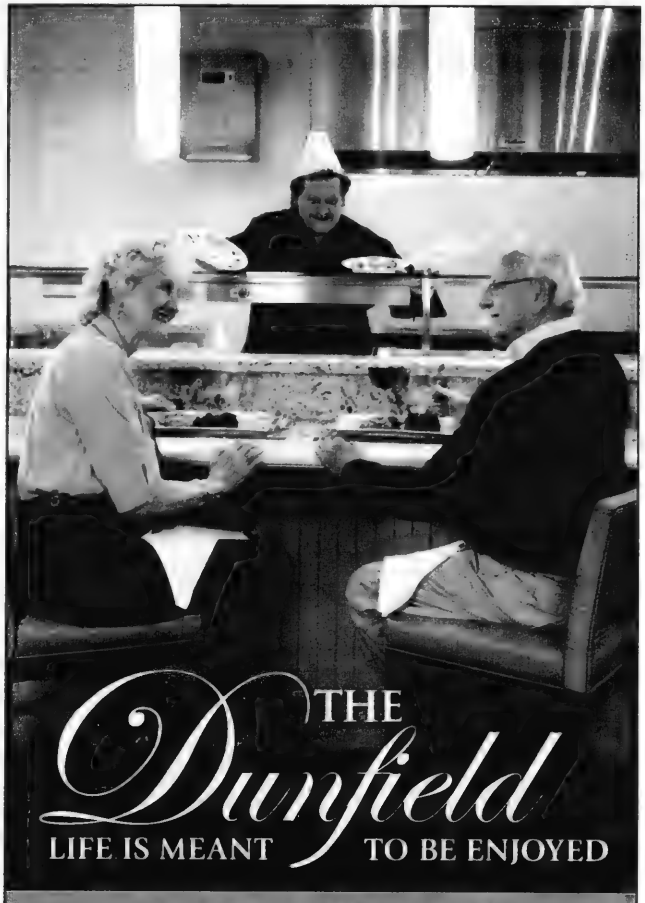
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On Campus

Undergraduate fraternity reborn

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

After an absence of almost half a century, the undergraduate chapter of the pharmaceutical fraternity Rho Pi Phi has been re-established at the University of Toronto.

Rho Pi Phi International Pharmaceutical Fraternity is made up of professionals in the pharmaceutical field. Toronto's chapter, called Rokeah, was established in 1926, and an undergraduate chapter, known as Nu chapter, was established a few decades later, but it eventually petered out. Until last fall.

In 2009, Joshua Lieblein, a fourth-year undergraduate pharmacy student at U of T was approached by some of Rho Pi Phi's professional members about possibly re-starting the chapter on campus.

"I'd been aware of Rho Pi Phi through my parents and grandparents, and through other friends I had in the community who would talk about the influence of Rho Pi Phi in decades gone by," Lieblein said. "I didn't think I'd ever have the chance to bring it back."

After meeting with pharmacists who are members of Rho Pi Phi's Toronto chapter, Lieblein started recruiting students from September to December 2009.

While the organization itself is non-sectarian, meaning any gender or ethnicity can join, most of the Toronto members are Jewish, as are the seven new undergraduate members.

"Older members asked me if I was interested. I took the initiative," Lieblein said.

On April 11, the new members were officially inducted into the fraternity.

Lieblein sees the fraternity as an opportunity for students to form bonds early in their careers.

"I thought it would be appropriate, given that there were not very many Jewish students [in the program], to have a nucleus of students that stick together and help each other out," he said.

"Pharmacy has become a very challenging program. It's nice for people to have your back. The relationships you form are very important. Business and social relationships were very instrumental in helping [the older members] achieve success."

Like Rokeah, the new undergraduate chapter will have a social role and will help members build contacts.

"It's a lot of work, pharmacy. We have seven courses a term. We want to offer some social events, some [that may be] Jewishly based," Lieblein said. "It will give students a chance to relax and have some happy memories."

Fred Stoll, the chancellor of Rokeah, hopes to see the undergraduate chapter grow and expand to different campuses.

"We hope eventually that it will grow... [and] help Rho Pi Phi to continue as a fraternity. As we grow older, more people are passing away," he said.

Right now, Rho Pi Phi members are exploring the possibility of starting an undergraduate chapter at the University of Waterloo's school of pharmacy.

Stoll said older members of the fraternity can help newer members.

"[Fraternity members] have quite a strong bond. These people have been together for 40, 50 years. We would serve as their mentors," he said.

Reina Bendayan, a professor in the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at U of T and the undergraduate chapter's faculty adviser, was impressed with the diverse group of professionals that showed up to the induction ceremony.

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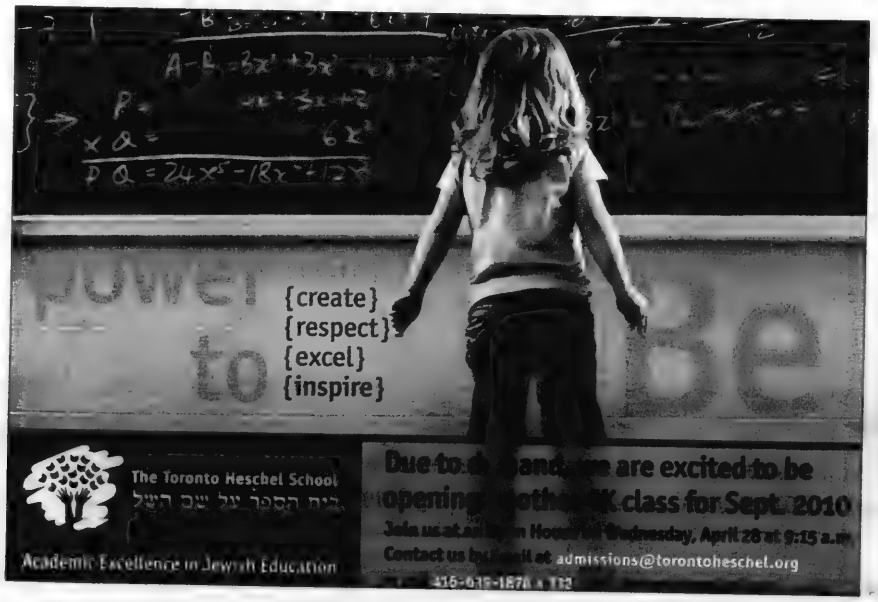

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On Campus

York U report angers conference organizers

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Organizers of a York University-sponsored conference on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were angered by the school's recently released review of the three-day event.

The conference, called "Israel/Palestine:Mapping Models of Statehood and Paths to Peace," held last June, was criticized by Jewish groups, who said it was one-sided and anti-Israel.

York's president, Mamdouh Shoukri, commissioned Frank Iacobucci, a former Supreme Court of Canada judge, to review the conference last August. The report was posted on York's website earlier this month ago and drew criticism from conference organizers, which included York professors, as impeding academic freedom.

Mamdouh Shoukri

After the report was released, organizers publicized a series of e-mails acquired through a freedom of information request.

The e-mails, sent to Shoukri and Patrick Monahan, the school's provost, by senior York officials such as Marshall Cohen, chair of York's board of governors, urged the president to relocate the conference off-campus and include new speakers.

"We were subject to a great deal of political pressure… and also pressure from the administration," Bruce Ryder, one of the organizers and a professor at Osgoode Hall Law School, told *The CJN*. "The pressure was aimed at interfering with the conference program and alternatively denying us the use of campus space."

In one e-mail to Shoukri, Cohen voiced his concerns about the conference, stating that it "is bad news in and of itself, but on top of recent events [including a number of clashes between pro- and anti-Israel students] it will be a disaster."

Cohen, who could not be reached for comment, went on to recommend that the conference be moved off campus.

A number of Jewish groups held protests at York's Glendon Campus, where the event was held, while UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy issued a joint statement saying the conference would focus on a one-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, effectively advocating an end to Israel as a Jewish state.

In the weeks leading up to the conference, Gary Goodyear, minister of state for science and technology, urged the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a federal agency, to review its $19,750 grant to the event, because initial grant proposals didn't detail speakers. He cited concerns that some of the scheduled speakers had made anti-Israel and anti-Semitic comments in the past.

The Canadian Association of University Teachers called for his resignation for "unprecedented efforts to interfere" with the event.

Conference organizers have set up a website, www.fragilefreedomatyorku.ca, that outlines their experiences with the conference and includes the e-mails obtained through an FOI request. The site also has a critique of Iacobucci's report, which calls on York to undertake an internal review of university policies.

The report, which can be found on the office of the president's website, states that "it is wrong to assume that academic freedom is unlimited and without constraint" and that "the concept of academic freedom… entails not only rights but also responsibilities." The report adds that these responsibilities are not defined as clearly as they should be in York's policies.

Conference organizers said that the report doesn't focus on the role of York's administration in supporting academic freedom as much as it should.

York spokesperson Keith Marnoch said the fact the conference was held on campus shows that academic freedom wasn't impeded.

"It really is a view of the university that academic freedom was not breached in this case," Marnoch said. "Despite the contention around it, the university did support the conference."

Marnoch added that the organizers have a right to make the e-mails public.

"They're making their opinions known," he said.

Iacobucci's report will be reviewed by York's senate academic policy planning and research committee, which will help determine what changes to make to university policy, Marnoch said.

Daniel Ferman, citywide student chair of Hillel of Greater Toronto, commended the university for commissioning and releasing a review of the conference.

"I think that Hillel and all students would agree that academic freedom is an integral part of university life, but it should never be used as a substitute for a balanced discussion," he said. "It was an unbalanced conference dealing with Israel's right to exist, and that's a non-starter."

Ryder disagrees.

"I think many of those opinions [from Jewish groups] were ill-informed," he said. "We did our very best to attract a wide range of perspectives… We were willing to accept advice from any and all scholars about who to invite and how best to accomplish academic objectives."

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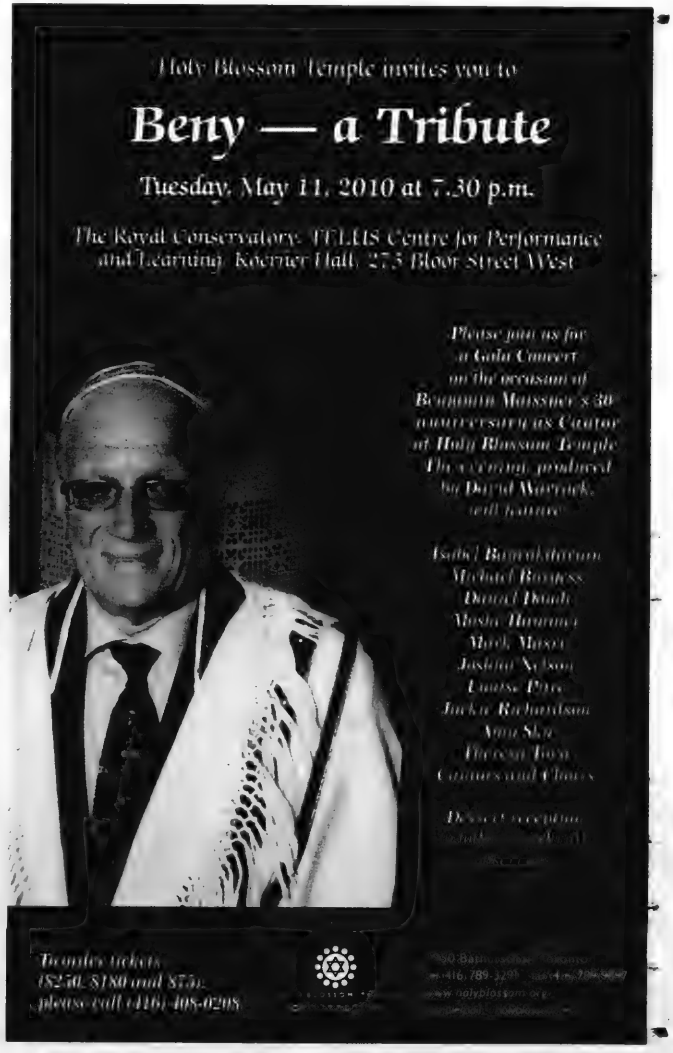
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Class Acts

Teens work to make the world a better place

Compiled by CJN Staff

Hundreds of Toronto-area teens will be among the 10,000 across North America, Europe and Israel who will work to improve the world during an international day of community service.

They will be taking part in J-Serve, the Global Day of Jewish Youth Service, on April 25.

This is the first year that Toronto teens will have the opportunity to participate in the international initiative, thanks to funding by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. J-Serve Toronto is a joint project of BBYO, Canadian Young Judaea, Congregation Darchei Noam, Habonim Dror, Hashomer Hatzair, Jewish student unions, NCSY and United Synagogue Youth.

"Teens are encouraged to register at Jserve.ca where they will be asked to choose a project from among several service opportunities," says Kevin Goodman, program director at BBYO.

J-Serve Toronto's service options include creating no-sew fleece blankets for distribution to Haitian refugees; assembling tzedakah box kits for the Zareinu Educational Centre; beading bracelets to be sold by JACS to fund its work; assisting Reena residents with gardening, baking and crafts; making calls at Hadassah-WIZO's campaign telethon; hosting a sing-along with residents of Cummer Lodge; and working with Shari's Mission at a bone marrow drive.

The day starts at Council House at 11:30 a.m. with an orientation and refreshments, followed by an address from Rabbi Jared Grover of Beth Tikvah Synagogue to frame the day's activities. Buses will take the teens to their pre-selected service sites from 1 to 4 p.m., and then back to Council House for a wrap-up party that includes an inspirational talk by Robin Mednick of Pencils For Kids.

"This is the perfect chance to give back to our community that gives us so much, and to come together as a generation passionate about tikkun olam, repairing the world," says Rochelle Derlick, a Grade 12 student and BBYO member. "There are so many different project options, making it easy to individualize the experience while... making the world a better place."

The Toronto initiative is one of over 40 J-Serve projects internationally where teens will have the opportunity to fulfil the Jewish values of gemilut chasadim, acts of loving kindness; tzedakah, charitable giving; and tikkum olam.

J-Serve is the Jewish service component of the annual Global Youth Service Day of Youth Service America and is a collaboration of PANIM: The Institute of BBYO and Repair the World, with generous support from the Charles and Lynn Shusterman Family Foundation.

"All of us who share a devotion and commitment to the Jewish future should be moved and inspired by the thousands of Jewish teens who are volunteering to repair their communities and our world through J-Serve," says Lynn Schusterman, chair of the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation. "Through their efforts, they are helping to make service a central part of North American Jewish life."

For more information or to register for J-Serve Toronto as either a teen participant or an adult chaperone, visit www.jserve.ca or Goodman at kgoodman@bbyo.ca or 416-398-2004, extension 222.

SALTY TRAVELLER: Associated Hebrew Schools senior kindergarten student Daniel Swartz brought back salt from the Dead Sea to share with his classmates while they learned about Israel for Yom Ha'atzmaut. He's also holding the passport he prepared for his in-class mock trip to Israel.

Class Acts

OLD SCHOOL, NEW NAME

Students, parents and teachers at Robbins Hebrew Academy, formerly United Synagogue Day School, danced the horah, above, as part of celebrations last week marking the school's name change. Below, Jaden Robbins and Michael Tobianah display RHA's new flag. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies took place April 15 on both the school's campuses. *[Frances Kraft photos]*

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy 90th birthday, Estelle Kuchar! With love and best wishes from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Henry Eigenmacht, 90 years young on April 21. With love on your special birthday. Susan & Joe, Jack & Ellen, Jeff, Bram, Kevin, Leo, and Samuel.

Rhonda & Jacques Pepin and Donald & Barbara Whyte are excited to announce the upcoming marriage of Michele & Jesse on May 23.

Ellen & Richard Paulin and Jill & Tom Weinberger announce the engagement of David & Laura. Grandparents, Norman & Ruth Stone, Tillie Paulin and Edith Weinberger.

Annie Ushky & late husband Jacov wish to welcome Benjamin-Jacov, born Jan. 8. Mazel tov to parents Dimi & Ronny Ushky. Proud uncle Eddy Ushky.

Mazel tov Sasha & Page Magen on the birth of Taylor Rose on March 15. Proud grandparents Karen & Alan Goren, Homa & Bijan Magen.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@cjnews.com** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Leila Speisman, is away on medical leave.

Women and Cancer
Taking Charge of Our Health
Join our expert panel and learn how to reduce your risk
Tuesday, April 27
7:30 pm Info Booths Open
8:00 pm Program Begins
Shaarei Shomayim
470 Glencairn Avenue
Free admission and parking
416 630-0203

What's New deadline for the May 6 issue is April 26. Deadline for May 13 is May 3. Phone 416-391-1836, fax 416-391-0829, e-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 22

HERO OR VILLAIN?

Join Mekorot for "Hero or Villain? The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn." with **Paul Franks**. Thursdays, April 22-May 13, 9:30-11 a.m (note date change). Prosserman JCC.

MEDITERRANEAN HISTORY

Canadian Institute for Mediterranean Studies: "A History of Corfu: The Making of a Mediterranean city on a Greek Island." 7:15-8:15 p.m. University of Toronto Bancroft Building, Room 415. Everyone welcome.

ART EXHIBIT OPENING

Koffler Gallery: "Auguststrasse 25," the first visual arts solo exhibition by **E.C. Woodley**. Opening reception 7-9 p.m., artist talk 7:30 p.m. Kiever Synagogue. Until May 30.

Saturday, April 24

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (central) meets at Toronto Heschel School, 819 Sheppard Ave. W. Shiur 9 a.m. Services 9:30 a.m. Kiddush following. tpmcentral1@gmail.com.

Sunday, April 25

J-SERVE

Day of community for Jewish teens, 11:30-5 p.m. Earn five volunteer hours. Organized by BBYO, USY, Habonim Dror, Hashomer Hatzair, JSU. Information, jserve.ca, or call 416-398-2004, ext. 223.

WOMEN'S LEARNING

Kehillat Shaarei Torah "Women's Day of Learning: What Can Judaism Offer Me, a 21st-Century Woman." 10 a.m.-3:15 p.m. $25 in advance, $30 at the door, includes lunch. 2640 Bayview Ave., education@shaareitorah.com or 416-229-2600, ext. 5.

BOOK LAUNCH

Bunny Iskov launches her new book, *Sapphire Seasons*, with Aeolus House and Israel's. 5 p.m. at Israel's. 870 Eglinton Ave. W. Free. Kosher refreshments. 416-256-1010.

MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism presents "The Middle East Conflict: Threats, Historical Challenges and Legitimate Responses" with **Dr. Emanuel Adler**, scholar, author and editor. Light buffet of Israeli appetizers, desserts and wines. 7 p.m. $15. 18 Wynford Dr., main floor. 416-385-3910, or contact **Roby** at roby@oraynu.org.

ISRAEL IN THE NEWS

Temple Sinai presents **Paul Michaels**, Canada-Israel Committee communications director, discussing "Israel: The Most Covered But Least Understood Country in the World." Members $5, nonmembers $10. Coffee and cookies 7 p.m., program 7:30 p.m. 210 Wilson Ave. 416-487-3281.

ISRAEL DEFENCE FORCES

Torah in Motion presents Rabbi **David Stav** in conversation with **Elliott Malamet** – "Can One Refuse Military Orders? Conscience vs. Duty in the IDF." 8 p.m. (Minchah 7:45). Or Chaim Yeshiva, 159 Almore Ave. 416-633-5770, www.torahinmotion.org.

D.A.N.I.

Parents, professionals and community members are invited to a one-day seminar sponsored by D.A.N.I. Choice of sessions including bullying, anxiety, mental health and a mom's panel. Kosher buffet lunch. Registration and information, 905-731-6606 or dani-toronto.com.

Monday, April 26

BOOK CLUB

Beth Tzedec's Library Book and Film Club. This week is *The Girl From Foreign: A Search for Shipwrecked Ancestors, Forgotten Histories and Sense of Home*, by Sadia Shepard. Reviewer is **Dr. Janna Nadler**. Dessert 1 p.m., lecture 1:30 p.m. Non-members $15 at the door.

Continued on page 33

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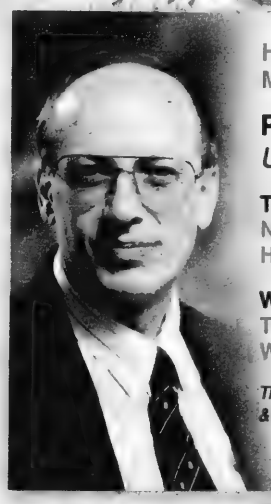

Harry & Blanche Posen Memorial Lecture Series

Professor Gabi Ben-Dor, *University of Haifa*

Tue. May 4, 2010, at 8 p.m.
National Resilience in Israel: How Strong Is Israel Today?

Wed. May 5, 2010, at 8 p.m.
The Middle East and the World: Old Game, New Rules?

This series is made possible by the Harry & Blanche Posen Memorial Lecture Fund.

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Continued from page 32

SATELLITE AT SINAI

Satellite at Sinai Live from New York program "Food on the Tube: How TV Shapes the Way We Think About Food," scheduled for April 26, has been rescheduled for June 1 at 7:30 p.m. 416-487-3281.

Tuesday, April 27

RELIGIOUS RADICALISM

Temple Har Zion's daytime program committee presents **Martin Regg-Cohn**, columnist and deputy editorial page editor of the *Toronto Star* speaking about "Covering Religious Radicalism: The Five Fundamentals." Presentation includes a discussion of Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian fundamentalists throughout the world. 7360 Bayview Ave. 1 p.m. Temple members $3, non-members $5.

WOMEN AND CANCER

L'Chaim Cancer Support Group presents "Women and Cancer – Taking Charge of Our Health." Information booths at 7:30 p.m., panel of cancer experts at 8 p.m. Free, no reserved seating. 416-630-0203. Shaarei Shomayim, 470 Glencairn Ave.

ISRAELI VIDEOS

Temple Har Zion's adult education committee presents "Israeli videos, Part II" with **Rabbi Cory Weiss**, 7:45 p.m. Members free, non-members $5. 905-889-2252.

Wednesday, April 28

FAMILY TREE

Jewish Genealogical Society of Canada presents **Jerrold Landau** speaking on "How I Became the 'Nerve Centre' of My Extended Family." 8 p.m. Doors open 7:30. Shaarei Shomayim. $5 for non-members. www.jgstoronto.ca.

Thursday, April 29

PIRKEI AVOT

Rabbi Cory Weiss, Temple Har Zion, will discuss "Pirkei Avot: Wisdom of the Fathers" at a Lunch and Learn, 12-1 p.m. Bring lunch. Coffee and tea provided. Program continues each Thursday to May 13.

BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Temple Sinai Congregation presents its eighth annual Boutique Night. Women and children's accessories, stationery, artwork, beauty and wellness items, kitchenware. Free admission and prizes. 4-9 p.m. Call Marcie, 416-487-3281.

OTHER NEWS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Baycrest is seeking volunteers aged 55+ to participate in an innovative study to see if volunteering provides a buffer against the onset of dementia. If you are available for three hours a week over a 12-month period, call 416-785-2500, ext. 2572, and ask about BRAVO. Information at www.baycrest.org/bravo.

The Baycrest Summer Youth Program 2010 is recruiting youth ages 13-24 who are mature, have strong interpersonal and communication skills, energy and initiative. Especially needed are those with musical ability and/or who speak a second language. 416-785-2500 ext. 2572 or alefkovitz@baycrest.org.

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre needs meals-on-wheels drivers and visitors for homebound seniors. **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112 ext. 127.

MINDREADER

Atzmaut chapter of Hadassah-WIZO holds a fundraiser May 2 at Earl Bales Centre with the Magical Mysterion Tour featuring Mysterion the Mindreader, band and Chinese kosher buffet. $50 per person. Reservations until April 23. **Miriam Shell**, 905-771-1931.

MUSICAL CELEBRATION

Temple Sinai Congregation presents the Ben Steinberg Musical Celebration, recognizing Jewish music and musicians. Performances by **Cleveland Duo**, **James Umble** and **Igor Gefter**. Friday, April 30, 8 p.m. Free.

GOD AND SUFFERING

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin speaks on "Where is God in the World of Tragedy and Human Suffering?" May 3, 7:30 p.m. Free. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

BETH ISRAEL ANNIVERSARY

Beth Israel Synagogue in Kingston celebrates its 100-year anniversary May 14-16. If you have ever been, are family of a congregation member, or have used synagogue services while at Queen's, St. Lawrence or RMC, you are invited to attend. bethisrl@kingston.net.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or go to www.jfandcs.com.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Six-session group for couples marrying in the next year, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly. Starts April 26, 7:30-9 p.m. at First Narayever.

Couple Communication: Four sessions for couples wanting to learn communication skills, April 22. Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 7-9 p.m.

Stepping Stones for Women: Creating Your Journey Toward Employment: One-session workshop for women looking to enter or re-enter the workforce. April 28, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. No charge, registration required.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing life skills. April 29, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Centre.

FOR SENIORS

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park, friendly atmosphere in beautiful surroundings. Sunday dance, April 25, 7-10 p.m. with live music; An Hour With Chopin, April 26, 10:30-11:30 a.m. $5 at the door; social bridge, Thursdays 12:30-3 p.m.; bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Association of Jewish Seniors: Thursday, April 22, lecture, "Protecting What You've Got in the Changing Financial Landscape" with **Janine Purves**, senior financial advisor at Assante Capital Management. 9:45 a.m. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Adath Israel Congregation: Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. Everyone welcome. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Marcia**, 416-932-1229.

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC: Computer course for beginners. Tuesdays 1-3 p.m., 8 weeks. 416-924-6211 ext. 155.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

Tuesday, April 27, lecture, "These Days Anyone Can Write a Book" with **Lorne Miller**, author and publisher. 10-11:30 a.m., $3 members, $6 non-members.

Wednesday, April 28, Spring Fling Lunch & Concert. 12-2:30pm. $13 members, $15 non-members.

Thursday, April 29, Wellness lecture, "Dealing with Grown Children" with **Judy Weiss**, personal growth coach, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

April 28, 10-11:30 a.m. Experience Israeli and international folk dance with **Teme Kernerman** and **Sandy Starkman**. Room 211. Free.

Wednesdays, May 5-June 16. "Conversations about Conversion." For those considering conversion or in a conversion program, alone or with a Jewish partner.

Family programs, including Sports with Jay, Shabbat party and prenatal classes for parents-to-be. For more information or to register, call 416-638-1881, ext. 4235.

Contact registration desk to receive a $25 discount on courses from the Department of Adult programs, including Ryerson/Chang course, theatre classes, dance, mahjong and more. 416-638-1881 ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

Stars on Spadina, April 26, 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. $180 includes dessert reception. Tax receipt for maximum allowable. Tickets in person at Miles Nadal JCC, ext. 0, or at www.mnjcc.org.

Toronto Jewish Film Festival, to April 25. Tickets: 416-967-1528 or www.tjff.com.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

CJPAC IN WASHINGTON: The Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), the political Israel advocacy organizaton, sent a delegation of observers to the recently concluded American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) policy conference in Washington, D.C. From left, are CJPAC fellows Paul Meyerson of the University of Winnipeg and Jay Gutovich of York University, CJPAC chair Joel Reitman, CJPAC fellow Leah Walters of Humber College, Jill Reitman and CJPAC executive director Mark Waldman.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 35

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Bystritski, Mikhail	March 26/10	Private
Haber, Margaret	March 27/10	282 Hidden Trail
Davis Vader, Sylvia	March 27/10	Private
Hadjibelov, Pinhas	March 27/10	Private
Rappaport, Edith J.	March 27/10	
Kalb, Phyllis	March 28/10	
Werzberger, Leon	March 27/10	
Barash, Boris	March 29/10	
Rothman, Jack	March 29/10	4968 Yonge St
Tapuach, Leah	March 31/10	Private
Kogan, Arthur	April 2/10	Private
Wadowski, Klara	April 2/10	Private
Jonas, Juraj	April 3/10	8 Scollard St
Brooks, Melvin	April 4/10	Private
Shepherd, John	April 1/10	Private
Priven, Sarra	April 5/10	Private
Kaganov, Semeon	April 5/10	193 Wilson Ave

HEBREW BASIC

Anneliese Lippman	Apr 4/10	644 Sheppard Ave. E.
Janet Gould	Apr 8/10	1126 Steeles Ave W
Ida Tate	Apr 9/10	351 Christie St

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Thelma Lettman	Apr 4/10	4350 Bathurst St
Moshe Shmuel Irving Weis	Apr 5/10	25 Willcot Rd
Joseph Benitah	Apr 5/10	745 New Westminister
Jennie Sheps	Apr 6/10	45 Battersea Cr
Ted Milo	Apr 6/10	109 Craig Dr
Sydney Rosenfield	Apr 6/10	1 Concord Pl
Arthur Siegel	Apr 7/10	15 Wellesbourne Cr
Rosalie Budovitch	Apr 6/10	11 Townsgate Ave.
Evelyn Linden	Apr 9/10	265 Cassandra Blvd
Harris Lindsay	Apr 7/10	3560 Bathurst St
Tatiana Arkanov	Apr 9/10	146 Ner Israel Dr
Nita Leonard	Apr 10/10	61 Gloucester Grove
Harry Crystal	Apr 10/10	23 Karl Crt
Jack Risenman	Apr 11/10	86 Bestview Dr

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ISADORE (SMITTY) KERZNER ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, April 25th at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
KLARA WAGNER ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, April 25th at 10:30 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Phase 5, Community, HHHHH, Row I, plot 10
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
MAX LEFKOWITZ ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, April 25th at 1:00 p.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
986 Wilson Ave.
Shaarei Tefillah Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
CHARLES (CHIL) KORNBERG ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, April 25th at 11:00 a.m.
Mt. Sinai Memorial Park
Independent Friendly Workmens Circle Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of
SADIE AND JULES MORANIS ז"ל
will take place
Friday, April 23rd at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Beth Tikvah Section
Phase V, GGGGG, Elm Rd.
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

IN MEMORIAM
JASON EINSTOSS ז"ל
In loving memory of our beloved son, brother and uncle. It has been 10 years since you left us, Jason. You are in our hearts, thoughts, prayers always.
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Dad, Mom, Philip, Allan, Karen, Jake & Jack

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Obituary

Canadian Chabad leader dies at 94

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Rabbi Moshe Elye Gerlitzky, one of the founders of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement in Canada, died April 4 at age 94.

Rabbi Gerlitzky, who was active until nearly the end of his life, was described by Chabad as the movement's oldest emissary. He was among a group of nine Chassidim, refugees from Nazi-occupied Poland via Japan and China, who in 1941, established the Rabbinical College of Canada in Montreal, a day school that was open to boys of different backgrounds. Rabbi Gerlitzky was its first talmudic studies instructor.

He and his colleagues owed their life to the Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara, who, while posted in Vilnius, Lithuania, during World War II, helped thousands of Jews find safe haven.

Rabbi Gerlitzky was born in 1916 in Lodz, Poland. When he was 10 years old, he recited his first *Blessing of the Sun*, a springtime prayer ritual that takes place every 28 years. More than eight decades later, he recited the same blessing in a pre-Passover ceremony last year, making him one of the few people to have taken part in the tradition four times.

He earned a reputation as a diligent student at the Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch yeshiva in Lodz, and became known for his bright smile and charitable manner.

When he was 17, he transferred to the central Lubavitch yeshiva in Warsaw, where he was later ordained. He spent the High Holidays with the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, in the suburb of Otwock. The experience, which included observing hours of study and prayer, had a profound effect on the young Rabbi Gerlitzky. Years later, he could repeat by heart the Rebbe's discourses.

At the outset of World War II, Rabbi Gerlitzky and two friends left Lodz, where he was teaching, for Warsaw. There, the Rebbe gave them American money to pay to be smuggled across the border to Russia.

Once in Russia, they made their way to Vilnius, and joined the Lubavitch yeshiva there while they knocked on the doors of foreign diplomatic offices for transit visas. Along with thousands of others, they came to the Japanese consulate, where Sugihara issued them visas to travel through Japan and on to North America.

According to a colleague, Rabbi Volf Greenglass, also a Chabad-Lubavitch founder in Montreal, his friend never lost his positive outlook, even as the prospects of surviving seemed grim.

"We lost everything," Rabbi Greenglass said. "We lost our families, our belongings and the roof over our heads. It was his lively spirit that maintained us and kept us going during our long and difficult journey until we came to Montreal."

Travelling across Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Rabbi Gerlitzky made it through Japan and on to Shanghai, China. From there, he joined eight other students, eventually heading to Montreal, where they arrived in 1941.

A year after his arrival, Rabbi Gerlitzky married Chana Rosenblum. At the request of Rabbi Schneersohn, the couple started a school for girls a few years later, and the first class held in their home was the genesis of today's Beth Rivkah Academy.

In the 1950s, Rabbi Gerlitzky started visiting Atlantic Canada to bolster Jewish life there.

"He travelled by bus, by train and on foot," said Harold Medjuck, a native of Halifax, where the rabbi visited at least once a year. "He travelled a long distance, he had a lot of miles to cover, a lot of people to see.

"His smile, his appearance, his sparkling eyes, his magnetic personality – we were drawn to him as to a fireplace on a winter day."

He is survived by eight children and over 300 grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Many of those descendants today serve as Jewish educators and Chabad-Lubavitch emissaries across the globe.

Coast to Coast

Manitoba NDP gov't blocks vote to denounce IAW

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — A private member's resolution denouncing Israeli Apartheid Week that was tabled in the Manitoba legislature last week didn't come to a vote when the NDP government blocked it, calling the move "unhelpful."

The resolution, introduced by Progressive Conservative MLA Heather Stefanson on behalf of the PC caucus and PC Opposition Leader Hugh McFadyen, called on the legislature "to denounce Israeli Apartheid Week as divisive, promoting intolerance and undermining a balanced debate of the Israeli-Palestinian question."

The rules of the Manitoba legislature state that a private member's bill doesn't automatically come to a vote, and the PC caucus asked the Speaker to grant leave for a vote, which required the agreement of the NDP government.

The government refused to grant leave and later ran out the clock on the resolution by speaking about it until noon. Despite Stefanson's request, the government also refused to extend the clock on the resolution past noon and allow it to come to a recorded vote.

"By speaking out the resolution, the NDP killed it," McFadyen said in an interview afterward.

In the legislature, Gord Mackintosh, minister of family services and consumer affairs, said that while applying the term "apartheid" to Israel was "profoundly unhelpful" and "unwelcome speech" it was speech "likely protected" by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"The resolution asks the government to take a formal role in 'denunciating' the speech of certain Manitobans," Mackintosh said. "The resolution is speaking outside, then, of the existing civil and criminal laws and the Human Rights Code of Manitoba."

He rejected the notion that it is the "new function for provincial governments of the day in Canada to formally denounce and chill unwelcome speech… I am then at risk of being their next target."

Referring to Mackintosh's comments, McFadyen said, "If proponents [of IAW] can make a statement advocating it, then why can't we as a House be able to make a statement condemning it?… Had the resolution been voted on and passed, it would not have had binding legislative effect on a university. It would not have prevented anyone's free speech. But it would have sent a powerful declaratory message about what we as a legislature think about the event. It would have been our statement."

David Chomiak, minister of innovation, energy and mines, said in the legislature that he didn't agree to granting leave for the resolution to be voted on because he didn't want to give the IAW event credibility.

After saying that the "A-word" [apartheid] does "not apply to Israel in any shape or form," Chomiak said IAW in Manitoba was "a non-event," and that by "voting on this… we give a platform for those who failed."

McFadyen, however, told *The CJN* that "it's not as if we are talking about two eccentrics on a street corner" who are putting on IAW. He said IAW is an organized event by those with a "clear agenda to undermine the right of Israel to exist as a state."

Stefanson noted that a "similar motion in Ontario was supported by politicians of all political stripes."

Jon Gerrard, leader of the Liberal party in Manitoba and its only MLA, supported the resolution.

McFadyen said his party and the NDP were in negotiations for a "couple of weeks" trying to agree on wording for a resolution.

Premier Greg Selinger was absent from the legislature when the resolution was debated. Brian Letour, IAW spokesperson in Manitoba, told *The CJN* that "we sent about 150 petitions to the government against Stefanson's resolution."

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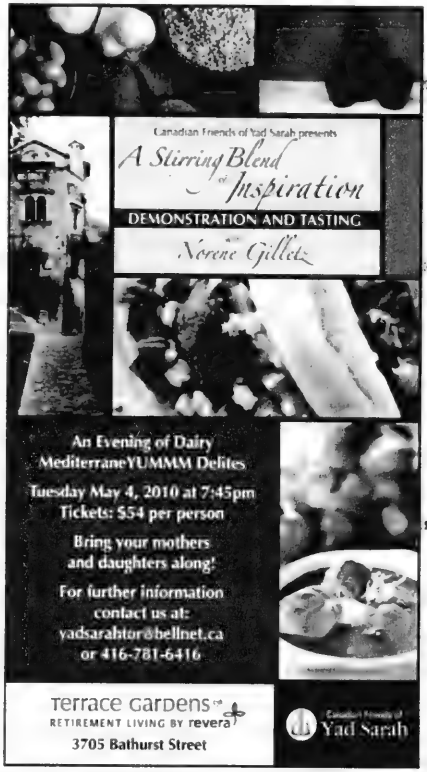

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Joseph Schlesinger
Award winning Canadian journalist with CBC Television news. Joseph was raised in Czechoslovakia and in 1939 he and his brother were among the 669 children Winton saved. Mr. Schlesinger was made a member of the Order of Canada in 1994.

Sir Nicholas' heroic efforts were responsible for saving 669 children from the Holocaust. Under his direction, Czech Kindertransports were organized to transport refugee children from Prague to Britain. His son, Nick Winton will be accepting the award on his behalf.

Thursday May 6th, 2010 at 6:00 pm

Proceeds to support initiatives designed to teach children the lessons of the Holocaust and foster their understanding of human rights, social action and religious tolerance. A Children's Garden honouring the memory of the lost children of the Shoah and a learning lab will be established and available to the general community as teaching tools. For more information about this exciting event, including sponsorship opportunities and reservations, please contact Pearl Grundland.

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Emeritus at the Hospital for Sick Children and Department of Psychiatry and Pediatrics, University of Toronto;
Member of the Bereavement Research Group at the Hospital for Sick Children

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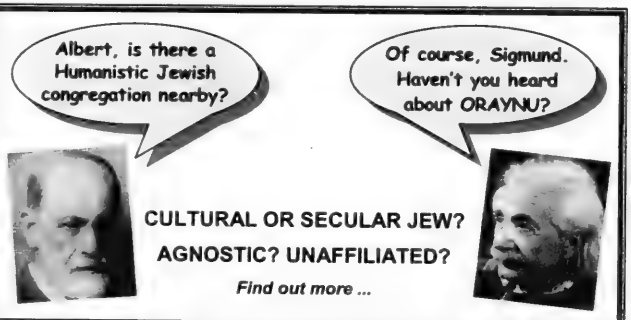
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Coast to Coast

Canadian people, IDF unit honoured

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Canadian Friends of Meir Medical Centre will honour the people of Canada and the Israel Defence Forces' medical and rescue team for coming to the aid of the people of Haiti following a devastating earthquake last January.

The Meir 2010 Humanitarian Award of Distinction "recognizes the outstanding contributions that the honorees have made toward the rescue and the relief of suffering of the Haitian people, as well as to the rebuilding of that devastated nation."

The award will be presented at a gala dinner at the Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue in the fall.

Representatives of the IDF rescue team, which included doctors from the Meir Medical Centre, are expected to attend the presentation, as well as yet-to-be-determined Canadians, said Arie Raif, president of the Friends group.

Canada and Israel were among the first nations to respond to the earthquake that devastated Haiti last winter, with Israel dispatching an IDF field hospital to Port-au-Prince. It was among the first functioning field hospitals and "it was able to save hundreds of Haitian lives and treat more than 500 Haitians a day," Raif said.

Altogether, the seven-person medical team performed 319 surgeries and delivered 16 babies, three by Caesarian section. Among the IDF medical personnel were three doctors from the Meir Medical Centre, he said.

In addition to offering emergency medical services, the IDF unit "took to Haiti 30 tons of medical equipment, including two incubators, more than 1,000 blankets, 30 large tents, mattresses, sleeping bags, kitchen equipment and a K-9 [dog] rescue unit that helped find four individuals trapped under rubble," Raif said.

The award also recognizes the generosity of the Canadian people, who raised more than $150 million, most of which was matched by the federal government. "It was an amazing response," Raif said.

At the same time, the Canadian Forces' DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) provided up to 50,000 litres of potable water a day.

IDF soldiers saved lives in Haiti

Raif, a former Israeli diplomat, said that in addition to honouring worthy recipients, the award will showcase an important aspect of the IDF. "It's about time we defuse the wrong image and perception of the IDF," he said. "This [deployment in Haiti] followed the Cast Lead operation [in Gaza] and the false accusations against it. This is a humanitarian army and they deserve the award."

Canadian Friends of the Meir Medical Centre was established about four years ago to boost the profile and raise money for the facility, located in Kfar Saba, northeast of Tel Aviv. The centre serves close to one million people per year – both Arabs and Jews.

A teaching hospital that operates in cooperation with Tel Aviv University's medical school, Meir Medical is known for cancer research, treating diabetes, orthopedic surgery, geriatric care and head and neck surgery. Medical personnel publish about 200 scientific papers every year, Raif said.

The Canadian Friends group raised more than $1.2 million for the hospital last year.

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Coverage of nuclear summit focuses on terror

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

With very few exceptions, the coverage of the two-day Nuclear Security Summit, held in Washington D.C. early last week, remained focused on the summit's stated goal: to secure loose nuclear material worldwide and prevent it from falling into the hands of terrorist groups.

While there had been reports in the lead-up to the summit that Turkey and Egypt planned to make an issue of Israel's non-participation in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – ostensibly one reason Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided not to attend, and to send his deputy, Dan Meridor, instead – in the end, Israel wasn't singled out as feared.

Instead, attention was focused on what U.S. President Barack Obama said April 11, on the eve of the summit: "The single greatest threat to U.S. security, both short-term, medium-term and long-term, would be the possibility of a terrorist organization obtaining a nuclear weapon... We know that organizations like Al Qaeda are in the process of trying to secure nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction, and would have no compunction at using them."

However, as Steven Hurst and Anne Gearan of the Associated Press reported April 12, Obama's sense of urgency about the imminent threat of nuclear terrorism isn't shared by all, and particularly not by some whose nuclear arsenals are most vulnerable. They noted that at an unofficial conference of 200 international nuclear experts (also held in Washington at the same time as the summit), well-known Pakistani physicist Pervez Hoodbhoy remarked: "Unfortunately, I do not see this concern either in Pakistan or in India about nuclear terrorism. Both countries do not see the seriousness of the situation."

This indifference is especially worrisome to those experts who warn that Pakistan's expanding nuclear arsenal (which Pakistan claims is needed for "deterrence" – a reference to its enemy, India) could fall into the hands of Al Qaeda, given the instability in that country and in South Asia generally.

Even though Obama has generally received commendation for convening a 47-nation summit (Iran, North Korea and Syria were not invited) to tackle the nuclear terrorism threat, there has also been criticism that since the summit's declaration about securing weapons-usable nuclear material within four years is non-binding, it is, accordingly, of limited effectiveness.

The challenge for the United States and the international community is immense. As the *Globe and Mail*'s Konrad Yakabuski wrote from Washington (April 14): "Indeed, Mr. Obama has so far made no progress in containing the biggest non-terror-related atomic threats – nuclear buildup in India and Pakistan, the prospect of nuclear-capable Iran and an obdurate North Korea. Mr. Obama talked tough [April 13] on pursuing sanctions against Iran, but in the same breath acknowledged that China's dependence on Iranian oil is still an obstacle to getting a UN Security Council resolution with any teeth."

A rare instance of sustained attention on Israel at this time was Patrick Martin's April 13 article, "Universal assumption is that Israel has nuclear weapons," filed from Jerusalem. Martin wrote that Netanyahu's decision not to attend the Washington conference drew attention to the "question of Israel's alleged nuclear arsenal."

Martin's own question, "Does Israel have nuclear weapons?" appears to be rhetorical since, as he noted, despite Israel's policy of ambiguity (neither affirming nor denying having an arsenal), "it is universally assumed that Israel does, in fact, have nuclear weapons." So there's nothing new in mentioning this long-assumed "open secret."

More controversially, Martin wrote that "Ironically, the universal assumption that Israel possesses nuclear weapons may have contributed to Iran's desire to also possess the bomb." The phrase "may have contributed" has its own ambiguity, as it leaves open the possibility that it may not have contributed.

In fact, the evidence is overwhelming that Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons was motivated by factors unconnected to Israel's program – namely, Tehran's pursuit of regional hegemony (which is as much a threat to Sunni-dominated Arab states as it is to Israel, a country Iran has repeatedly threatened to destroy).

The prospect that Iran could soon develop nuclear weapons and place nuclear material in the hands of terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah is what keeps people, including many Arabs, awake at night.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Rabbi Avraham Feder, Rabbi Emeritus and Senior Scholar of Beth Tikvah Synagogue, will once again lead us in two inspiring emeritus lectures, Thursday, April 29th and Thursday, May 6th as well as an evening of song on Monday, May 3rd.

This is one of the most popular events at Beth Tikvah, so mark these dates in your calendars and come early!

1. **Thursday, April 29th at 8:00 p.m.**
   "Israel 2010: Tensions, Trials, and Triumphs"
   A discussion of Israel's trials and achievements in the social, economic, cultural and religious spheres against the background of ongoing tensions on the regional and international scene.
   Leona Feder Memorial Lecture
2. **Monday, May 3rd at 8:00 p.m.**
   "Rabbi Feder's Personal Musical Tribute to Theodore Herzl"
   On the occasion of the father of modern Zionism's 150th birthday a concert of Hebrew, Yiddish and English favourites.
3. **Thursday, May 6th at 8:00 p.m.**
   "Worship as Drama"
   A consideration of the interface of words, music, and theatre in the experience of Jewish public prayer.

Cost: $10 for each lecture/concert; $25 for all 3
The Community is invited to attend; doors open at 7:30 p.m.
RSVP to the Synagogue Office 416-221-3433

Beth Tikvah Synagogue, 3080 Bayview Avenue, Toronto, 416-221-3433

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
Youth Shabbat Service Leader

The Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue Youth Department is currently looking for a youthful, responsible, engaging, and dedicated individual to fill the position of Youth Shabbat Service Leader. This position entails preparing, executing, and leading Shabbat Morning Services and lessons surrounding Jewish themes for youth ages 8-14 years. The candidate must be experienced and have great knowledge in Torah, leading religious services, age-appropriate activities, and a strong Jewish identity and Jewish education background. Training for position will take place this Spring, position officially starts fall 2010. Candidate must be at least 18 years of age. If interested, please send your resume to Lauren Cohn, Youth Programme Director, Lauren@beby.org, 416.633.3838 x 229. Please submit all resumes via email by May 30, 2010.

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue 100 Elder Street Toronto ON M3H 5G7 416.633.3838 www.beby.org

Students learn Jewish leadership in school

Continued from page 3

"We have probably one of the most pro-Israel governments in the history of Canada right now," he said. "Hopefully, they will use their good reputation and good standing within the Jewish community to try to broker a deal or get more involved."

Additionally, many of the students involved currently take a Torah High class about Jewish leadership, so it's also important for them to see their work make a difference, he said.

In the past, he said, students have sent petitions to the offices of MPs or the prime minister, with each petition also having about 250 signatures. However, having the petition go through Parliament makes it a lot more public, he said.

He said he hopes this experience inspires students to get involved in Israel advocacy.

"We're teaching them about activism before they even reach university, which is where it really starts," he said, adding that many Torah High alumni are involved in Israel advocacy groups on campuses.

Aaron Miller, a Grade 10 student enrolled in a Torah High class, said he got involved with the petition because he's a big believer in Israel. Although they have presented the petition to Parliament, the teens will continue to raise awareness in every possible way, he said.

"To have a soldier that's kidnapped just doesn't seem right to me, and I think that we should do everything we can to try to get him back," he said.

Although this isn't the first petition of its kind, Poilievre emphasized the importance of persistence.

"Any time you highlight an injustice, you move towards resolving it, and we have to continue to raise our voices so that this is not forgotten," he said.

Israeli author to visit

Compiled by CJN Staff

OTTAWA — Israeli author Amir Gutfreund will speak at the Ottawa Writers Festival on April 25.

Gutfreund wrote his breakthrough novel, *Our Holocaust*, in 2001, based on his own experiences growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors. He will be introducing his new book, *The World A Moment Later*.

In an interview Gutfreund told the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*: "Even if I write an instruction manual for a washing machine, it will always contain humour, and it will always contain the Holocaust. It's a part of me."

He also said that although he is proud, it's not easy to be an Israeli Jew. "What a burden it is to be born both Jewish and Israeli. It's like carrying five watermelons on your back all your life."

The World A Moment Later is the story of a European Jewish journalist who is sent to Palestine in 1918 to report about the lives of the Jewish pioneers. He has no intention of joining them, but is forced to remain when his newspaper is embezzled by its editor. The book is a tribute to the countless forgotten people who were among Israel's founders. Gutfreund will speak at the Lord Elgin Hotel, 100 Elgin St. at 10 a.m. and at the Mayfair Theatre, 1074 Bank St., at 4 p.m.

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E: fwoznica@tanenbaumchat.org
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Israeli students win humanitarian meet

Compiled by CJN Staff

An Israeli team from the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya took first place at the 2010 edition of the Jean-Pictet Competition on international humanitarian law held recently in Orford in the Eastern Townships.

The three Israelis beat out teams from 44 universities from 32 other countries.

The week-long competition, held March 20 to 27, is intended for students in relevant fields, such as law and political science, or attending military academies at the undergraduate level or above, and is now in its 22nd year.

It consists of simulating legal cases before a professional jury, which evaluates the teams' theoretical knowledge and practical understanding of international humanitarian law.

This year's competition was chaired by Philippe Kirsch, who until last year was a judge of the International Criminal Court in The Hague and its first president.

"For an Israeli team to win a competition in the field in which Israel is so often criticized is significant," the team's academic supervisor Daphné Richemond-Barak is quoted as saying in the *Jerusalem Post*. "The Jean-Pictet is the most prestigious competition in the field worldwide."

Teams role-played as foreign affairs officials, military advocates or Red Cross representatives. The Israelis' coach, Ido Rosenzweig, summarized international humanitarian law as, "Do the most damage to the enemy [while] minimizing harm to civilians," and Israel, he said, has much experience in the laws of war.

The Israelis' training included access to the highest government officials. The students were Jonathan Braverman, Danielle Brown and Uri Feldman.

Their final round was against New York University and the Université de Montréal.

The *Post* reported that, after winning, the Israeli team received a five-minute standing ovation from the other teams, including those from Iran, Lebanon and Jordan. For the closing ceremony, the team waved an Israeli flag.

April 30th & May 1st *Guest Scholar weekend at Beth Tzedec with pre-eminent synagogue historian and renowned teacher*

Professor Lee I. Levine

Judaism's Encounter with Hellenism: Between Compatibility and Conflict.
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Digging Bet Alpha: Exploring through Archaelogy and History One Community's Creation of a Synagogue *Friday, April 30th, Kabbalat Shabbat, 6:30 p.m.* Join us for a special evening of music, dinner and inspiring scholarship. Chazzan Simon Spiro leads a musical *Friday Night Live* Kabbalat Shabbat service before dinner and the lecture. *Prepaid reservations required for dinner.* Adults: $35; Children 4-13: $20. Please call 416-781-3511 to RSVP by Tuesday, April 27th. Visa & Mastercard accepted.

O Jerusalem! Its Emergence as the Holy City of the Jewish People *Lecture from the Pulpit, Shabbat, May 1st, Shacharit 8:45 a.m.*

The Triumph of Christianity under Constantine: Good or Bad for the Jews? *Lecture immediately following service, Shabbat, May 1st.*

Professor Levine is a Professor of Jewish History and Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is one of the seminal spiritual founders of Conservative Judaism in Israel. *Dr. Levine's visit is generously sponsored by The Louis & Moshe J. Weisfeld Annual Memorial Lecture Endowment.*

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Advertising Feature

Robbins Hebrew Academy Harnesses "Learning Power" to Produce Successful 21st Century Graduates

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In the past year alone, RHA, formerly United Synagogue Day School (USDS), has increased literacy levels, improved oral French skills and integrated school-wide critical thinking challenges every six weeks, in both General and Judaic Studies. These successes come on the heels of a $4 million endowment by Larry Robbins, ensuring the sustainability of the school for generations to come.

RHA, building on the strong foundations established by USDS, is pursuing a variety of initiatives to ensure its students are well positioned to succeed beyond its doors.

The first Jewish day school in Toronto to employ SMART Boards in each of its classrooms, RHA continues to embrace new technological innovations to actively engage students in the learning process. With the enthusiastic support of an active parent-body, RHA is poised to prepare its graduates for success in professions that may not even exist yet, using technologies that have not even been invented.

"We began with the portrait of a 21st Century Graduate, and then built the vision for the school with this end-result in mind," said Claire Sumerlus, Head of School at Robbins Hebrew Academy. "Developing and implementing critical thinking skills is just one example of what we have been doing to increase our students' "learning power". The ability to thoughtfully assess and determine the best course of action for a given situation is not just an academic skill; it is a fundamental life skill."

The RHA vision extends well beyond desks and chairs, encouraging social responsibility and mindful living. "Our role as educators," Ms. Sumerlus added, "is not just to teach our students math or language or history, but to prepare them for both the challenges and successes they will encounter throughout their lives — academically, professionally and personally."

United Synagogue Day School, which officially changed its name to the Miriam and Larry Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA) on Thursday, April 15th, 2010, was founded in 1961 and is a member of the Solomon Schechter Day School Association. RHA offers Nursery through grade 8 General and Judaic studies at its two campuses in the Greater Toronto Area. For information go to www.rhacademy.ca.

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NAOMI CHAZAN

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY

Israel's democracy has recently been challenged in areas such as gender equality, the delegitimization of human rights organizations, and the scope and composition of the Supreme Court. The New Israel Fund (NIF) has been deeply involved in these issues for more than 30 years, widely credited with building Israel's progressive civil society from scratch.

Professor Naomi Chazan, president of the NIF, has been personally attacked in the most recent controversial assaults on NIF and the NGOs it supports. Chazan is a former Israeli Knesset Deputy Speake, leading human rights activist and Professor Emerita of Political Science and African Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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Coast to Coast

Parizeau leaves Montreal's JGH

Compiled by CJN Staff

MONTREAL — Former Quebec premier Jacques Parizeau was discharged from Montreal's Jewish General Hospital (JGH) April 14 after a 10-day stay.

In a statement, the hospital said that Parizeau, 79, was in "good" medical condition, but requires several weeks of convalescence.

Throughout his confinement, the hospital has respected Parizeau and his family's request for privacy. JGH representatives did not give interviews, and asked hospital staff not to comment. The hospital, however, provided regular updates to the media.

Many saw irony in Parizeau's choice of hospital, given his remark on the night of the 1995 sovereignty referendum that the "yes" side lost because of "money and the ethnic vote."

Parizeau was admitted on April 5 reportedly after a drop in blood pressure. Within two days, his condition was described as stable and improving, and he was being kept under observation.

The Board, Administration, Staff and Students extend their profound sympathy and condolences to

Cecile Zaifman & Family

on the passing of

Zenia Zaifman z"l

May the family be spared further sorrows for many years to come.

Judy Engel, *President* — Paul Shaviv, *Director of Education*

Hillel of Greater Toronto

Notice to Members of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Hillel of Greater Toronto will take place on Wednesday, May 5, 2010 at 6:00pm at The Wolfond Centre for Jewish Campus Life
36 Harbord St., Toronto, M5S 1G2
416-913-2424

Members may vote by written proxy in accordance with the corporation by-laws.
By Order of the Board, Allan Weinbaum, Secretary April 14, 2010

The Annual General Meeting will be followed by **Hillel of Greater Toronto's 14th Annual Awards Night,** honouring exemplary Jewish Student Leadership on Campus

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דזשערי קעין

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פֿון דזשערי קעין

וען מען קוקט צוריק, איבער די וערטער פֿון די געלערענטע–עקאָנאָמיסטן, פֿאַלימקער, רבֿים, און קבצנים— וואָס האָבן פֿראָבירט ברעגנען שכל, געבן אַ פֿאָרוואָס צו דעם עקאָנאָמישן פּסיעד וואָס האָט שיער ניט פֿאַרטרעגן די וועלט— פֿאַרשטייען מיר אַז זיי האָבן נישט געלייענט די בריוו צווישן מנחם מענדל און שיינע שיינדל. ווי איר וייסט, טיפֿערע ליינער, האָט זיך מנחם מענדל שיער ניט דערשטיקט אויף דער אַדעסער בערזע. ער האָט, ווי היינטיקע פּינאַנציעלע מאַכערס, געמיינט אַז ער איז אַן עקספּערט אין אַלע פּינאַנציעלע ענינים. אָבער, ווי מיט די היינטיקע עקספּערטן, האָט די בערזע אים געגעבן אַ כאַפּ בימס גאָרגל אַז אין ניכן אויסגעריניקט זינען קעשענעס.

נו, פֿאָרוואָס דערמאָן איך דאָס? שרשטענס וועל שלום עליכם, דער עכטער, פּינאַנציעלער שליימל, האָט פֿאַרלאָרן אַ מאָנאָטיק אויף דער קישוער בערזע. ער וויזט אָבער, דורך מנחם מענדל, וואָס ער אַליין האָט נישט אַזוי גיך פֿאַרשטאַנען. אויף דער בערזע קען מען גיכער פֿאַרלירן געלט ווי מאַכן געלט.

מנחם מנדל שרייבט צו שיינע שיינדלען:

זי וויסן, אַז דאָס "אולטימאַ" איז אָבגענומען, און ס'איז געווארן אַן איבערקערעניש, זאָל מאָס שומר ומציל זיין! פֿון דער גרויסער "וואַריאַציע" וואָס איך האָב אויף איר אַריינגעקוקט ווי אויף משיחן, האָט זיך צוגעקילט, באַקומען דעם קאַטער — איז אין דער פּאָליטיק געווארן אַ מהומה, מע וויסט ניט וואָס סע טוט זיך. "לאַנדאַן" איז טאַקי געווארן מיט גאָלד גלידן, און דאָס קערבעל איז טאַקי געפֿאַלן אין שאול תחתיה אַרײַן, און ס'איז אויטן אַ מוראדיגער "בעס"! ועטס דו דאָך פֿרעגן: וואָס זענען מיטנע "בעסען" מיט מיטנע "סטאָלאָזשען"? איז דער תירוץ: די "בעסען" זענען ניט קיין "בעסען", די "סטאָלאָזשען" זענען ניט קיין "סטאָלאָזשען", קיינער ווייל ניט נעמען, קיינער ווייל ניט געבן – און רוף מיר קבאַקניסל! אָן ווי אויף־צו־להכעיס, האָב איך געשטעקט מיט מײַן שחורה אלץ בי אַזעלכע מענטשעלעך, וואָס מיט איין קוועטש זענען זיי דערשטיקט געווארן....ס'איז ביסער אַן פּינצטער, איך האָב אַוועקגעבען דאָס גאַנצע פֿאַרזעצט...אָפֿילו די קאַפּאָטע, די שבתדיגע אויסגעטאָן אַן פֿאַרזעצט – אַן דאָס איז אַלצדינג אריין אַהין...אָן איך געפֿין זיך איצט אין אַזאַ סרדיריקער לאָגע, וואָס איז אין לשער, אַן אַהיים בעזק איך...

שיינע שיינדל ענטפֿערט:

למען השם, באַלד ווי דו ווענסט באַקומען מײַן בריוו מיט'ן געלט, זאָלסט דו זיך אויפֿזעצען אַן אָפּגעזעגענען זיך מיט אַדעס, אַן ווי באַלד דו ווענסט נאָר אַרויספֿאָרען פֿון שטאָט, אַזוי זאָל עס זיך אָנצינדען אין אַלע פּיר זינטען, אַן עס זאָל ברענען אַן פֿלאַקערן, שרפֿהגען אַן פֿאַרשרפֿהט ווערן, ס'זאָל פֿון דעם ניט בלײַבען קיין שריד ופֿליט. ווי עס ווינטשט דיר פֿון טיפֿען האַרצען דײַן באַמת געטרײַע שיינע־שיינדל.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט געדאַנקען ווען אַנדזער ווינקל לאָזט וויסן. שרײַבט מיר אויף מײַן אַדרעס, דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליץ-פּאָסט: info@cjnews.com

Na'amat's Club Masada celebrates 65 years

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Hannah Freedman has been a Zionist since birth, which is why she helped found Club Masada 65 years ago.

The club, which celebrated its 65th anniversary last week, is part of Na'amat Canada, an organization that raises money for social services that support women and children in Israel.

Masada members, most of whom are more than 60 years old, started Adopt-a-Child, a program that financially supports day cares in Israel, as well as Dollars for David, a Chanukah fundraiser that collects money for needy children in Israel.

"I was a Zionist, raising money for Israel, long before it became [popular]," Freedman said, adding that her mother was part of the Pioneer Women, a Zionist organization that later turned into Na'amat Canada.

For Freedman, supporting a Jewish state was natural.

"As far as I was concerned, it would be an insult to my mother [not to]."

Club Masada originally started with 12 members. They ran fashion shows, teas, garage sales and movie nights, all to raise money to support a Jewish state. Now, 65 years later, the group has more than 50 members.

"Everybody was very enthusiastic and they still are. They're a lot of old ladies, and they're doing marvellous work," Freedman said.

Pamela Goldfarb, a Na'amat Canada Toronto member and chair of Adopt-a-Child, agrees.

"They're one of the older groups, but they have done so much," she said at the banquet in Club Masada's honour, held April 14 at Beth David Bnai Israel Beth Am Synagogue. The banquet, which had about 180 guests, raised $50,000 for Adopt-a-Child.

"[Club Masada] started as a group before Israel was a country. They had such remarkable vision and belief," Goldfarb added. "They inspire everyone else, and they really mentor them."

For Tillie Margolis, Club Masada's president, the group is about more than just fundraising. It's about building bonds.

"We have so many members, we have meetings every two weeks. We keep in touch – if a member doesn't come, we call them," she said.

"It gives you a feeling of closeness. If there's a death in the family, everyone visits. We've known each other for a long time."

Margolis joined Club Masada 60 years ago, soon after getting married.

"[They] said, 'You must join.' It snowballed from there," she said. "This is a wonderful thing, having reached this point."

Lorraine Levene, executive director of Toronto's Na'amat Canada chapter, looks up to Club Masada members.

"They're our largest group. They raise the most money. Their belief is you have to give before you ask to give," she said. "There is not a member in their group that does not give something. In their hearts, they feel they have to help."

Tillie Margolis, Club Masada's president, celebrated the club's 65th anniversary last week at Beth David Bnai Israel Beth Am Synagogue.

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Who's at fault in the case of a delinquent kid?

Family Matters

by

John Syrtash

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Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 28 years

Question: My child only attends school when she feels like it, and that's not very often. She is currently 16 going on 17, and lives with her boyfriend most of the time. Am I still obligated to pay child support to the custodial parent?

Answer: If you can prove that she lives with her boyfriend most of the time and is delinquent in school you may be able to persuade a judge to stop child support. But demonstrating that a child is no longer within parental control and has dropped out of school is far more difficult than it sounds. What does "only attends school when she feels like it" really mean? How many courses is she taking? Is she registered as a full-time or part-time student? Is she passing each course or failing?

It may be that she is a poor student who is registered for full time courses but hasn't exactly failed. It may also be that she spends two or three nights a week with her boyfriend and the rest of the week with her mother. Everything depends on the extent of her independence from her mom and just how often she misses school.

My question to you, sir, is how did it happen that a 16 year old girl is finding comfort in a sexual relationship so early in life and is so often absent from school? And what did you do to contribute to this state of affairs? Rather than worry about how quickly you can shave a few bucks off your child support, are you perhaps asking the wrong question? What are you doing to help your daughter? How often have you spoken to the school teachers or principal about getting her help? What can you do to re-establish the relationship that appears to have gone sour?

Fatherless children turn into young adults who often become troubled parents themselves, leading to fatter wallets for divorce lawyers like me. No doubt there is more than one parent or the child to blame, but heaven help us if we don't start asking the right questions.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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Warm hugs greet Reena clients at Beth Torah Congregation

By CYNTHIA GASNER
Special to The CJN

Saturday has become the favourite day of the week for Reena clients and staff who live at 40 Elway Court, says Sarah Boyd, a Reena support worker.

"We dress up and attend Shabbat services at Beth Torah Congregation," Boyd said.

Reena is an agency that supports people with developmental disabilities.

"In a society where our population is often greeted with trepidation, and sometimes even disdain, the congregation at Beth Torah has quite literally opened its arms and embraced us into their midst," Boyd said.

"Beth Torah Congregation lives and breathes integration, tolerance and compassion."

Boyd said that when the group arrives at the synagogue, located at 47 Glenbrook Ave., they are warmly greeted and guided to their seats. Clients have been invited up to read and participate in returning the Torah scroll to the ark.

Beth Torah's Purim Carnival

She noted their excitement and said that "the participants talk about it for days afterwards."

Beth Torah's spiritual leader, Rabbi Yossi Sapirman, preaches tolerance, compassion and good judgment, she said. "This is reflected in the synagogue's open-door policy toward our clients."

Referring to his shul's recently completed building campaign and renovation, Rabbi Sapirman told *The CJN*, "We are a welcoming community, and the congregants of Beth Torah recognize that 'Completing the Dream' did only happen when all were included and our remarkable new facility was accessible to all."

Boyd said that she also gets something from the experience.

"Even though I'm not Jewish, I always come away with a nugget of spiritual wisdom from Rabbi Sapirman's sermons, which are finely crafted and often very humourous," she said.

At the end of the service, Cantor David Young invites several of the Reena clients up to the reading platform to sing with him and the choir.

She said Reena client Sharon Abramowitz has been known to wave her arms in the air and conduct the choir and the rest of the congregation in the songs at the end of the Shabbat services.

Boyd added that Abramowitz "literally beams with joy as she sings *Ya'aseh Shalom*."

And at the conclusion of the service, the group is invited upstairs for a delicious and healthy Kiddush lunch. "This gives our clients a chance to socialize with the members of the congregation, some of whom greet them with familiar hellos and warm hugs," Boyd said.

"The clients love attending the services and love the singing and the music. They look forward to each Shabbat."

The Reena clients are also welcomed to other Beth Torah events.

"We particularly enjoyed the Purim carnival, where they participated in the games and enjoyed the refreshments," Boyd said.

Last year, Reena clients joined a group from Beth Torah on UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's Walk for Israel.

On April 22, the shul will receive a Community Inclusion Award of Excellence from Itanu Toronto, federation's "Inclusion Initiative," whose mission is "a more inclusive Jewish community where people with special needs are able to fully participate in educational, spiritual, communal, social and recreational activities."

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SHOAH STUDIES: Elizabeth and Tony Comper recently addressed Bialik Hebrew Day School's Grade 8 students as part of their Holocaust studies. The session focused on the "Choose Your Own Voice" component of the FAST (Fighting Antisemitism Together) program that the Compers founded. Grade 8 student Eden Shaul presented the Compers with flowers in thanks. Also pictured is Nicole Miller, FAST's national program manager.

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'We won't stop working to bring home Gilad'

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JERUSALEM — Israel will continue its efforts to bring home abducted Israel Defence Forces soldier Gilad Schalit, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday at a Memorial Day ceremony in Jerusalem dedicated to the victims of terror attacks.

"We won't stop taking action to bring Gilad Schalit home," said Netanyahu, who also took the opportunity to call on Schalit's captors to release him.

Schalit was captured by Hamas in a 2006 cross-border raid and believed to be held in Gaza.

Netanyahu addressed the families of terror victims, saying, "We commemorate the memory of thousands of terror victims murdered in attacks against Israel.

"The only sin committed by these victims, was that they lived in Israel, or visited Israel. But [the attackers] weren't sticklers – they killed Israelis outside of Israel, too. The murderers slaughtered them only because of their identity."

The prime minister added that Israel will extend its hands to "anyone who wishes to live with us in peace, but those who wish us ill, and those who kill our children, we will pursue everywhere and exact revenge for their hatred and their crimes."

A woman places a stone at the grave of a fallen soldier. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

In this comment, Netanyahu echoed sentiments he uttered several hours earlier at the national Memorial Day ceremony at the Mount Herzl cemetery, during which he had said, "We are a peace-seeking nation who prays for peace."

The prime minister addressed Israel's efforts to achieve peace with its neighbours, saying that "our one hand is extended in offering peace to our willing neighbours, while the other wields a sword to protect ourselves against from those who seek to destroy us.

"On this day, the entire nation is embracing the mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, the sons, daughters and wives of the great big bereaved family," Netanyahu said.

"Our loss is greater than we can bear," he added. "Our only comfort is to continue our loved ones' path and to keep their memory alive."

Netanyahu, who lost his own brother, Yoni, in a military operation to free airline hostages in Uganda in 1976, addressed the bereaved families in attendance saying "my brothers and sisters, members of bereaved families, every family has its own way of dealing with the loss. I remember once when I saw my mother sitting in an armchair in the living room of my parents' house staring off into the distance when suddenly a smile passed over her face. I asked her, 'What are you thinking about?' and she said 'I'm thinking about Yoni. I have only good memories.'"

Israelis across the country stood in silence for two minutes on Monday morning to remember the 22,684 soldiers and civilians who were killed in Israel's wars and terror attacks since the beginning of modern Zionism up until today.

Following the two-minute siren at 11 a.m., Memorial Day ceremonies began in military cemeteries across the nation. Some 1.5 million visitors were expected to attend the various ceremonies Monday.

On Sunday, Netanyahu addressed a ceremony for Israel's Memorial Day at Jerusalem's Ammunition Hill, saying that Israel has learned that peace can only be achieved if it remains strong and prepared to defend itself.

"Over the years, we have learned that the olive branch of peace will be achieved only if we remain strong, only if we are prepared to defend ourselves in the same way our fallen soldiers did at this site," he told the crowd. "They attacked from this site and other hills not out of lust for war, but out of belief in the righteousness of the goal of defending the Jewish people's one and only country."

Netanyahu also stressed the importance of Jerusalem, saying, "Twice we have paid a heavy price to relieve the siege on Jerusalem – the first time during the War of Independence, and the second time when the city was bombarded during the Six Day War. Jerusalem – which was then a withered, divided city – has returned to being a city full of life."

Since those wars, he added, not a day has passed when Israel did not extend its hand in peace to its neighbours, "and our hand is still outstretched."

At 8 p.m. Sunday night, Israel fell silent for one minute as sirens wailed across the country to mark the start of Memorial Day. President Shimon Peres then lit a memorial flame at the official ceremony at the Western Wall plaza in Jerusalem and addressed Israel's bereaved families, saying that Israel seeks peace, but will defend itself in case of war.

"On this blessed occasion, I want to say in the name of the state of Israel at large: We do not seek war," Peres told the families. "We are a nation that yearns for peace, but knows, and will always know, how to defend itself."

Nothing, he told the families, can compensate for the loss of a loved one. "I am aware that nothing can compensate for the sound of your son's steps, which you expect to hear on the staircase, but have suddenly gone silent," Peres said. "Facing your tormented eyes, I am at a loss for words."

However, he added, "Israel's strength springs from the strength of its faith, and its greatness emanates from the heroism of its sons. Today we grieve for their loss and are blessed by their legacy."

Noting that Israel still faces threats, he warned those who seek to harm it not to "belittle our capabilities."

"There are still those who wish to annihilate us," Peres said. "At their head is the autocratic Iranian regime that seeks to impose its rule on the Middle East, silence it with lethal weapons and launch an anti-Israel incitement campaign to deflect Arab fears."

Though alone among the nations, he continued, "we had the good fortune to have sons that defended us with great courage. Alone we won seven wars and emerged from them stronger and more determined.

"We are a democratic country, with many divisions and chasms, internal disagreements and wrangling, yet we are also a nation that knows how to stand united and put aside the bickering in times of need, to defend itself and inflict a resounding defeat on those who wish to destroy us."

He ended by thanking all those who have defended Israel and their families. "We want to express our gratitude, from the bottom of our hearts, to the youths who are no more, whom you raised and in whom you instilled the values that made them what they were until their last breath," he said. "It is their courage that gave our people the strength to face the challenges ahead – not to fear the enemy, not to cease building, not to lose faith in the peace to come. And it will come."

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March of the Living arrives in Israel

Canadian students, seen above left with some young Israeli soldiers accompanying them, were in Israel on the second leg of the March of the Living last week. They attended various activities on Mount Arbel, lower left, and Masada, above. The first leg of the March was in Poland. For more photos of the Canadians on the March of the Living, please go to our website, www.cjnews.com.

[Photos by Monique De St. Croix]

'Don't push Israel into corner,' former Israeli minister warns

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

"We're talking about spilling a drop of ink and not a drop of blood," former Israeli deputy defence minister Ephraim Sneh said last week in advocating immediate sanctions when asked what needs to be done to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power.

Sneh was speaking on an April 12 conference call hosted by The Israel Project (TIP), a Washington, D.C.-based, non-profit think-tank and pro-Israel advocacy group.

The call took place on Yom Hazikaron and during last week's U.S.-hosted nuclear security summit in Washington. The summit's goal was to discuss and fast-track international sanctions against countries who threaten nuclear terrorism, particularly Iran.

Sneh, a former Labor MK and current head of the Israel Hazaka party, cautioned his listeners – composed chiefly of U.S. media – that stringent, hard-hitting, U.S.-led economic sanctions must be implemented right away in order to deter Iran's nuclear ambitions and foment a brewing internal revolution that would likely depose the dictatorial Iranian regime.

Barring these actions, Sneh said, Israel would have to consider taking action against Iran before it became an "unacceptable" existential threat to the Jewish state.

Ephraim Sneh

This will happen sooner than later, he added.

"The main lesson of the Holocaust is that we cannot ignore the combination of a regime with an ideology of hatred combined with a colossal military build-up. This is what happened in Germany with Hitler, and what is going on now with [Iranian President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad," he said.

"Israel is a country that cannot live even one day under the shadow of an Iranian nuclear bomb, because a reality will be created that Israel will no longer serve as a safe haven to Jews and as a state with excellence of entrepreneurship. We will suffer a brain drain."

He said Iran continues to build centrifuges that will allow it to have enough highly enriched uranium to create a bomb.

"If something is [not] done soon to stop Iran's [nuclear enrichment program] or to topple its regime, [Israel] will be compelled to do something. This is the main thing I would like the people of the U.S. to understand," said Sneh, a physician who has served as Israel's minister of health and as minister of transportation.

Asked whether he thought the U.S. would impose harsh sanctions in time, Sneh said "this is the big question." He said America has the legislation ready and could do something if the political will was there.

"It's a matter of understanding there is no more time to waste. Iran's centrifuges keep spinning," he said. "There is no change in [Israel's] attitude that Iran is close to reaching the point of no return."

In his talk, Sneh said Iran may produce enough fissile material for a nuclear bomb by September.

Speaking about the threat of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah – both supported by Iran – Sneh said these organizations would become emboldened in their activities if Iran became a nuclear power.

He said the current Iranian regime is based on a "visceral hatred not only of Israel" but of all democratic societies.

Sneh said he doesn't consider a military attack on Iran to be a first option. "It's the last resort. We need to avoid this. We can take sanctions that are cheap and bloodless.

"If companies all over the world knew that if they invest in the Iranian oil and gas industry, or sell refined petroleum products to Iran… that they would never again be able to do business in the U.S., the U.K., Australia, France or Canada, this is a threat that no sane executive in the world would take. By doing so, we may bring about the implosion of the Iranian regime. And let me be frank: the purpose of sanctions is not just to avoid Iranian nuclear bombs. It's to get rid of this horrible regime, which is cruel and brutal at home and spreading terrorism abroad."

In conclusion, Sneh said the West needs to appeal to all Middle Eastern countries who don't want to be "slaves to Iran's nuclear blackmail empire," such as Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states. He said as soon as "real" sanctions are declared by the United States, all these countries should also join the initiative.

But he warned that the world shouldn't "push Israel into a corner where we have no other option" but to act against Iran.

Western Wall invalidates ad

Continued from page 1

The authority banned the ad, telling the Israeli Government Tourist Office not to imply that places in the occupied territories were part of the State of Israel.

The Tourism Ministry responded that the present legal status of Jerusalem was irrelevant unless there was an unnecessary attempt to "interpret the straightforward message of the ad in a manner that went beyond what consumers were likely to understand from the ad."

Another tourism ad was banned last year following letters of complaint about a map in the ad that included the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip as part of Israel.

Campaign seeks N. American heirs to Shoah assets

BY ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff reporter

Israel has $250 million (US) in assets waiting to be claimed by North American heirs of Shoah victims.

That's according to an ad campaign launched last week in Canada and the United States by the Israeli-based Company for Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets.

The hopes to locate heirs to Israeli assets originally purchased by Jews who died in the Holocaust.

Ads calling on heirs to come forward are now running in Jewish newspapers in North America and on Jewish websites. It's believed that many of the investors or their descendants made their way to the United States and Canada after the war.

Speaking to *The CJN* from Israel last week, Jeremy Ruden, international spokesperson for the restitution program, said he hoped heirs in Canada and the United States will take advantage of this opportunity.

As of last week, his organization had received "very little" feedback from North Americans, though it was still early in the campaign, Ruden said.

About 55 per cent of the assets are in real estate, 20 per cent in bank accounts, another 20 per cent in shares and stocks and the rest in artwork and valuables, he said.

A plot of land in central Israel, an example of unclaimed real estate in Israel.

[Photo courtesy of Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets]

"We want people to come to our website and hopefully make a claim," Ruden said.

Although it's unclear how long this new North American campaign will continue, Ruden said that any money or assets left unclaimed "in the long term" will eventually go to survivors and to Holocaust education programs in Israel.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, hundreds of European Jews invested in what was then Palestine. Following World War II, many of the assets were never claimed. Included in these assets are untouched plots of land, unclaimed bank accounts and shares from the Jewish Colonial Trust – the parent company of the Anglo Palestine Bank which later became Bank Leumi – as well as other Israeli financial institutions.

The Restitution of Holocaust Victims' Assets – the Israel-based organization that launched the campaign – has compiled lists of these assets and is working to make the process of returning the belongings to their beneficiaries as easy as possible.

Set up by the State of Israel, the organization was established in 2006 to provide historical justice to the victims of the Holocaust and reinstate the assets with their legal heirs. Its establishment followed criticism of Israel for not doing enough to find the rightful heirs of Israeli assets. There are currently some 55,000 unclaimed assets on the organization's list.

Its website, Hashava.org.il/eng, contains additional information on submitting an application to request restitution of an asset on the list.

It also provides a user-friendly search feature for family name input.

With files from JTA

Goldstone barred from grandson's bar mitzvah

JTA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa – South African judge Richard Goldstone is being barred from attending his grandson' s bar mitzvah.

Following negotiations between the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol in Sandton, an affluent suburb of Johannesburg where the event is due to take place, an agreement has been reached with the family. As a result, Goldstone will not be attending the synagogue service, scheduled for early next month.

Goldstone was the head of a United Nations-appointed commission that investigated last winter's Gaza war. The commission's final report accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes and said there may be evidence of crimes against humanity.

Richard Goldstone

Some of the role-players were tight-lipped when contacted by JTA, with Avrom Krengel, chairman of the SAZF, saying: "We understand that there's a bar mitzvah boy involved – we're very sensitive to the issues and at this stage there's nothing further to say."

Jewish groups had planned to organize a protest outside of the synagogue if Goldstone was in attendance, according to reports.

Reached in Washington where he is currently based, Goldstone was reluctant to comment save to say: "In the interests of my grandson, I've decided not to attend the ceremony at the synagogue."

Retired chief justice of South Africa Arthur Chaskalson said it was "disgraceful" to put pressure on a grandfather not to attend his grandson's bar mitzvah. "If it is correct that this has the blessing of the leadership of the Jewish community in South Africa, it reflects on them rather than Judge Goldstone. They should hang their heads in shame."

South Africa's Jewish umbrella body also criticized the decision to pressure Goldstone into not attending his grandson's bar mitzvah.

"The South African Jewish Board of Deputies… deeply regrets that a religious milestone has been politicized and disagrees with the manner in which this matter has been handled," a statement from the country's umbrella body said in a statement titled "In response to pressure resulting in Judge Richard Goldstone not attending his grandson's bar mitzvah.

"This position is in no way a comment on the merits or demerits of the Goldstone Commission and its subsequent report," the Board of Deputies said.

Israel Briefs

Peres criticizes Syria, Iran

Israeli President Shimon Peres criticized Syria and Iran during a visit to Paris. At a meeting April 12 with Prime Minister Francois Fillon, Peres said that "Syria continues its doublespeak. On the one hand it speaks about peace, and on the other hand it passes sophisticated Scud missiles to Hezbollah that threaten Israel. The transfer of arms from Syria to Hezbollah and Syria's support of terrorist organizations does not square with its declarations of seeking peace." On Iran, Peres said that "As Jews who experienced the Holocaust, the people of Israel cannot remain indifferent to Iran's desire to develop nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons in the hands of a fascist government like Iran present a tangible threat to global peace. If Hitler had nuclear weapons, we would not sit here today." Peres and Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe inaugurated a new square near the Seine River, in the central part of the French capital, named the Ben-Gurion Esplanade.

Hezbollah coy on missiles

A Hezbollah government minister said April 16 that whether or not they have acquired Scud missiles is none of Israel's business. Hussein Haj Hassan said the group was always arming and preparing itself, but he refused to confirm or deny Israeli allegations that the militant Lebanese group has acquired Scud missiles. Earlier last week, Israeli president Shimon Peres accused Damascus of providing the Scud missiles, a charge Syria denied. The U.S. State Department responded April 14 by saying that if the allegations were true, they "would put Lebanon at a significant risk."

Olmert, now Lupolianski too

Former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert has denied that he was involved in a massive real estate scandal that has also led to the arrest of former Jerusalem mayor Uri Lupolianski. In a news conference last week, Olmert called police suspicion that he took a bribe, in what is being described as one of the worst corruption scandals in Israeli history, "a character assassination attempt that is unprecedented in its scope and might." Olmert was identified by police as the chief suspect in the Holyland project scandal. He's currently on trial in relation to other corruption charges. Lupolianski was arrested the same day in connection with the Holyland scandal. He's suspected of accepting $750,000 in bribes during the project's construction.

Hamas executes alleged spies

Hamas reportedly executed two Palestinians in Gaza convicted of collaborating with Israel. The men, convicted by a Gaza military court of treason for passing information to Israel, were executed April 15 by a firing squad. Reportedly, they are the first executions in Gaza since 2005, when Hamas took over the Strip, according to the Palestinian Ma'an news agency. Under Palestinian law, executions can only be carried out by authorization of the president. The executions, which were not approved by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, are a Hamas challenge to Abbas' authority, Reuters reported. Palestinian human rights groups in Gaza and the West Bank had appealed to Hamas not to carry out the executions.

Israeli allowed to visit Beirut

Israel's Supreme Court has given an Israeli-Arab writer permission to visit Beirut to attend an Arab writers' conference. Ala Halihal from the northern Israeli city of Akko appealed to Israel's Supreme Court after Interior Minister Eli Yishai refused to allow the trip. Asked by the court to respond to the petition, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he also opposed the visit. It's illegal for Israeli citizens to visit Lebanon, which is considered an enemy state.

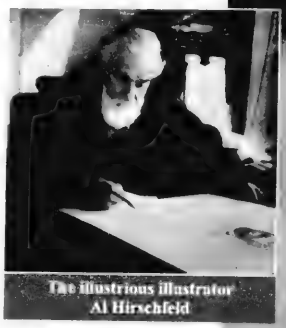
Arts & Travel

Documentary examines Hollywood family dynasty

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Thanks to the generally first-rate films at this year's Toronto Jewish Film Festival, movie buffs are in for a treat.

The Brothers Warner charts the rise and fall of a family dynasty in Hollywood. The four Warner brothers, Harry, Jack, Albert and Sam, founded and administered a studio whose gritty and socially relevant films ranged from *Casablanca* and *Rebel Without Cause* to *Giant* and *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. Cass Warner's intriguing documentary, based on archival footage and interviews, examines their lives and impact on American culture. She has a personal interest in the topic, having been Harry's granddaughter.



The illustrious illustrator Al Hirschfeld

The Warners – the sons of Russian Jewish immigrants who briefly lived in London, Ont. – were genuine pioneers. They made *The Jazz Singer*, the first talkie, in 1927. It was phenomenally successful, having been Hollywood's biggest moneymaker until *Gone With the Wind* in 1939. As she suggests, the Warners were fond of "message films." For example, *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* prompted prison reform in the United States, while *The Public Enemy* showed that crime does not pay.

On the eve of World War II, the Warners produced Hollywood's first explicitly anti-Nazi feature film, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, starring Edward G. Robinson. As well, the Warners were the first studio moguls to sever business relations with Hitler's Germany.

Under pressure from their father, the brothers worked together as a team. But the arrangement collapsed after Jack, in a stinking manoeuvre, took control and ousted his siblings. United they stood, divided they fell.

April 25 at 1:15 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre

***

Kaspar Heidelbach's fine German-language feature film, *Berlin '36*, focuses on the trials and tribulations of Gretel Bergmann, a world-class German Jewish high jumper who was cynically exploited by the Nazis to forestall a U.S. boycott of the summer Olympic Games in Berlin. Bowing to an American demand that at least one Jewish athlete should be permitted to compete on Germany's team, Germany recruited Bergmann for its track and field squad. Yet Germany never had any intention of using her, having found an athlete – a man disguised as a woman – to displace her at the last possible moment.

Karoline Herfurth plays the Jewish high jumper Gretel Bergmann in *Berlin '36*.

Bergmann, an exile in Britain, had no desire to compete for Germany. But when the Nazis threatened her family in Germany, she had no choice but to join the German team at its training camp. Her first coach was a decent fellow, but his successor was a Nazi. Bergmann was treated like a pariah by the second coach and some of the athletes.

Berlin '36 portrays these events in competent style. Karoline Herfurth – a luminous poster child for Aryan womanhood – plays Bergmann with poise and dignity. Hans Waldmann depicts Axel Prahl, the first coach sacked by the Nazis, with gravitas and sensitivity.

In a riveting afterward, the real Bergmann appears on screen. She says she was "forced into my situation," adding that her life would have been endangered had she been allowed to compete, win a gold medal and disprove the Nazi racial canard that Jews are inferior.

April 25 at 1 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas

***

Dirk Regel's feature film, *Oh, What a Mess*, is set in contemporary Germany and deals with such common-place issues as acculturation and mixed marriage. Who would have thought, 65 years after the Third Reich's ignominious defeat, that such issues would arise in Germany? But given the growth of Germany's resurrected Jewish community since the fall of communism, no one should really be surprised that a German film director has chosen this topic.

The film, a comedy, turns on Jil, a single, 20-something Jewish tax consultant who falls in love with Mark, a German evangelical Christian and landscape architect. Since her father is opposed to interfaith unions, Jil asks her boyfriend to pretend to be Jewish. He agrees and acquits himself quite well. But after Mark's cover is blown, all hell breaks loose, and he and Jil must decide whether they will continue to be a couple. *Oh, What a Mess*, though schmaltzy, manages to provide viewers with what may be an inside picture of modern Jewish life in Germany.

April 22 at 4:30 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas

***

The Line King: The Al Hirschfeld Story, by Susan Warms Dryfoos, is a portrait of a famed caricaturist whose simple yet revealing drawings graced the pages of the *New York Times*' Sunday arts section for several decades and usually won him the admiration of his subjects.

Hirschfeld, raised in a Russian-Jewish immigrant household and influenced by Asian line drawings and the British caricaturist Max Beerbohm, forged his stellar reputation on Broadway. After attending a preview or a dress rehearsal of a play, he would repair to his studio, seat himself in an old barber's chair and finish the drawing.

With a single scribble of his pen, he could draw out character, personality and mood, producing seemingly effortless, lighter-than-air caricatures. "He made people interesting, not beautiful," says an observer.

Hirschfeld, though starting out as a sculptor and proficient in watercolours and oils, preferred line drawings to anything else. That was his forte.

This film, released about seven years before his death in 2003 at the ripe old age of 100, traces the arc of his illustrious career and his marriage to the German actor Dolly Haas, who was his muse for half a century.

April 23 at 4 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre

***

The Loners, by Renen Schorr, unfolds mainly in an Israeli military prison. Two Soviet immigrants serving in the Israeli army, Sasha and Glori, have been accused of treason, charged with selling munitions and weapons to Hamas. The accusation is particularly shocking to Sasha, since he has just been accepted to officers' training school. Certain he will be brutalized as a traitor by his fellow inmates, Sasha asks for a retrial, but his request is ignored. In desperation, he and Glori, his friend, stage a revolt. Regrettably, *The Loners* is more monotonous than exciting.

April at 5:30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema and April 24 at 9:15 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre Cinemas

***

Israel Ltd, directed by Mor Loushy, follows several North American teenagers as they partake in The Israel Experience, a month-long youth program. The teens get tours of former battlefields and a Druze village and are taken to a disco and the Western Wall. They are also given history and shooting lessons, and exposed to a moving story of a soldier who lost his limbs in battle. On their final day in Israel, they are urged to become ambassadors for the Jewish state.

The guides, in the main, present a militarized and rather skewed picture of Israel. The teens are alternatively bored and moved by their experiences.

April 23 at 2:15 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre

Play explores sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll and the Holocaust

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Jake Ehrenreich always wanted to be a real American.

He excelled at stickball, played the drums, listened to Christmas music and spoke Yiddish – which is what always gave him away.

Ehrenreich, who wrote and performs in the one-man play *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, is the son of Holocaust survivors. Born in the United States, he spent years fighting his culture. Now, he's fighting to give it a voice.

"The story of Holocaust survivors has been told. I said, 'One day, I'm going to tell this story from my perspective,'" said Ehrenreich, who will be performing his play in Toronto at the Panasonic Theatre from April 28 to May 16.

"The story didn't end. These people had children."

Ehrenreich's play delves into his immigrant experience, which includes his father's Holocaust testimony, his sisters' and mother's battle with early onset Alzheimer's and his desperate need to fit in with American culture.

It's also a musical comedy.

"Judaism has a wonderful tradition of the circle of life. There's a time for mourning and a time to end mourning," he said. "When you get people to laugh, they become more emotionally attainable… when people laugh with you, they trust you."

When writing the play, Ehrenreich, a musician and actor in his early 50s, was careful to keep a balance between light and dark. He never laughed at anyone, he laughed with them.

"My great-aunt, she looked like Yoda. Did I love her? Of course," he said, adding that he'll never forget her response when asked her age for a medical form.

"She said, 'A woman can't tell her age.' I felt like saying, 'Your age? I can't tell your gender.' That's an important part of where the laughter comes from. It's laughing at ourselves."

For Ehrenreich, the jokes were the easy part.

"The most challenging parts were always the most personal," he said.

Jake Ehrenreich

This includes talking about his family's experience in the Holocaust.

"[My great-aunt] said, 'All you need to know is the best of us didn't survive.' [Survivors] lived with a tremendous amount of guilt," he said.

Along with comedy and multimedia displays, such as his father's Holocaust testimony, Ehrenreich tells his story through music, using both Yiddish and rock songs.

"Music to me is really a way I relate to the world," he said.

"I play instruments in the show… I'm so surprised how people relate to the drum solo. Drums are extremely elementary and people go crazy. The applause you get is different than everything else."

About a year and a half ago, Ehrenreich was asked by Health Communications Inc., the company that publishes the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, to turn his play into a book of the same name as the play.

"The book was the biggest surprise of my life. I thought it would be a snap, but it was an arduous undertaking," he said.

In the book, he discusses parts of his life that were left out of the play, including his extensive drug use, which caught up with him in his late 20s during a gig at the Red Parrot Nightclub in New York.

"I had done so much blow that my heart felt like it was exploding out of my chest, and I actually felt like I could die right then and there," he wrote.

Ehrenreich was also able to go into detail about what he calls his womanizing (he lost his virginity at 15) and the life lessons that he learned, like taking responsibility for his mistakes.

"I wanted to maintain that same balance of humour and life lessons," he said.

Ehrenreich attributes some of the play's success to the fact that his story is universal.

"It's a very traditional Jewish story, but I've been told that [I] can be speaking Korean," he said. "The journey we all share is one that deals with loss and fear and laughter and who we are. I wanted to be an American. It took me a long time to realize, 'Why can't I be both?'"

For tickets to *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, visit www.mirvish.com.

New perspective on Gershwin

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

The music of Broadway legend George Gershwin comes alive at the Winter Garden Theatre in Toronto when *The Soul of Gershwin, the Musical Journey of An American Klezmer* opens on May 1.

The theatrical concert was created and written by Joseph Vass, the show's musical director and pianist, and the guiding spirit behind American klezmer group Klezmerica. It features 23 songs by George Gershwin (1898-1937).

The Soul of Gershwin demonstrates how a generation of Jewish-American composers were influenced by the cross-pollinating sounds of the day, the ultimate expression of immigrant assimilation. They wrote for Broadway musical theatre, blending classical music techniques and forms with jazz techniques and the popular music of the day.

"Gershwin comes on stage and starts to tell the story of where his music comes from. There are a lot of Gershwin songs and a lot of other music intermingled as he goes forward. The music really tells its own story, Gershwin is setting it up," says Vass, the Springfield, Ill., native who now makes his home in Maplewood, Minn., with his wife, comedian Susan Vass.

Although Vass grew up Jewish, he wasn't very aware of Jewish music until his later years.

"As I began to understand Jewish music, it came to me that Gershwin was a kind of Jewish music. When I studied piano, I learned that Gershwin and a whole generation of American songwriters, who wrote the jazz standards – the 'American Songbook,' including Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Rogers and Hart, Kurt Weill, later when he moved from Germany, Irving Berlin and on and on – were Jews.

"So, I began to wonder if there was a connection between Jewish music and this music that I was told came from a combination of European and black music. It seemed to me, when I heard actual African-American music played by African-Americans, it didn't sound much like Gershwin or Berlin… There were missing ingredients."

When people ask Vass what Jewish music is, he says that we have been listening to Jewish music our whole lives and just didn't know it. He doesn't really believe there is such a thing as "klezmer music." Klezmer is rather a person, a vessel of song. Thus, *Musical Journey of an American Klezmer* makes sense. Gershwin is not playing a narrow, ethnic-defined instrumental music that some people label klezmer. But Jewish musicians are "klezmers," who often incorporate different things that they hear from different places.

He feels that after hearing Gershwin's music in the show, we will have a deeper understanding and a greater appreciation and experience. Vass promises the show is not klezmerized Gershwin tunes, but a celebration of the music of Gershwin and his generation and what Jewish music gave to the larger world of music.

The Soul of Gershwin is directed by Peter Moore and presented by the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, in association with the National Jewish Theatre. Michael Paul Levin plays Gershwin, and the show includes three vocalists, Bruce A. Henry, Prudence Johnson and Robert Marinoff, and an onstage band, Klezmerica. This contemporary six-piece music ensemble with Vass at the helm has performed throughout the United States and at Israel's International Klezmer Festival.

The show runs from May 1 to 9. For tickets, call 416-872-5555, or go to www.ticketmaster.ca. For more information on *The Soul of Gershwin*, go to www.thesoulofgershwin.com.

Presented by Special Arrangement with American Theatre Festival and National Jewish Theater

THE SOUL OF GERSHWIN

The Musical Journey of an American Klezmer

Created and Written by Joe Vass
Music and Lyrics by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin
Additional Lyrics from *Porgy and Bess* by DuBose Heyward
Directed by Peter Moore
Producing Artistic Director Arnold Mittelman

The Soul of Gershwin is a "Rhapsody in Blue" – a theatrical concert featuring 23 songs of one of America's greatest composers. The show takes the audience on a journey through the musical ethnical influences that stoked his genius to the accompaniment of an incomparable klezmer band and powerhouse vocalists.

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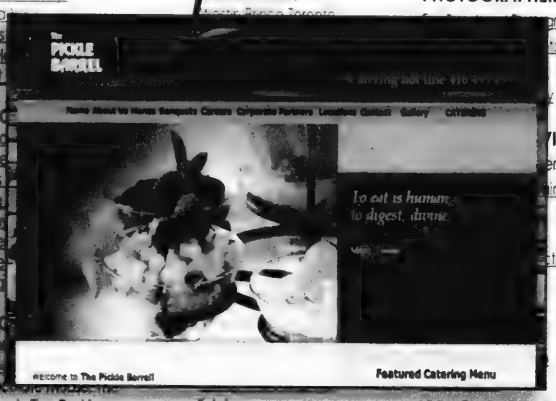

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Arts & Travel

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

PAINTINGS BY HAIFA ARTISTS AT TORONTO GALLERY

The Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation presents Haifa Art Toronto, an exhibition of original paintings by 40 artists from Haifa. Proceeds from sale of the works go to Art Centres for Children in Haifa.

The exhibition runs April 22 to 26. An opening reception, with the Israeli consul general and other dignitaries in attendance, is being held April 22, 6 to 9 p.m. Gallery 133, 1260 Castlefield Ave. www.gallery133.com

* * *

Concert in London ,Ont.: "Voices Uplifted, Female Cantorial Soloists Celebrate Jewish Song" is a concert featuring **Aviva Chernick**, **Tracy Shuster**, **Tara Abrams**, **Phyllis Angel Greenberg**, **Dawn Bernstein** and **Lindi Rivers,** performing a selection of Hebrew, English, Yiddish and Ladino music with accompanist **Ellen Meyer**. This special concert at the Or Shalom Synagogue in London, Ont., Huron and Adelaide streets, marks the 50th anniversary of the synagogue, Sunday May 2 at 7:30 p.m. $18 until April 23; then $25. 519-438-3081

* * *

Names in the News: Canadian conductor **Kerry Stratton** was in Israel last week, guest-conducting the **Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra** in concerts in Herzliya and Jerusalem. The program featured a Paganini concerto with young Israeli violinist **Nitzan Bartana** as soloist. Stratton was then scheduled to return to Toronto for a concert here, then travel to Slovakia to conduct the **Slovak Sinfonietta** of Zilina. The Slovakian Sinfonietta also performs in Toronto, with Stratton conducting, at the Glenn Gould Studio on May 3. 416-872-4255

• **Bernhard Schlink**, author of *The Reader*, will be interviewed by **John Ralston Saul** about his newest book, *Guilt About the Past*, a collection of essays that explore the long shadow of past guilt as both individual and collective experiences. This is a free event at the Philip Smith Congregation Hall at the Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St. April 22 at 7:30 p.m.

* * *

Musical Events

• Canadian-born jazz virtuoso **Renee Rosnes** and New York-born pianist **Bill Charlap**, who are husband and wife, team up for an evening of jazz as part of the Jazz Performance and Education Centre's Swing Into Spring series. $45, $20. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Saturday, April 24, 8 p.m. 416-872-4255, www.jazzcentre.ca

Aviva Chernick

• **Jaffa Road**, recent Juno Award nominees, perform with **Yair Dalal** at Hugh's Room, 2261 Dundas St. W. Presented by Koffler Centre of the Arts and New Israel Fund. $12, $15. Sunday, April 25, 2 p.m. 416-531-6604

• Kachol Lavan, the Centre for Hebrew and Israel Studies, presents Israeli singer **Danny Robas** performing in Hebrew. Details at www.kachol-lavan.com.

• Stars on Spadina, a fundraising evening in tribute to the Y at Bloor and Spadina, features a generous roster of talent, including **Melanie Doane, Micah Barnes** and **Sophie Milman**. Tickets are $180 and include show, live auction and dessert reception. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0. www.mnjcc.org

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Film & TV

• The 18th Toronto Jewish Film Festival, which continues through April 25, features People of the Comic Book: The Creators of Superheroes, Graphic Novels & Toons, a special series celebrating the Jewish pioneers and creators of comic book art, the graphic novel and early animation. Festival details at www.tjff.com.

• The crEATivity club presents "Six Shows in 60 Minutes," a lively discussion hosted by **Mark Clamen** about unexpected Jewish plot twists and quirky characters from the first TV shows until today. Prosserman JCC, 4588 Bathurst St. Admission free. Wednesday, April 28, noon to 1 p.m.

* * *

At the Galleries

• **E. C. Woodley**'s "Augustrasse 25" is a multimedia installation that re-creates a Jewish living room from 1920s Germany. Koffler Gallery off-site at the Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave. Free. April 22 to May 30. Opening reception, Thursday, April 22, 7 to 9 p.m.

• "Mnemonic Objects," an exhibition of works by Toronto art teacher **Simma Goldreich** that "reflect and synthesize the Jewish historical experience," continues at the Art Works Gallery, 238 Jane St., between Bloor and Annette, through April 25. 416-766-0662, www.artworksartschool.com

• **Anat Betzer**'s "Purple Rain" continues at the Julie M. Gallery, 15 Mill St., Building 37, Suite 103, in the Distillery District, through April 25.

• "From the Melting Pot into the Fire," an exhibition of contemporary ceramics from Israel, continues at the Gardiner Museum, 111 Queen's Park, through May 9.

• The fourth annual Best Israel Art and Craft Exhibition and Sale features first-class artists from Jerusalem and the Negev. The Designers Walk, 168 Bedford Rd., second floor. May 2 to 5, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Reception, Monday, May 3, 5 to 8 p.m. 416-961-1211

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Band takes off in one fell swoop

Toronto band One Fell Swoop is made up of Dunniel Medina, left, Dean Medina, David Rakusin and Jason Pilarski.

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It started with an African drum and a guitar. There were no speakers, no microphones, no expensive equipment, just two guys and their instruments playing on the streets of Amsterdam.

They had no idea that, a few years later, they'd be opening for Israeli musician David Broza and playing to crowds of hundreds.

"I got to Amsterdam and I kind of wanted to start on a completely clean slate," said Dean Medina, the co-founder of the Toronto band One Fell Swoop. Medina, who sings and plays guitar, used to hate performing in public.

"I would never want to play to people in my own household. Anytime people came in, I stopped playing. I was just shy to sing... I was afraid of criticism," he said. Everything changed during a trip to Amsterdam.

"I started messing around and playing for people. I figured I'll never see them again, if I perform in front of them and they don't like it, who cares? But people really enjoyed it," he said.

It didn't take long for percussionist Jason Pilarski, a friend of Medina's, to join him in Amsterdam with a jambi, a type of African drum.

"It was kind of scary at first. You're sitting in a foreign place, playing music just out of nowhere, not knowing what kind of reaction you're going to get. But it turned out to be amazing," Pilarski said.

It was in Amsterdam that the two musicians wrote one of their first song together, called *Origins*. *Origins* is also going to be the name of One Fell Swoop's first album, which they're hoping to finish by the end of May.

But there was never really supposed to be an album. There was barely supposed to be a band.

After performing in Amsterdam, Pilarski and Medina came back to Toronto and started playing at a few venues. It was a hobby, a good way to pass the time. Then Medina's older brother, Dunniel, 28, came to see a show.

"[Pilarski and Medina] played a few shows in Toronto. They had humble beginnings. They didn't have a plan at that point," said the elder Medina, who plays guitar and sings in the band. "I went to see them once to support my brother and I said, 'I think I can add to the band.'"

Before joining One Fell Swoop, Medina had been playing wherever he could, which included rooftops and beaches in Israel.

"I've been writing music for a long time. I wanted to [play with] like-minded people that want to create music and get a wider audience for it," said the older Medina. "As soon as you start thinking, 'I want to immortalize my music,' then you start thinking about promoting it... It moved from that fun hobby to where we want to play as much as we can."

The band's next step was to find a bassist, which is where David Rakusin came in. Rakusin, 24, knew some of the band members through school and was asked to join One Fell Swoop last July.

"I went to see their shows, and I really liked their music," said Rakusin. "We all get along really well. We have similar ideals about music. We all just really like performing together." After Rakusin joined, the band started to get serious, practising three times a week and performing anywhere they could.

Like most of the band members, Rakusin is shocked by One Fell Swoop's success.

"Some of the first shows we played, there were 20 or 30 people [in the audience.]... Our last one had 250 to 300 people," he said. "We just want to go out and perform and try to put out a fun show. If people are out watching and dancing... that's the best thing."

The band's popularity is linked to their catchy songs, which the older Medina describes as polished pop music. His brother, on the other hand, is hesitant to define their style.

"We all write completely different songs. There's a lot of pop, a lot of rock. A lot of the stuff I work on is reggae and ska," he said. "We don't stick to one genre, that's for sure."

One Fell Swoop, which recently opened for Israeli singer David Broza at Artzy, a Hillel-sponsored art showcase, is known for mixing upbeat melodies with serious lyrics.

"It's a curious mix of dark and light. The songs can be very serious and sombre in their lyrics and very upbeat in their melody and the other way around, too," said Medina's older brother. An example of this is the song *From the Desert*, which is about the Jewish experience and has references to the Holocaust.

"That song has an uplifting chorus, and it should, but the verse itself is very sombre," Medina said. "That's an interesting aspect of the music that many people really like."

The band first started gaining fans by playing charity shows, something that they've continued to do. Recently, they started the Swoop Movement, which is when they dedicate shows to various charities. They perform charity shows every few months at the El Mocambo in Toronto as part of their Swoop for Soup series, which supports local soup kitchens and other organizations in the city.

"That's pretty much 90 per cent of what we do. Charity is a great way to get your foot in the door" said the younger Medina. "It's a great thing as well. We have something to offer. People really enjoy the music."

One Fell Swoop will be performing at United We Rock: The Concert for Human Rights on May 8 at Dundas Square and will also be playing at a Swoop for Soup show at the El Mocambo on May 28. For more information, visit www.swoop-music.com.

The donkey, the monkey, the writer and the Holocaust

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

Is it possible to write a Holocaust novel without mentioning concentration camps, Jews and gas chambers?

Canadian author Yann Martel, whose award-winning novel *Life of Pi* sold more than seven million copies, seems to think so.

Yann Martel

"To my mind, *Beatrice and Virgil* is a Holocaust novel, but not a conventional one," Martel says of his new novel, which features a donkey and a howler monkey as two of its main characters. "I am trying to capture the Holocaust without all the history and conventions of a Holocaust novel.

"What got me started on this book was something that I noticed over years of reading Holocaust literature – that the mode of representation that dominates the Holocaust is non-fiction," Martel says. "If you ask your average person, 'When you think of the Holocaust, what writers do you think about?' Likely it would be Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel and Anne Frank. It struck me how little 'true fiction' there really is on the Holocaust – truly invented stories."

In *Beatrice and Virgil* (Knopf Canada), Henry is a successful novelist whose latest project is an allegorical Holocaust novel, which he wants to publish as a flipbook, combined with an essay he wrote on Holocaust literature. His publishers balk at the idea, so instead he puts it aside and moves with his pregnant wife to an unnamed European city.

There, he comes across an unusual elderly taxidermist, also named Henry, who requests Henry's help with a play he's writing about Beatrice, a donkey, and Virgil, a howler monkey. The play, we find out, takes place on the back of a blue and grey striped shirt and is revealed to us through the course of the novel in snippets. Bit by bit we learn that the animals are living through what they call The Horrors – an event that begins to remind Henry of the Holocaust.

Martel says that fictitious representations of the Holocaust are overdue. After all, he argues, war, which killed millions of people, has successfully been interpreted in many different ways.

"With the Holocaust we've been much more stringent with how we apply it," Martel, who is not Jewish, says. "It's not a criticism of what's out there, but don't we also need to have those representations that come to us through the imagination?"

He cites, for instance, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, which is a Civil War classic even though the author was born after the war. "He used his imagination. The fact that he wasn't there didn't take away from his credibility because it works. And that's the benchmark: Does it work? Does it make sense? Does it move you?"

The play in this novel is mostly a philosophical dialogue between Beatrice and Virgil, a lot of which deals with finding ways to represent the horrific events happening to them.

"How are we going to talk about what happened to us one day when it's over?" Beatrice asks Virgil.

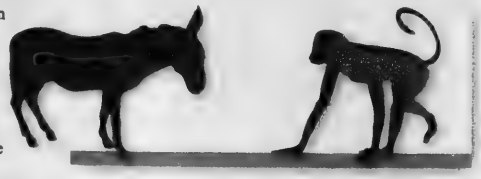
"That's assuming we survive," Virgil replies solemnly.

Martel says one of the reasons why there hasn't been a true fictitious account of the Holocaust is because of the sheer size of the atrocity. War is a lot easier to write fiction about because we can accept that soldiers die.

"In war, soldiers must die. The Holocaust is the genocide of civilians. A single murder is a boon to storytelling. Who killed him? How? We delight in that. But once you get too many victims it all blurs. The victims become depersonalized."

Stories operate with characters, he explains. In the case of the Holocaust, the characters were linked only through a single trait – being Jewish, a trait which meant different things to different people. "That was the only thing that linked all these personalities, that they were Jewish. And how do you tell a story where personality does not matter?"

The other problem he sees with telling a Holocaust story is that the narrative arc is always the same. "In the genocide, you are either a victim or a victimizer. You are trapped in this narrative arc which is great if you are the first to tell it."



He says the natural reaction when telling a genocide story is to be a witness and say what happened, like Levi and Wiesel. "There is nothing wrong with that, but to me history really stays with us and becomes meaningful if in some ways it becomes a story. Stories that are non-fictional are tied to history, and as time goes by their believability may diminish. We have to start telling the Holocaust in different ways. Once an event has past, you're only left with its representations. As ghastly as it sounds, we need to have Holocaust westerns and science fiction and comedies. Better a funny memorial than no memorial at all."

Martel says that without fiction the Holocaust will disappear someday. " I do think with time, it will start to fade. We haven't found a way of weaving it into the emotional text of our lives. It's too massive, too literal, too far away. And the event was so unbelievable. With that degree of personal hatred, you need devices to tell that tale."

Although in the book, Henry's wife refers to the play as "Winnie the Pooh meets The Holocaust," *Beatrice and Virgil* is not a children's fable. As the play gets revealed to us, it gets darker and darker and what starts as wonderfully-written dialogue about the taste and feel of a pear takes a horrific turn.

In one of many touching bits of dialogue between the two animals, Virgil, the monkey, wants to tell Beatrice three jokes; but Beatrice doesn't want to hear them. "I can't anymore," Beatrice tells Virgil. "Not laugh, or even try to laugh. About anything."

"Then those criminals have truly robbed us of everything," Virgil says.

"We always see the Holocaust as the very end, when people are walking to the gas chambers and that silences everything ," Martel says. "We've got to pull back and see they were human beings before that. Yes, people died but before they died they were alive. No one likes utterly sad things. If you lose your joy of life, your laughter, then the victimizers have robbed you of everything. They've won the day."

Comparisons to George Orwell are a certainty, and *Beatrice and Virgil* does to the Holocaust what *Animal Farm* did to the Russian Revolution.

"*Animal Farm* discusses Russia without discussing Russian history," Martel says. "It's proper allegory. Art gets to the essence of the event and ignores the facts which are too numerous and too weighty and creates other facts which are fictitious but are spiritually true. *Animal Farm* is spiritually true but fictitious nonsense. I'm trying to get to the same thing with *Beatrice and Virgil*, speak about the Holocaust without speaking about it literally – to get to its essence."

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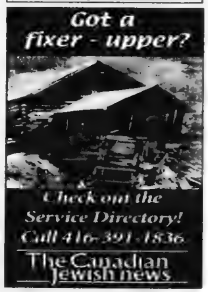

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Israel & the Jewish World

Nazi past haunts Austria's upcoming elections

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER
JTA

ROME — Austrians will go to the polls April 25 to vote for a president after a volatile campaign that focused in part on right-wing extremism and raised the ghosts of Austria's Nazi past.

Incumbent President Heinz Fischer, a Social Democrat, is expected to win a landslide victory over his main rival, Barbara Rosenkranz, a regional leader of the far-right Freedom party (FPO), which was once led by the late Joerg Haider.

Two weeks ahead of the election, two public opinion polls showed Fischer, 71, with more than 80 per cent of voter support, compared to 12 to 14 per cent for Rosenkranz and four to six per cent for Rudolf Gehring of the small Austrian Christian Party. Re-election of the popular Fischer was such a foregone conclusion that the main conservative force, the Austrian People's Party, did not put up a candidate.

Rosenkranz, a 51-year-old mother of 10, entered the race in early March in a bid many experts saw as a test for the Freedom party's staunchly anti-immigrant, law-and-order, anti-European Union platform ahead of regional elections later this year.

The wife of a key longtime member of a now banned neo-Nazi party, Rosenkranz quickly sparked an outcry over ambiguous statements about the Holocaust and criticism of Austria's tough 1947 anti-Nazi law.

In response, Cardinal Christoph Schonborn, the Catholic archbishop of Vienna, said that "someone who questions the National Socialism prohibition law and fails to make clear statements regarding the Holocaust is not an option for me personally."

Members of Austria's 8,000-member Jewish community joined political, civic and social network groups in spearheading opposition to Rosenkranz's presidential bid.

A Jewish community statement called her candidacy an "embarrassment" for Austria and a "mockery of the 65,000 Austrian Jews killed in the Shoah."

Jewish community president Ariel Muzicant helped organize a candlelit anti-Rosenkranz rally on March 25, drawing thousands outside the Hofburg Palace, the seat of the Austrian presidency. The rally grew out of an anti-Rosenkranz Facebook group that had more than 91,000 members as of two weeks before the elections.

Nazi Germany annexed Austria in 1938, and many Austrians were willing supporters of the Nazi regime. But the victorious World War II Allies officially declared Austria "the first free country to fall victim to Hitlerite aggression."

It wasn't until the 1980s that the country began a close examination of its World War II history, when Kurt Waldheim was elected president in 1986 despite revelations of a Nazi past.

Following the public outcry over Rosenkranz's criticism of the Austrian law banning Holocaust denial, Nazi organizations and Nazi ideology as "an unnecessary restriction" on freedom of opinion, she signed a public declaration "disassociating" herself from Nazi ideology.

Critics, however, said her ambiguous views dated too far back to benefit from the apology. More than seven years ago, a journalist had already branded Rosenkranz a "closet Nazi."

"Rosenkranz is on the extreme right wing of an already extreme right party," said Hanno Loewy, the director of the Jewish Museum in the western Austria town of Hohenems.

Immigrants and Muslims, rather than Jews, are the main target of the Freedom party's rhetoric. About 500,000 Muslims live in Austria, and the party campaigns under slogans such as "The West is for Christians" and "Homeland instead of Islam."

Rosenkranz has called for the reintroduction of border controls with Austria's eastern neighbours, in order to stop the "import of crime."

Despite their omission, Jews feel targeted. In March, vandals defaced the Mauthausen concentration camp near Linz with anti-Jewish and anti-Turkish graffiti.

> ***Immigrants and Muslims, rather than Jews, are the main target of the Freedom party's rhetoric***

"The progeny of Muslims are for us what the Jews were to our fathers. Be on your guard. Jews and Turks, poisonous blood," read the graffiti, spray-painted in big letters on the outer wall of the camp, where more than 100,000 people were killed.

"FPO leaders and functionaries keep getting caught in open or coded Holocaust denial, anti-Semitism and neo-Nazi affairs," said American historian Stan Nadel, an expert on migration who teaches in Salzburg. "They don't talk openly about Jewish conspiracies, just about 'East Coast' conspiracies."

Rosenkranz, he said, "doesn't say the Holocaust never happened. She just says she believes in the history she was taught in school – she went to school at a time when school history courses generally stopped with 1918," Nadel said. "Her anti-Semitic supporters know that, and they understand she is covertly denying the Holocaust, but she hasn't said it out loud, so she hasn't broken the law."

The Freedom party's outspoken leader, Heinz-Christian Strache, said his party's views were justified by a poll last week showing that 54 per cent of Austrians believe Islam poses "a threat for the West and our familiar lifestyle."

The survey, conducted by the IMAS polling agency, showed that 72 per cent believe Muslims would "not stick to the rules" when it comes to living in Austria and 71 per cent believe Islam "does not match western beliefs in democracy, freedom and tolerance."

Strache, 40, a former dental technician, is expected to make a run for the provincial leadership when key elections are held in Vienna in October. Analysts say the Social Democrats may lose their absolute majority in the capital, and they predict sharp gains for the Freedom party.

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Erlich, Werek start summer early after teams eliminated

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

By any measure, Daniel Erlich had a pretty good OHL season: fourth in scoring (16 goals, 43 assists) on a second-place team; second in playoff scoring through two rounds; a three-point night in critical Game 6 of the second round, and more conscientious play in his own zone.

Not bad for a 19-year-old who stands 5-7 and weighs all of 165 pounds. But was it enough to get him noticed by NHL scouts prior to this year's entry draft after being ignored last year? Or, more to the point, is it enough to get some team, any team, to overlook the fact that NHL small man Martin St. Louis – at 180 pounds – is a power forward next to Erlich?

Following a disappointing conclusion to an otherwise pretty good season, Erlich was pretty upbeat. He feels he did what he could to help his team, the London Knights, advance through the OHL playoffs and he's confident he'll get a call from some team interested in a highly skilled, albeit smaller player.

His stats in the high-intensity crucible of playoff hockey should impress: nine goals and 12 assists in a dozen games, second only to highly touted Toronto Maple Leaf draft pick Nazem Kadri (27 points) in team and league scoring after two rounds.

Playing right wing next to Jared Knight and Michael MacDonald (with 36 and 25 goals, respectively), Erlich went from being a playmaker during the regular season to a sniper in the post season. "I just hit a hot streak. I started shooting the puck and it started to go in," he said.

Facing the Kitchener Rangers in the OHL Western Conference semifinals, the series was a see-saw affair that wasn't decided until the seventh game.

"It was just a really weird series," Erlich said. "It could have gone either way."

Unfortunately for London, Game 7 went the other way as Kitchener eliminated the Knights with an 8-3 win. London actually led 1-0 after one period but suffered an inexplicable collapse in the second, ending the frame down 5-1. Erlich still isn't sure what happened. "Lucky bounces went in" and players weren't concentrating. "It just happened," he said.

Daniel Erlich

Although the Knights didn't accomplish what they set out to do, Erlich felt "I had my biggest game in the OHL" in Game 6. He notched three assists in a 5-3 London win that forced a seventh game. What's more, "I thought I played well defensively," he said.

At the other end of the province, Ethan Werek and the Kingston Frontenacs also faced a premature end to their season, this time after only one playoff round. They were defeated by the Brampton Battalion, but despite the early exit, for Werek, the glass was half full. The Frontenacs, he pointed out, hadn't made the playoffs in years and the team under head coach Doug Gilmour "took a step in the right direction."

Despite a couple of injuries – the 19-year-old hurt his hip flexor early in the season and suffered a slight tear of his medial collateral knee ligament in the playoffs – "I had a pretty good year," Werek said.

In 57 games he scored 30 goals and added 34 assists, good for second in team scoring behind Nathan Moon.

A six-foot-two, 195-pound centre, Werek was drafted by the New York Rangers in the second round, 47th overall last year.

"I try to be an aggressive, hard-working player and create opportunities," Werek said, describing his style. Some say he resembles a younger Corey Perry.

Coincidentally, Werek and Erlich are good friends. Both are the children of Israeli parents and they grew up playing together, Werek said. Games against each other are more fun than the average OHL encounter, with jokes and barbs traded on the ice, followed by a get-together for dinner afterwards.

Playing under Gilmour has been a treat, Werek added. "He's a real player's coach. He knows what it is to be a player, he pushes us hard in practice and he treats us as professionals."

In his second year in the league, Werek said he began to feel more comfortable and he saw his performance improve, despite missing games due to injury. Living with Jay and Toby Abramsky helped, as the Kingston couple included him in celebrating Jewish holidays and taking him to synagogue.

Werek and Erlich both expect they'll be back in the OHL next season, though both are also getting ready to attend pro training camps in the fall – Werek with the Rangers and Erlich with – well, who knows?

Last season, though undrafted, he was invited to the San Jose Sharks' camp and loved it. "It was a great experience," he said. "I did well and got positive feedback."

After a short rest, both guys say they'll resume training to achieve what the NHL wants: to get faster, bigger and better.

Werek, who played for Canada's Under-18 junior team, has his heart set on playing in the world Junior tournament and later in the NHL.

Ethan Werek

Erlich is likewise determined to make hockey his career. If it doesn't pan out in North America, he'll look to Europe. He's got the bug. Whether it's here or overseas, all he knows is that he'll be playing hockey somewhere.

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Important to have the conversation

By MICHAEL GORDON

The Senior Side of Life

The daughter was in turmoil. She called me about her mother, who was suffering from late-stage dementia. She and her two brothers could not agree on whether to put in a feeding tube, as it was becoming impossible to provide adequate nutrition. There had already been two episodes of aspiration pneumonia.

"My two brothers and I are in complete disagreement and I don't know what to do. I can't accept that we can let her die like that."

I asked her what she thought her mother would want under the circumstance.

"We never talked about such things. My brothers and I tried to bring up the topic and she told us it was not something she wanted to discuss. She was a very proud woman and always had a positive view of the world. Talk of illness and dying was just too morbid for her."

I asked: "In the absence of actual discussions, what do you think she would want, knowing what kind of person she was?"

The daughter replied: "She was a tenacious person and always a fighter."

I outlined some of the considerations she should bring to her and her siblings' decision-making process that might reflect their feelings about what mattered to her mother, and then left it for the daughter to discuss them with her siblings.

This discussion occurred a few days after a series of meetings I attended where some of the challenges in long-term care planning by elders with their children was one of the topics of the program. Over and over, those involved in one of the roundtable discussions where various eldercare specialists and planners were gathered came back to the concept of "having the conversation."

We all agreed that there was often an enormous reluctance for loved ones to broach the subject of future planning for living arrangements, financial planning preferences or wishes for end-of-life or serious life-imperilling situations. The question that kept coming up was why there was such a reluctance to explore one's wishes and values when late-stage illness such as dementia or malignant disease might occur.

Many reasons were given by those around the table, including superstition, discomfort in facing negative aspects of life, religious beliefs or one's personality and relationship with those with whom the discussion would have to be held for it to be meaningful.

Some years ago, there was large-scale impetus for people to develop living wills as a way of assuring their wishes would be honoured should they no longer be able to make health-care decisions. For some, the process proved useful. For others, it became too complicated or threatening.

From various studies, many eldercare specialists concluded that the written document was not the most important part of the process. Rather it was the conversation that explored wishes and personal values that could form the basis of decisions that reflected what the person was likely to do if he or she could assist in the process.

The daughter called back a few weeks later and told me that she and her siblings had decided against the feeding tube and would allow their mother to receive supportive and palliative care with comfort measures only for her last weeks of life.

"I wish we'd had the conversation," she said. "But I believe this is what our mother would have wanted."

Try to have that important conversation with your loved ones so that decisions can be made during the last period of your life that reflect your wishes and values.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey, can be researched from his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

GRILLED SWEET POTATOES WITH LIME CILANTRO VINAIGRETTE

CAPLAN'S

8 sweet potatoes

Vinaigrette:

1/4 c fresh lime juice

1 1/2 tsp kosher salt

1/2 c olive oil

1/4 c chopped fresh cilantro

Cover potatoes with cold salted water in a large pot; bring to a boil. Simmer 25-30 min., then transfer to a large bowl of cold water to stop cooking. Drain well. When cool enough to handle, peel potatoes with a sharp small knife and quarter lengthwise. Prepare grill for cooking. Whisk together lime juice, salt, pepper and add oil in a slow stream, whisking. Whisk in cilantro. When grill is hot, grill potatoes in 2 or 3 batches on lightly oiled grill rack, uncovered, turning, until grill marks appear and potatoes are just tender, 3-6 min total. Serve potatoes warm or at room temperature, drizzled with vinaigrette.

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Dietary tips for diabetics

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

Do you have diabetes but you are not sure what you should be eating?

You are not alone! Many people with diabetes have received limited education on managing their disease, and the tips below may help.

First, what is diabetes?

When we eat, most food turns into glucose (sugar), which causes blood sugar levels to rise. In a non-diabetic the pancreas gland and a hormone called insulin then kick in and reduce sugar levels back to normal. In a diabetic, not enough insulin is produced and the sugar levels remain high. This can cause serious health problems.

The most important nutrition components in controlling diabetes are eating regular, balanced meals and controlling weight.

The first recommendation is to not go long periods of time without eating – three meals and two snacks are ideal. In addition, you should limit sugar intake from foods and drinks. Have mixed meals consisting of lean protein, high-fibre carbs and vegetables. Fruits contain sugar and should therefore be limited to three per day and eaten with a mixed meal.

Maintaining a healthy weight is also essential, because having diabetes significantly raises your risk of heart disease. So be active and aim for a trim midsection. The ideal waist circumference for men is less than 40 inches, and for women less than 35 inches, since increased weight around the middle also increases risk for heart disease.

Finally, make sure to follow your doctor's orders, take all medications as prescribed and ensure that you understand your dietary requirements.

If you want more information, contact The Canadian Diabetes Association at www.diabetes.ca.

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

Turning 50 and no burial plot

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

I will be half a century old on April 27. 50! Am I my grandfather?

Being 47 didn't take much getting used to, and 48 walked in as if on a breeze. There was nothing terribly memorable about the onset of these ages. They were nondescript really, just like 34 or 28, and I thought little of them. "Hello," I wished them, and they answered the same.

Fifty, however, is belting out a noise loud enough to make me cringe, cover my ears and settle myself over the sink ready to vomit. My grandfather was 50, and then 60 and then 70. He always seemed older. Forever a senior. Me too?

Fifty is the jubilee year – seven times seven, plus 365 days – when, according to the Torah, the land must remain fallow and all debts are forgiven. Why do these things happen at 50? Because 50 is old and nobody holds debts for that long. So it's really not a problem, and it makes the borrower feel good – sort of.

At 49, I began accepting the fact that the face looking back at me in the mirror was that of a man about to enter into the youth of age. I looked closely for wrinkles and white hairs. I found them. Crow's feet. Creases. Folds. Rumples. They were all beginning to emerge. Where had my baby's bum gone?

Fifty. They call me sir at the car rental place, and some, knowing my almost half-century status, ask where I was when John F. Kennedy was assassinated. I tell them probably having my diapers changed.

I'm almost 50, and therefore have friendships that go back 40 years. I've known David since we were eight, so that's 42 years. Remember when someone said, 'Oh yeah, we've been playing mah-jong for 42 years,' and you'd think Baycrest? Me too.

I'm about to turn 50 years old, and that means my childhood is over, my early adulthood is complete, and any thoughts I had about being terribly attractive to younger woman are gone. I'm almost 50, and I remember dial phones, the milkman, Turkish delight, one sink, slow motion replay and Sweet Daddy Siki.

I've watched as men I know turned 50 and it was seldom pretty. Some of them pretended to be hunched over. Their hands were slightly creased. Others complained a lot. A few frequently reminded me they were almost as old as their father when he passed away – even if they were not. Chronic this and irritable that just kept on plaguing these poor fiends. And they were proud of their Air Miles.

It says in *Pirkei Avot* (*Ethics of our Fathers 5:25*) that 50 is the age when a man or woman can give advice. We are the "man" – the CEOs, prime ministers, school principals, senior rabbis, vice-presidents of sales and have lots of insurance. People are coming to us asking for advice about careers, investments, retirement places, books to read and memories of the war. What war? Any war.

They do this because we're 50 and that number sounds like history. We're junior sages, assistant wise folks but really have no idea what's going on.

I am just about to turn 50, and I am a bit shaky, feeling unbalanced and want so badly for God to say, "I'm kidding." But He's not. I am about to become that age when younger and older people will say, "Do you have a will? Where is your plot?"

My plot? Where is my plot? I don't know. What plot? Oh God, please help me. I'm not Mr. Rosensweig. Really.

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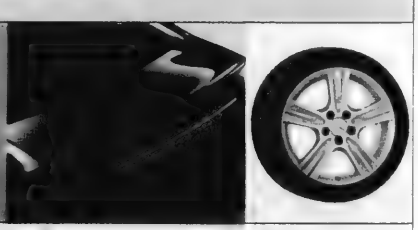

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The Canadian Jewish news

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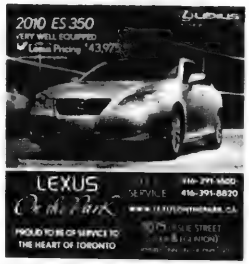

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Community gathers for Yom Hashoah. *Page 14*

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Solemn ceremony, solemn promise

Members of the Israel Defence Forces took part Sunday in ceremonies at Yad Vashem marking Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah. Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi, photo on right, said that "the Jewish people will never again be dependent on the benevolence of others," for their defence. "Never again will Jewish children be fearful or begging for mercy. Never again will an advocate of evil be able to dictate the future of the Jewish people." *Please see related story on page 37.*

[Flash90 photos]

Iran says it's improving centrifuges

By BARAK RAVID
© *Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.*

JERUSALEM — Iran announced last Friday it had developed faster centrifuges for uranium enrichment, signalling determination to press on with its nuclear work despite possible new UN sanctions sought by U.S. President Barack Obama.

Obama acknowledged that sanctions would not necessarily shift Iran's behaviour, but said sustained world pressure could eventually prompt it to revise its nuclear calculations.

The centrifuges Iran is using now are adapted from a 1970s design and have been prone to breakdowns. Tehran is known to have been testing various new models for years.

It was not immediately clear when the new machines would be introduced into full-scale enrichment, something analysts say would be a significant step.

Western powers are seeking the support of Russia and China for a fourth round of UN sanctions against Tehran.

Obama, who hosts a nuclear security summit this week, wants Russia and China to support further measures to deter Iran from pursuing what the West believes is a covert drive to develop nuclear weapons. Tehran says its program has only peaceful purposes.

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Tel Aviv U tracks rise in European anti-Semitism – please see page 39

The News in Brief

Canada

'Shoah' Soap Tested

MONTREAL — A bar of soap that its owner says was made from Jewish Holocaust victims was seized by police for tests. Montreal police took possession of the soap from Jewish shop owner Abraham Botines after he tried to sell the alleged World War II relic from his curiosity shop on the city's trendy St. Laurent Boulevard. Police will conduct a chemical analysis of the soap, which has a swastika stamped on it, the Montreal *Gazette* reported. Botines was willing to sell the bar for $300. He claims he bought it from a retired Canadian soldier who found it in a concentration camp. Botines said he tried to sell the item to a Shoah museum, which refused the offer, the paper reported.

World

Punk Impresario Dies

LONDON — Malcolm McLaren, the Jewish punk impresario who formed the Sex Pistols, died April 1 at a Swiss hospital of mesothelioma, a cancer. He was 64. He was raised by his maternal grandmother, Rose Isaacs, a member of London's venerable Sephardi community. In the early 1970s, he and his then-partner, Vivienne Westwood, ran a clothing store and were part of London's bleak, nihilistic arts scene. In 1975, he brought together the Sex Pistols, a group that eschewed pop music forms and function. Its songs and albums – including *God Save the Queen*, which savaged the monarch as a fascist – were banned. The band broke up in 1978, and its members and McLaren spent 10 years mired in lawsuits over who owned the music and name.

Protest Pre-planned

IRVINE, Calif. — The Muslim Student Union (MSU) at the University of California, Irvine, orchestrated the disruption of a Feb. 8 speech by Israel's U.S. ambassador, Michael Oren, leaked e-mails indicate. MSU representatives have said the disruption, which provoked an ongoing academic disciplinary process, had been the impetus of students acting individually. Eleven students were arrested for disrupting Oren's speech. The revelation about the e-mails was published by the Washington-based Investigative Project on Terrorism. It said the e-mails show the MSU both organized the disruptions and told students to say they acted on their own.

Israel Backs Gay Fest

SAN FRANCISCO — The Israeli consulate in San Francisco is co-sponsoring a month of events highlighting gay and lesbian culture, along with local Jewish groups. It's the first time a foreign country has sponsored such an event in the United States, the consulate told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Until the end of April, Israeli films, concerts, dance performances, panel talks and author appearances will focus on gay culture in Israel and the U.S. Jewish community. Highlights include a screening of *Yossi and Jagger*, a 2002 Israeli film about a romance between two male IDF soldiers, and readings by Israeli novelist Yossi Avni-Levy, whose book, *Auntie Farhuma Wasn't a Whore After All*, features a gay couple.

Hungarian Jews Protest Anti-Semitism

BUDAPEST — More than 1,000 Jews marched through Budapest's Old Ghetto district April 6 in response to a series of anti-Semitic incidents in the lead-up to Hungary's elections this month.

The marchers defied a police recommendation to keep a low profile, marching in the neighbourhood of the Great Dohány Street Synagogue wearing kippot. The recommendation came the previous week, after the windows of a rabbi were stoned in the same area during a Passover seder.

The previous week, anti-Semitic graffiti appeared in various places in Budapest, a Holocaust memorial was damaged in the western Hungarian city of Zalaegerszeg and neo-Nazis held an anti-Semitic rally in the eastern city of Tiszaeszlár, where a notorious blood libel against the local Jewish community led to pogroms in 1882-83.

Organized by the Free Folks for Hungary movement and the Association of Hungarian Jewish Religious Communities, the Budapest demonstration was secured by the police and no violence was reported.

Jews have expressed concern about anti-Semitic overtones in the national election campaign. In a vote set for April 11, with a possible runoff on April 25, the ruling party Socialist party was expected to be toppled by the country's main conservative party. A far-right party is also expected to score significant gains. Hungary's estimated 50,000 Jews traditionally vote centre-left.

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He will be remembered with great affection as our President who supported Tel Aviv University and Israel with passion and devotion, and will be sadly missed by all.

The Canadian Jewish news

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Carleton students attacked with machete

Pro-Israel advocates escape anti-Semitic incident

By CARA STERN
Special to The CJN

OTTAWA — Just one month after Israeli Apartheid Week, two Zionist students at Carleton University said they barely managed to escape after being physically attacked April 5 by a group of men, one of whom chased them with a machete.

Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, calls this the most serious allegation in the Ottawa area in the past 15 years.

Both students are pro-Israel advocates and are well known on Carleton's campus.

Nick Bergamini, one of the victims, is the vice-president of student issues for the Carleton University Students' Association. He's not Jewish, but has shown continuous support for Israel.

He was with his Jewish roommate, Mark Klibanov, who is an executive on the Israel Awareness Committee of Ottawa, when they were attacked, he said.

Around 1:45 a.m. on April 5, the pair were on their way home from a bar in Hull, Que., when they heard "the shout of 'Zionist' in Arabic," Bergamini wrote in a recount of the events posted on his Facebook account.

Although Bergamini said they didn't know whether the shouts were directed at him or Klibanov, they both responded that they were, indeed, Zionists.

A group of 10 to 15 men surrounded them, shouting in Arabic, Bergamini wrote, and he was hit in the back of his head.

The pair then ran back to the bar, where he said they waited with the bouncers for about 10 minutes, until they deemed it safe to leave.

They were walking to the bridge back to Ottawa when a car pulled up to them with its occupants yelling anti-Semitic slurs, he recounted.

One of them opened the trunk and pulled out a machete, Bergamini said, and proceeded to chase them. He said witnesses told him the blade came within inches of his neck.

They managed to run away and found a nearby police car, he said. The students have since filed a report with police.

Bergamini said he recognized some of the attackers as fellow Carleton students.

Farber is urging the police to launch a full investigation, while B'nai Brith Canada is calling for universities to ban anti-Israel agitation, saying it has long warned about the "spill-over effects of anti-Israel hate-fests" such as Israeli Apartheid Week.

Bernie Farber calls incident most serious allegation in Ottawa area in past 15 years.

Noah Kochman, political affairs chair for the Canadian Federation of Jewish Students, said that calling Israel an apartheid state is discriminatory, demonizes Jewish students and doesn't support a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

He said he would rather support a Palestinian Human Rights Week, adding that the federation would co-sponsor events if this were the focus.

Discussions on human rights and peaceful solutions to the conflict would be much more beneficial, he said.

Continued on page 33

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Tell and retell the truth

Toward the end of the movie *Exodus*, there is a powerful scene in which the older children in the children's village on the fictionalized Kibbutz Gan Dafna carry to safety through the dark and treacherous steps of night the younger children of the kibbutz.

The war for Israel's independence has begun.

The children's trek is extremely dangerous because they must find their way through the lines of marauding, irregular armies of Arab mercenaries recruited by outside overlords to stanch at birth the nascent Jewish state.

It is also arduous because the children carry their precious cargo of very young ones on their backs through the rock-strewn gullies and pathways between the sloped hilltops of the Galilee. The young ones have been sedated to ensure their silence through the night

We subsequently are told that all the children, carried and carriers, arrived safely to their destination, which was merely the next Jewish community (or "settlement" to use the loaded language more familiar to contemporary ears) over the hill, where they were out of harm's way, at least temporarily.

For those who do not know, *Exodus* was the dramatic film version directed by the award-winning Otto Preminger and starring the late Paul Newman of the book by the same name written by Leon Uris. It tells the gripping story, through the lives of a number of men and women, of the birth of the State of Israel.

It is doubtful whether such a film would be made today. It is doubtful whether such a book would be written today. The propriety of the Jewish people returning to, building, let alone deserving a sovereign state of their own in the historic land of their ancestors, is no longer thought to be a politely correct view in many circles. A large part of the world has accepted the Arab world's assiduously, cynically, callously but, alas, successfully cultivated portrayal of the Palestinians as victims of the rapacious, colonialist, trespassing, thieving Jews. But that portrayal, it must be repeated as long as there is breath to do so, is abjectly and totally false.

From the editor's desk...

The evacuation of the children during Israel's War of Independence, however, as depicted in *Exodus*, it must also be told and retold, did actually happen. It happened, for example, at Kibbutz Gesher, some 12 kilometres south of the Sea of Galilee, where the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers meet, and which *The CJN* recently visited.

The topography of the area immediately surrounding the kibbutz has determined the geo-politics of the area for generations and centuries. The gap between the Golan Mountains and the Hills of Gilead was one of the key "pathways" travelled by rumbling armies crossing from Asia to Europe, or Europe to Africa. Today, it is the meeting place of three countries: Jordan, Syria and Israel.

In May 1948, it was the intended point of entry into the newly declared State of Israel by the army of Iraq, one of the seven Arab states that attacked the Jewish state after May 15, 1948. The fighters from Kibbutz Gesher repulsed the Iraqis.

Gesher means bridge in Hebrew. The kibbutz takes its name from the span across the Jordan River, a functional concrete and steel remnant of which still exists. The other bridges that once joined the two sides of the small rivers in the area were bombed by the Israeli forces in the War of Independence to prevent the Iraqi forces from penetrating Israel near the kibbutz. The Iraqis ultimately did enter Israel at a point farther to the south, across the Jezreel Valley. But Gesher held.

In *Genesis 1948: The First Arab-Israeli War* (Signet Classics, 1972) journalist-historian, Dan Kurzman, described Gesher's heroic stand against the Iraqis.

"Iraq, having no common border with Israel, sent a brigade of about 3,000 men and an armoured car regiment... to the east bank of the Jordan River opposite the Israeli settlement of Gesher. The Iraqi plan was to ford the river, overrun Gesher and drive southwestward toward the sea, cutting Israel in two at her narrowest waist.

"Over hastily laid pontoon bridges replacing spans blown up by the Jews, Iraqi forces, on May 16, struck across the Jordan and, after intense fighting managed to seal off Gesher. Iraqi soldiers in armoured cars then assaulted the front gate of the neighbouring police fortress, blew it up, and were about to enter the building itself when a defender hurled a Molotov cocktail at the leading armoured car which had penetrated the courtyard. The vehicle burst into flames and the attackers fled. Discouraged by their failure, the Iraqis satisfied themselves thereafter with keeping Gesher under tight siege."

There is a small museum on the site that tells of the heroic fighting during the War of Independence and of the hydro-electric power station built in 1932 by the visionary, risk-taking engineer Pinchas Rutenberg that sits today unused merely metres from the bridge across the Jordan.

Our guide and teacher from the kibbutz, Nirit Bagron recounted for us, with pride, passion and a sense of hallowed possession, the story of Gesher, of the children and adults who carried the younger children to safety during war and of the men and women who staved off the Iraqi invaders.

The story is part of the history of our age. It demands to be recalled, told and retold. It denies the distortions that Israel's enemies propagate as truth. More importantly, it attests to the more rightful truth that the Jews are not interlopers in the land of our ancestors.

– MBD

MEGILLAT HASHOAH SERVICE

From left, David, Saul, Norma and Joel Dimitry light a candle in memory of destroyed communities, assisted by Barry Sonshine, at the eighth annual Megillat HaShoah commemoration. The service took place last week on April 8 at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. Readings of the commemorative scroll also took place elsewhere in North and South America, as well as in Israel and Europe.

[Frances Kraft photo]

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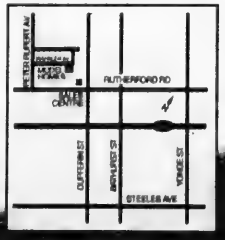

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Toronto school board to review book

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) will launch a formal investigation into a controversial library book critics say is one-sided and portrays Israel in a hostile light.

The review was ordered after the TDSB received a formal written complaint from Brian Henry, who has a child in the Toronto school system and who has been highly critical of the book's one-sided and biased depiction of Israelis.

"We will now undertake the process of a formal review," said TDSB's Lloyd McKell, executive officer for student and community equity. "Before, we informally looked at the book. Staff gave their best professional judgement based on the educational and social value of the book."

The text in question, *The Shepherd's Granddaugther*, is part of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) Red Maple Program, designed to provide supplementary reading material to students in grades 6 through 8.

Prior to receiving the complaint, TDSB staff informally reviewed the book after parents, teachers and trustees voiced concerns about its negative depiction of Israelis. Responding to similar concerns last month, the York Region School Board issue a caution to teacher librarians to provide some context to the book's narrative, to ensure an "equitable learning environment free from bias and discrimination."

Last week, prior to receiving the complaint, the TDSB issued a similar directive to principals and teacher librarians after determining "readers are capable of deriving positive educational and social value from this book without developing destructive attitudes towards people in the current Middle East conflict."

The TDSB's memorandum stated, "It is important that teachers continue to provide appropriate guidance to students when they read this novel and other similar materials that contain controversial and sensitive issues."

The advisory encouraged teachers to have students identify the nature of bias and how it is developed; to be alert to biases and explore why they exist, and determine whether they are positive or negative and ascertain how to respond to bias in the text.

School trustee James Pasternak said he was disappointed the TDSB is retaining the book as part of the after-school reading program. "This book does not help bring people together or understand what the conflict in the Middle East is all about. It is totally out of context. It brings people apart and hardens their views," he said.

"I've read the book. It's clearly a situation in which the author has an axe to grind. It demonizes Israelis. It doesn't mention all the good things Palestinians and Israelis have done together – how thousands of Palestinians have been saved in Israeli hospitals, how 1.5 million Palestinians are Israeli citizens, that tens of thousands of Palestinians and Israelis work together."

Pasternak said that while the book is marketed as a work of fiction, "to a casual reader it's not presented in that way." He noted the cover contains a photograph of a real person and a testimonial to the "truth" it contains.

Pasternak said he and other trustees, including Sheila Ward, who has been a vocal critic of the book, "will see if we can send a signal to the OLA that the book is divisive.

"We can't stop them from endorsing certain books, but we can send a signal that we can have a second tier of review" to prevent students being exposed to books that advocate a political agenda, which would be contrary to the Education Act, he said.

Avi Benlolo, CEO of Friends of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* should be accompanied by additional perspectives to give the book some balance. He said the centre doesn't favour censoring the book, but said it should be accompanied by resources to provide students with a broader context and perspectives.

He suggested a book, *My Brother Was*, would be a useful additional educational tool to accompany *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*. "It is a book about children who tell stories about siblings and family members and how they were affected by suicide bombers.

"That's the flip side regarding what Israel has to deal with and why there are restrictions and roadblocks that Palestinians have to deal with," he said.

In Barrie, meanwhile, businessman Robert Zober received a call from a teacher/librarian in the Simcoe Country District School Board who asked him to provide context and a different perspective about the issues raised in *The Shepherd's Granddaughter*.

Active in the Jewish community, he'd gotten to know the teacher a year before when he was asked to address about 70 kids in grades 7 and 8 about Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli military response to rocket attacks from Gaza that had attracted widespread criticism.

This time, Zober and his wife, Debbie, addressed a group of youngsters in grades 7 and 8 who were studying *The Shepherd's Granddaughter* in class. He also learned that the film, *Occupation 101*, which is highly critical of the Israeli presence in the West Bank, had also been shown to kids in grades 6 through 8.

Zober said "we tried to refute the book moderately, and we did that by showing what life in Israel is all about, its achievements in agriculture, information technology, medical innovations, as being part of the world and benefiting humanity," he said.

They also discussed Israel's geography and why the country is so important to Jews.

He found "there was a lack of understanding of the whole Middle East."

The youngsters' questions suggested they had a significant misconception and some were very shocked to hear our answers and responses. "From my reading of the book, without check, it will leave a very negative impression in the minds of those children. They will view Israel in a poor light," he said.

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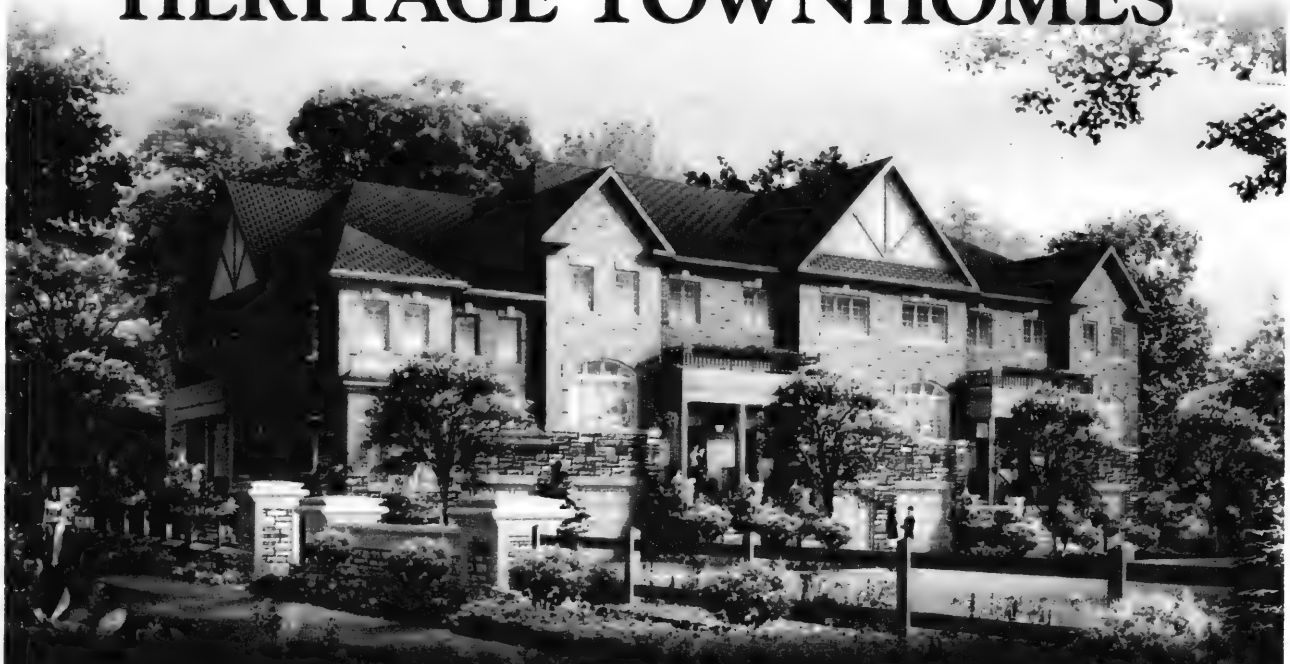

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Celebrate this wondrous occasion

Some time after sundown arrives on April 18 separating the end of *Yom Hazikaron* (Remembrance Day for the fallen soldiers of Israel) from the start of *Yom Ha'atzmaut* (Israel's Independence Day) we should dedicate at least a few moments to reflect upon and celebrate that very special transition. For it is and will always be, truly, a wondrous occasion.

Sixty-two years ago, on the fifth day of Iyar, at a hastily arranged, deeply emotional gathering of many – but not all – of the "founding fathers" (and mothers), the declaration proclaiming the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel was read into the airwaves of history for all eternal time by the head of newly proclaimed provisional government, David Ben-Gurion.

In an earnest, firm, steady voice, he asserted the right of the Jewish people, after two millennia of exile, to be independent, free and sovereign in our own land.

"In the Land of Israel, the Jewish people came into being," he began. "In this land was shaped their spiritual, religious and national character. Here they lived in sovereign independence. Here they created a culture of national universal import and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books."

Some 20 paragraphs later, the prophetic, feisty, visionary leader of the Yishuv completed the reading of the declaration. The gathering quickly concluded. Everyone there rushed out of the historic chamber in the home of the former first mayor of Tel Aviv, Meir Dizengoff, to greet the Sabbath and to steel their nerves and their resolve for the attacks by the invading armies of seven Arab nations.

As he thought about the existential enormity of the impending declaration of the Jewish state, then underground leader and one of the country's future prime ministers, Menachem Begin, wrote: "There is no doubt that the revival of Hebrew national independence in our generation has no precedence in human history. A nation had been driven out of its country after the loss of its liberty… It had wandered about the face of the earth for nearly 2,000 years… And now, in the 71st generation of its exile, this wandering people had returned to its Homeland."

Some 22 years after he read the proclamation of the state, Ben-Gurion wrote: "You cannot reach for the higher virtue without being an idealist. The Jews are chronic idealists, which makes me humbly glad to belong to this people and to have shared in their noble epic [of establishing the sovereign State of Israel].

It was, as Begin wrote elsewhere, "a profoundly wondrous event," and in the words of Ben-Gurion, an act of the highest virtue in furtherance of the millennial reach of the Jewish people toward the ever illuminated star of morality, justice and ideals.

As we set our hearts and minds upon celebration next week, we should also thank God for bringing us to this very wondrous day.

Chag samayach.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

U.S. astronaut Jeffrey Hoffman, the first Jewish man in space (Judith Resnik became the first Jew in space in June 1984) carried four mezuzot and an *atarah*, the inscription on the collar of a tallit, in his flight kit on the space shuttle Discovery. Hoffman, 40, was a past president of the men's club at his Houston-area shul, Congregation Shaar Hasholom.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones BAR TALK
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Israel's legal rights to the land

I must take strong exception to the sentiment expressed in the headline of the April 1st Editor's Desk, "U.S. harms peace hopes." What peace? What hopes? The time is long overdue to stop the sham of a "peace process" that has led nowhere for the past 17 years and replace it once and for all with confirmation of Israel's legal rights to the land.

On April 24 and 25, a worldwide commemoration will be held in San Remo, Italy, of the 90th anniversary of the San Remo Conference, where the Supreme Council of the Allies recognized and codified in international law Israel's legal rights to the land – and which remains valid to this day. (See related story on page 36.)

The notion of "illegally occupied" territories is invalid because these territories, in fact, had not been under the legal sovereignty of any nation when they were liberated by Israel in 1967. International law professor Talia Einhorn has said: "According to international law, Israel has full right to populate the entire Land of Israel with dense Jewish settlements and thus actualize the principles set by the League of Nations in the original Mandate Charter of San Remo in 1920."

In treating Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu so shabbily last month in Washington, D.C., U.S. President Barack Obama inadvertently presented Netanyahu with a golden opportunity to don the mantle of Churchillian statesmanship, ascend the stage of 21st-century world politics, and declare to the nations of the world that there exists a document legally binding on the international community, giving title to the Land of Israel back to the Jews. And we intend to hold them to it!

Goldi Steiner
Chair, Canadian Supporters of Israel's Legal Rights
Toronto

* * *

Unfortunate analogy

In his latest column, Rabbi Dow Marmur warns us that Israel may "become a kind of Jewish version of a Taliban state in which the haredim dominate" ("It's hard to be a Reform Zionist," April 1). Behind this unfortunate choice of analogy is his concern for the future status of those who converted to Judaism outside Israel.

Judaism is not a proselytizing religion. However, throughout its history, some individuals have been willing to undergo the thorough preparation required to convert. Among the 40 representatives of the 40 generations who passed along the Oral Law from Moses until it was written down in the Babylonian Talmud, there were some "righteous converts."

That's why all Jews, regardless of their position on the religious spectrum, should be troubled by the dilution of their ranks brought about by quickie conversions to get married or to immigrate to Israel. Becoming a Jew is more than just learning about a few ideas and festivities. It is a life-changing decision that requires rigorous, but fair, training.

Jaime Oksemberg
Toronto

* * *

Incorrect claims about rice on Pesach

Rabbi Yehiel Ben Ayon makes two claims, both of which are baseless, in his column "Not all Sephardim eat rice on Pesach" (April 1).

1) He claims: "For North African Sephardim, rice is a definite no-go area." This is incorrect. My father, who is from Tunis, ate rice, fava beans and lamb, as the seder meal, as did 95 per cent of Tunisian Jews. An Egyptian friend of mine eats rice on Pesach as well, as per his family tradition. Last I checked, both Tunisia and Egypt were part of Africa. To the best of my knowledge, only Moroccan Jews among Sephardim don't eat rice on Pesach.

2) "North African rabbis never banned rice," and the aversion to rice "began quite logically." Again, this is incorrect. Even Jews from Morocco ate rice until one of their sages discovered a wheat kernel mixed into his rice on Pesach. After that, he urged all his followers to refrain from eating rice on Pesach, which is why Moroccan Jews don't eat rice while most other Sephardim do.

Phil Lumbroso
Montreal

* * *

IAW is an intifadah against truth

To say that this year's Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) was "milder this year" is to admit that our own threshold of acceptance has been lowered to accommodate hate against Israel ("IAW fizzles on Canadian campuses," March 18). I was afraid that this might happen as the IAW campaign grows more professional, has access to unlimited funding domestically and from overseas and has become very slick in its presentation. However, we must never stop fighting IAW, which is an intifadah against truth.

Gary Gerofsky
Dundas, Ont.

LET THEM GO…
Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Surprises in the CJCCC archives

By NAOMI CARUSO

It sometimes happens that certain gifts given to archives end up lying in dark corners unattended for years. The reasons vary – there is a shortage of staff, there is more pressing work, the collection requires a language other than the official English and French – but eventually it all gets done.

This is what happened to a gift from the Oberman family, a collection that came to the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives (CJCCC) prior to 1988.

The collection was placed in three boxes, a short description was entered into the database, and since it turned out to be mostly in Hebrew, it was not looked at more closely.

A language expert was finally found, and earlier this year, the Oberman collection got the treatment it deserved. It turned out to contain quite a few surprises.

Since Yehudit and Morris Oberman were known as fervent Zionists who dedicated their life to working on behalf of Israel, it was assumed that the collection contained documentation pertaining to that. But upon closer scrutiny, the collection was found to contain much more.

The first surprise was discovering that Yehudit Oberman née Braslavsky (1901-2000), came from a very unusual family. Her father, mother and five children, emigrated from Ukraine to the Holy Land in 1905, when Yehudit was four years old. The family settled first in Ramla, a then-Arab village halfway between Jaffa and Jerusalem, where the father ran an inn for about two years. They then moved to Jaffa to allow the children to go to proper schools.

Tragically, within four years of their arrival in Jaffa, the father, aged 42, died, leaving his widow in dire straits as the sole provider of the family. How this brave woman managed under the miserable conditions of the early days of Jewish settlement, during the corrupt regime of the Ottoman Empire, belongs to a separate account. Suffice it to say that she did, and her five children grew and thrived. Of her three daughters, however, two ended up leaving what was then Palestine. Yehudit married Morris Oberman and came to Montreal. Her sister Miriam went to Paris. The three remaining siblings stayed on for the rest of their lives.

The second surprise was two-pronged.

First, was the realization that one of Yehudit's brothers was none other than Yosef Braslavi (1896-1972), the pioneer geographer of the Land of Israel who wrote the first guidebook to the country after walking its length and breath. His six-volume work, *Hayadata et Ha' aretz?* (*Do you know the country?*), is still in print today, as are many other books, articles and pamphlets on the same subject.

(Her other brother, Moshe (1902-1961), was also a writer who wrote extensively on the labour movement in Israel.)

Secondly, there were more than 500 letters written in Hebrew by Yosef Braslavi to his sister, spanning 50 years and covering all the main events of world and Jewish history of the time.

The final surprise lay among the hundreds of folded and twisted pages of those letters. It was a group of photographs mounted as postcards, some dating back to World War I and others to the 1930s. Two seemed especially interesting.

The first depicted a sad looking family sitting under a makeshift cover. The message on the back, in Russian, refers to hard times and the death of the head of the family. Judging by the date of the second postcard, 1919, it could be a Jewish family on its way to exile, having been forced by the Turkish authorities to leave Palestine because they were foreign nationals.

We know more about the second postcard. It was written by Yosef in 1919 from Jerusalem to his beloved Yehudit, and depicted a strangely macabre scene: five men clad in white robes dangle from separate gallows while some soldiers are posing for the picture.

Through the miracle of the Internet, we were put in touch with a Hebrew blog, www. israelitomstones. blogspot.com, run by Oded Israeli, and discovered the meaning of this picture. Israeli had traced a descendent of one of the victims and related the following story.

World War I was a terrible time for the Ottoman Empire – the army was losing battles everywhere and soldiers were deserting in great numbers. At first, an amnesty was declared in the hope of luring the deserters back, but when that failed, military police were employed using informers to catch deserters and put them to death.

Yosef Amozig, a recently arrived immigrant from Morocco, was a successful tailor living in Jerusalem. When war broke out, life in Jerusalem grew very difficult. Gamal Pasha, the Turkish commander in chief at the time, made life miserable for the Jewish population. People lost their livelihood and starved to death, leading to epidemics and general demoralization. Amozig closed his workshop, gave his wife a conditional divorce in case he did not return (for fear of leaving her an agunah) and enlisted in the Turkish army; he was posted to Be'er Sheva as a tailor.

Sometime during his stay there, his commander sent him to Jerusalem to buy material for two suits that he wanted made for himself and gave Amozig a three-day pass. Amozig arrived in Jerusalem, bought the material and reopened his workshop, working day and night to make the suits.

At this point, a tragic set of circumstances set in. Informers noticed him working in his workshop, caught him and put him in prison. He did not have the army permit on him. It was somewhere in his house and could not be found. In addition, his commanding officer for whom he was making the suits was suddenly transferred.

Two weeks later, when his wife finally found the permit and ran with it to the prison, it was too late. The gallows were set up in front of Jaffa Gate and five victims were hanged as an example to all others, Yosef Amozig being one of them.

The five victims were two Jews, two Christian Arabs and one Muslim Arab. A large crowd was present, including many dignitaries. The executioner was a Jewish policeman by the name of Mordechai Sasson, who was a good friend of Amozig's and cried all the while he was doing his duty.

At nine o'clock in the evening, the bodies were taken down and brought to burial. Amozig was buried on the Mount of Olives, not yet 30 years old.

A photographer, Chalil Rad, took pictures before the bodies were removed and displayed them in his shop window. According to one version, when the English took over administration of Palestine, they confiscated all existing copies and prohibited them from being displayed.

What a haunting tale! And it took one small postcard, lying like the proverbial needle in the haystack, to bring it back to life.

It is also a great example of why archives are so important.

Naomi Caruso is a writer and Hebrew translator who often volunteers for the CJCCC Archives.

Two of the photographs mounted on postcards found in the Oberman collection of the Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives.

Opinions

Campus double standards

With theatrical pomp and immaculate precision, the Ann Coulter road show swept across Canada last month, leaving behind it a trail of ruffled feathers and bruised sensibilities.

But even before she set foot in Canada, there was apprehension galore about what the characteristically unpredictable Coulter might say and whom she might offend.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

So, in an effort to tone down what he expected might be an overly confrontational session on his campus, University of Ottawa provost Francois Houle took it upon himself to forward her a letter, cautioning her that "Canada puts reasonable limits on freedom of expression" and advising her to "weigh" her words "with respect and civility in mind." He commented as well that "there is a strong tradition in Canada… of restraint, respect and consideration in expressing even provocative and controversial opinions" and he urged her "to respect that Canadian tradition while on our campus."

Following this warning, and very likely emboldened by it, a large and hostile group of demonstrators saw to it that Coulter's presentation at the university was cancelled.

Coulter is recognized for her brash, provocative and dismissive style. Aside from continuously getting up the noses of U.S. liberals, especially Democrats, she is on record for having at various times offended Muslims, Jews, women and gays. As with other conservative pundits she has her supporters. She also has her detractors – many of them.

But it can be argued that how she was dealt with in Ottawa had much less to do with who she is and much more to do with a glaring and grotesque double standard in how "freedom of expression" is handled on our campuses.

When it relates to someone like Coulter or, for that matter, to Daniel Pipes – another so-called "conservative" commentator, whose invitation to speak at York University a few weeks ago was also cancelled – it's apparent that there is a clear proscription against even listening to views that might challenge the politically correct hypocrisy that permeates the halls of the academy.

Conversely, when Israel-bashing exercises such as "Israeli apartheid week" come to campus, even the most egregious Jew-haters are given free rein to spread their lies and distortions. Somehow, the anti-Semitism that masquerades as anti-Zionism is driven by a different set of rules to those that apply to political pundits with contrarian views. Since when do the demonizers and delegitimizers of Israel and Zionism "weigh their words with respect and civility in mind" or "respect Canadian tradition while on our campuses"?

And when was the last time that Houle or his colleagues at York or elsewhere cautioned them to do so?

Israeli Arabs seek equal opportunities

By LESLIE SUSSER
JTA

A mass demonstration by Israeli Arabs highlighted the core contradiction at the heart of the Israeli-Arab experience: demands for greater equality within Israeli society amid growing alienation from the Israeli state.

Leslie Susser in Jerusalem

An estimated 50,000 demonstrators marched in two long columns March 30 to the Galilee town of Sakhnin to commemorate Land Day, an annual protest against unequal distribution of land resources, and in memory of the six Arabs killed in clashes with Israeli security forces in 1976 and the 13 who died in 2000.

For the first time, large numbers of Arab women took part in the annual protest and there was no police presence along the route or violence. The message, however, was not uniform.

While speakers focused mainly on land allocation, thousands of demonstrators waved Palestinian flags, emphasizing their own Palestinian identity and suggesting identification with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

A few masked men went further. As the procession passed, they hoisted large photographs of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and slain Hezbollah operations chief Imad Mugniyeh. The Hezbollah supporters, however, proved to be in the minority and were forced to leave by Sakhnin municipal stewards.

Although public support for Israel's enemies is rare, there can be little doubt that Israeli Arab alienation from the Jewish state is growing.

In late 2006, the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee called for a large measure of Arab political and cultural autonomy. Israeli Jews saw in this a radical demand for separation from the state. Arab leaders countered that it was more a plea for help and a warning of what might happen unless the Jewish majority makes a genuine effort to integrate the 20 per cent-strong Arab minority as fully equal citizens.

The main Arab accusation on Land Day was that the Israeli government continues to destroy illegally built Arab homes, mainly in the Wadi Ara area of central Israel and the Negev desert in the south, without giving the Arabs a chance to expand their villages, towns and cities legally. The Higher Arab Monitoring Committee says the government of Israel is effectively choking land development in Arab urban and rural areas.

The ensuing tensions have been exacerbated by a string of legislative initiatives by Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, the latest of which is a proposal to open the foreign service only to those who have done military or national service – effectively disqualifying most Arabs.

Lieberman's argument is that Israeli Arabs must be made to realize that sharing in the benefits of Israeli life comes at a price: loyalty to the state. Israeli Arabs, however, see this as discrimination on ethnic grounds.

Writing in *Yediot Achronot*, Mohammed Zeidan, chair of the Higher Arab Monitoring Committee, insisted that the Israeli-Arab struggle is not anti-Israel and has just two goals: equality within Israeli society, especially with regard to land ownership and use; and a just peace between Israel and the Palestinian people based on two states along the 1967 lines.

"Our central message on Land Day is that we are part of Israeli society and we are struggling to remain part of it," he wrote.

Avishai Braverman, a member of the Labor party and the minister in charge of minority affairs, also said that the men who hoisted the photographs should be punished, but insisted that most Arabs want to be part of Israeli society. Braverman argues that integrating Israeli Arabs as equals in Israeli society is a major strategic interest, for security and economic reasons.

A former World Bank economist and president of Ben-Gurion University, Braverman has established a $40-million fund for projects in Arab communities, and intends to raise more, partly from Diaspora Jews. He argues it would be money well spent in defusing what might otherwise become a major existential threat.

"When I go round the country, Arabs say to me, 'Braverman, we finished the university, now we want jobs here because we have nowhere else to go.' On the other side, there are people creating fear and talking about a fifth column. If we don't want the Israeli Arabs to turn against us, we must embrace them."

BBC propagandists caught in the act

Gen. David Petraeus is a busy man. As head of the American Central Command, he's responsible for the U.S. war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the spill-over in Pakistan, and preventing more 9/11 style attacks from Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. He doesn't have time for idle chatter and exchanging pleasantries on the telephone.

But he did have time recently for a highly publicized phone call to Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, chief of staff of the Israel Defence Forces. Petraeus wanted to correct the flood of false reports, broadcast on the BBC and Al Jazeera, and printed in fringe blogs as well as prestigious journals, in which he allegedly blamed Israel for fanning Arab and Muslim anger, thereby endangering American lives. In the fictitious version, Petraeus was quoted as linking jihadi terror to east Jerusalem construction, thereby "stunning" the White House.

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

For the leaders of the campaign to delegitimize and isolate Israel, and strip away its foundation of support from the United States, the invented Petraeus story was perfectly timed. They exploited friction over Jerusalem that surfaced during U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden's recent trip to Israel and continued during Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's meetings with President Barack Obama at the White House.

This activity also took place during the annual AIPAC meeting. Another piece of the invented Petraeus briefing had the U.S. military joining the conspiracy theorists and placing itself in opposition to the "powerful… Israeli lobby" by announcing that "America's relationship with Israel is important, but not as important as the lives of America's soldiers."

On the same day, Israel was also a headline story in London, after the British government expelled the Mossad station chief as punishment for forged U.K. passports linked to the Dubai killing of a Palestinian terror leader.

The veteran propagandists at the BBC merged these two stories, triumphantly declaring Israeli isolation, and broadcasting interviews with Mark Perry, the main purveyor of these fictions. (In contrast, the *New York Times* avoided the propaganda. Its story on Israeli tensions with the British and American governments didn't mention Petraeus.)

The central role of Perry in all of this is important. Perry is a hyperactive self-promoter – a minor journalist who morphed into an "adviser" to former Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat. In his eagerness to star in the media, Perry peddled rumours that fed his bank account, feeding customers willing to believe anything that weakened Israel.

One version of Perry's propaganda was posted on the website of *Foreign Policy*, a supposedly prestigious and credible publication. Here, Perry wrote that a briefing team sent by Petraeus had warned of "a growing perception among Arab leaders that the U.S. was incapable of standing up to Israel, that CENTCOM's mostly Arab constituency was losing faith in American promises, that Israeli intransigence on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was jeopardizing U.S. standing in the region."

The editors neglected to check the facts, or to tell readers that Perry had once been on Arafat's payroll, and then made his living from an NGO (Conflicts Forum) funded by naive European government officials that promote an ideology calling for the legitimation of, and negotiation with, terror groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. However, *Foreign Policy*'s website also features noted Israel-basher and conspiracy theorist Stephen Walt, and intelligent readers filter fact from fiction.

For the BBC, the embarrassment at being caught in the act is painful. For many years, evidence of anti-Israel bias and crude propaganda has been mounting, including the excellent reports on the BBC Watch website. In 2004, BBC officials were forced to accept an internal investigation, led by Malcolm Balen. But his report has been stamped "top secret," and many of the journalists responsible for the bias continue to be employed by the public broadcaster.

After the Petraeus affair, the need for a full-blown public investigation of the BBC's bias against Israel will be difficult to dismiss. For BBC's audience, the image as the world's most credible source of information on current events has been further tarnished. *Caveat emptor.*

The Kirshner File

Selections from the Toronto Jewish Film Festival

The annual Toronto Jewish Film Festival is a cultural event of the first magnitude. Judging by the lineup, this year's edition is one of the best, brimming with emotionally and intellectually stimulating documentaries and feature films. A sampler:

The People V.[1] Leon Frank (Tuesday, April 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema) charts the course of an appalling incident of racial prejudice in the United States in the early 20th century. It concerns Leo Frank, the Jewish manager of a pencil factory in Atlanta, who was wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to be hanged.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Ben Loeterman, the director of this riveting documentary, traces the trajectory of his case through dramatizations, court transcripts, letters written by Frank and his wife to each other and interviews with observers who have a special interest in this miscarriage of justice.

The Frank affair began in 1913 when one of his employees, 13-year-old Mary Phagan, was found murdered in the factory. Suspicion did not immediately fall on Frank, but a pair of detectives who questioned him thought he was nervous and fidgety.

After an African-American employee accused him of being an unsavoury character, Frank was imprisoned. Worse still, a procession of young women who had worked for him claimed he had a leering eye. Frank's trial ignited a wave of hatred and xenophobia throughout Georgia. He was a handy target, a Northerner and a Jew.

The prosecutor was hailed as a hero after Frank was convicted. Thomas Watson, a populist publisher, inflamed the situation by printing anti-Semitic innuendos in his newspaper. Frank appealed, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against him. The governor of Georgia commuted his sentence in 1915 after fresh evidence exonerating Frank emerged. A mob, consisting of upstanding citizens, broke into Frank's cell. After abducting him, they lynched Frank, the first and only Jew in American history to meet such a fate. In Phagan's honour, racists in Georgia formed the modern Ku Klux Klan.

A chilling film about racism and a perversion of justice.

***

As a teenager, I devoured Superman comics. Like my contemporaries in the 1950s and '60s, I was drawn to this larger-than-life hero who could defy villains but who, as Clark Kent, a reticent reporter on the *Daily Planet*, could churn out fast-breaking news stories on demand. In time, I amassed a considerable collection of comic books chronicling the scintillating adventures of Superman and the characters he knew, including cub reporter Jimmy Olsen and star reporter Lois Lane, Superman's love interest. To my eternal regret, my father threw my priceless collection into a garbage bin.

Brad Ricca's film, *Last Son* (Tuesday, April 20 at 8:15 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre), brings back nostalgic memories. This engaging documentary, which incorporates never-before-seen archival footage, is a biopic on Superman's Jewish creators, Joe Shuster and Jerome (Jerry) Siegel.

Superman was created by two Jews.

Siegel, a resident of Cleveland, developed the storyline of an amazing man of steel and superhuman powers who disguises himself as a mild-mannered journalist. Shuster, a Toronto-born Canadian who met Siegel in Cleveland, fleshed out Superman's exploits with his kinetic illustrations.

Siegel, a fan of science fiction pulp magazines and a devotee of magic, launched his career by writing stories for the high school paper. Shuster, a body-builder, was on the same wavelength as Siegel. According to Ricca, the boys were influenced by the supernatural tale of the Golem, the short stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs and the swashbuckling Tarzan movies.

By all accounts, Benny Friedman, the all-American college quarterback, served as one of the physical models of Superman. Lois Lane was supposedly modelled after two women Siegel fell for: Lois Amster, a fellow high school student, and Joanne Kovacs, his second wife. Siegel is said to have plucked Lois Lane's name from a pulp magazine.

Alas, Siegel and Shuster imprudently burned the prototype of their first Superman comic, which was rejected by countless publishers. Their second and successful prototype was rescued from the slush pile by an underling at Action Comics. To their lasting misfortune, they sold away the rights for a measly $130. *Last Son* recounts the rise of Superman with style and panache.

***

Hillel Kook, otherwise known as Peter Bergson, was a driven person who was committed to saving Jews in peril during the Holocaust. He acquired his passion after reading an account about the reported murder of two million Jews under Nazi occupation. Incredibly enough, it was buried on page 8 in the *Washington Post*.

Peter Bergson

Pierre Sauvage's indignant film, *Not Idly By: Peter Bergson, America and the Holocaust* (Wednesday, April 21 at 3: 30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema), derives its title from a comment uttered by Bergson. "We stood idly by," he declared, charging that mainstream Jewish organizations did precious little to try to rescue their brethren in Europe.

A Zionist Revisionist born in Lithuania and raised in Palestine, Bergson's accusations are contained in a television interview he conducted in 1978, 23 years before his death. Accusing Jewish leaders, particularly Rabbi Stephen Wise, of inaction and silence, he leaves no doubt that fewer Jews would have been killed had American Jews acted decisively and lobbied the U.S. government for support. At the very least, he observes, the Allies could have bombed Auschwitz. "We could have slowed the massacre," he claims.

Not Idly By packs quite a punch.

***

Fabrice Genestal's feature film, *Hidden Children* (Sunday, April 18 at 1 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema and Tuesday, April 20 at 4:30 p.m. at Silver City Richmond Hill), unfolds during the Holocaust in France, and is inspired by real events. A Jewish couple in danger of deportation entrusts their two young sons, Robert and Gerald Finaly, to the care of a Catholic woman. When she is denounced, she hands over the boys to a convent in Paris.

Eventually, they are hidden by a devoutly pious Christian woman whose theological view of Jews is less than benevolent. After World War II, their saviour and the boys' aunt in Palestine lock horns in an epic battle for their custody that embroils the Catholic church, the Vatican, the chief rabbi and the courts. An expertly crafted movie, *Hidden Children* explores a facet of the Holocaust that disrupted untold lives long after the Nazis had gone down to defeat.

***

The late William Kunstler was a radical American civil rights and criminal lawyer who stood up to injustice and risked his reputation by aligning himself with unpopular defendants. His daughters, Emily and Sarah, are the co-directors of *William Kunstler: Disturbing the Universe* (Sunday, April 25 at 3:30 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema), which is billed as an attempt to understand a complex individual. Kunstler, who started as an unremarkable lawyer in suburban America, fought for African-Americans and native Indians and protested the war in Vietnam.

He also defended the assassin of Rabbi Meir Kahane, the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing, a rapist, a drug dealer and Mafia kingpin John Gotti. However, the case that transformed him into a fullblown national celebrity was the Chicago 8 trial in 1969, which turned on free speech and the First Amendment.

In general, the filmmakers admire their father, but they are puzzled and alienated by some of his choices.

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Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah

Hermann Leiningen, grandson of King Boris III of Bulgaria *[Ron Csillag photo]*
Inset: King Boris III of Bulgaria

Bulgarian king lauded for saving Jews

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

Hermann Leiningen is soft-spoken, humble and unfailingly polite – traits he says he inherited from the grandfather he never met.

Something you wouldn't know right away about the unassuming Toronto banker, despite just a hint of a regal bearing, is that his full title is His Serene Highness, Prince Hermann Friedrich Fernando Roland zu Leiningen.

That's right: "Prince." A real one.

He's the great-grandson of King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, and through his father, a direct descendant of Queen Victoria. He is 126th in line to the British throne.

A more direct royal bloodline is via his late grandfather, King Boris III of Bulgaria, a much-loved monarch among whose lesser-known exploits was his refusal to surrender his country's Jews to the Nazis during World War II, resulting in the rescue of Bulgaria's 50,000-strong Jewish population.

Which is why on April 14 at 8 p.m., Leiningen, a 46-year-old Orthodox Christian, will accept an award from Chabad of Markham paying posthumous tribute to his heroic grandfather. The honour is to be presented to him by a group of Bulgarian Holocaust survivors who owe their lives to King Boris.

The story may not be as well-known as King Christian's rescue of his Jewish subjects in Denmark, but it's certainly no less dramatic: despite several meetings with Adolf Hitler, Boris, referred to in history books variously as king or czar, steadfastly refused to ship his country's Jews to Nazi-occupied Poland and its death mills.

In fact, Leiningen, an international investment expert with RBC, told *The CJN* in a recent interview that despite intense demands from Berlin, the king stuck to his "three nos:" no war with Russia, no German occupation of Bulgaria and no deportations of Jews.

"He was neutral in many ways," Leiningen said, gazing out onto Toronto's skyline from his 23rd floor office. "And I think [by] being neutral, in many instances, he postponed making big decisions by saying 'not now.'"

Boris ascended to the throne in 1918 following Bulgaria's defeat in World War I. When World War II broke out, the country declared neutrality, but joined the Axis in March 1941. In return, Bulgaria annexed lands it had longed claimed, namely, western Thrace from Greece and Macedonia from Yugoslavia.

As a Nazi ally, Bulgaria enacted anti-Jewish legislation. The Law for the Protection of the Nation prohibited Jews from voting, running for office, working for the government, intermarrying or owning land.

Even so, Boris had forged several personal relationships with members of the Jewish community. And his father, King Ferdinand, had personally financed the building of the synagogue in 1909 in the capital, Sofia.

Historians agree there was also a general absence of anti-Semitism among the populace. Most Bulgarian Jews were highly assimilated.

Some historians, however, have been less than kind to Boris, claiming he was weak-willed and sided with the Nazis only to regain lost territories. They've alleged that the dangerous game of protecting Jews fell mainly to one of his government ministers, Dimiter Peshev, and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

But as "an absolute monarch, the final decisions had to be made by [the king], regardless of what the parliament or church said," Leiningen counters. He lauds the people of Bulgaria and the church, but "it was a combined effort."

Besides, "had my grandfather not had this loose alliance with Germany, the Germans would have come into Bulgaria, would have gone into Russia, and the chances are, like in all the other occupied territories, there would have been deportations of Jews."

Continued on page 13

Chabad honours Bulgarian king

Continued from page 12

What Boris was unable to accomplish, however, was to save the Jews of the newly administered regions of Thrace and Macedonia. A total of 11,385 of these Jews were rounded up by Bulgarian forces and shipped to Treblinka.

Leiningen recognizes that as a sore point.

"Well, they were part of a territory that had been occupied by Germany, and as a result, it was a lot more difficult."

Leiningen, who was born in Toronto and has three real-life princesses for daughters, doesn't advertise his royal status, but he doesn't shy away from it either.

"My mother always said, 'Don't publicize, but be proud of your background. If someone asks, be available and tell the story.'

"I love talking about it. I'm learning more every day about my background."

And the story has no shortage of intrigue.

For one, King Boris died under mysterious circumstances just two weeks after his final meeting with Hitler in the summer of 1943. He was not yet 50. For decades, conspiracy theories swirled that he was administered a slow poison by Hitler's henchmen or murdered by Communist agents who knew that Bulgaria was about to fall into their hands and thought it would be easier to rule without a king.

(Boris's body was never found, but his heart was discovered after the Communists' fall in the early 1990s. An autopsy revealed that he likely died of a heart attack brought on by extreme stress).

By that time, Germany needed Bulgaria as an ally, because Italy had surrendered just six days after Boris' death. One year after that, the Red Army entered Bulgaria.

Banker's grandfather saved Jews during war

Boris was replaced on the throne by his six-year-old son, Simeon, who ruled by regency until 1946, when the Communists abolished the monarchy. They also executed Leiningen's great-uncle and all members of Bulgaria's parliament.

But Simeon wasn't through. He triumphantly returned to post-Communist Bulgaria and was the country's prime minister from 2001 to 2005.

Meanwhile, Leiningen's parents, Prince Karl and Princess Maria Luisa, came to Canada in the late 1950s. The German-born Karl had a soft spot for the country, says his son, because he'd been captured by Canadian troops while serving with the German army during World War II.

He stayed in Canada until 1969 and spent the last 20 years of his life in Vered HaGalil, a horse ranch and farm on the Sea of Galilee. What drew him to Israel? "No one could really figure it out," Leiningen says.

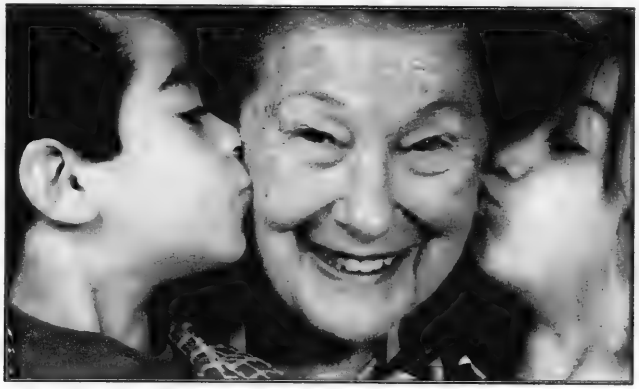
As for what motivated his grandfather to defy Hitler and save "his" Jews, Leiningen doesn't pause: "He was a very believing and spiritual man. His belief in God and God's will, were likely the biggest factors in helping make the decisions he made."

Chabad of Markham plans to unveil a "Tolerance Garden" at its Green Lane location to recognize King Boris and other notables who saved Jews during the Holocaust.

Leiningen says he's "overwhelmed" by Chabad's award, but "it's really for my grandfather. It's for what he did and the people he helped."

TORONTO COMMUNITY REMEMBERS

Gabriella Starker Saxe and Robert Saxe lit the candle for the righteous among the nations on behalf of her grandmother at the Holocaust commemoration ceremony in Toronto.
Please see page 14 for story.
[Rita Poliakov photo]



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Yom Hashoah V'Hagvurah

Community service draws 2,500 to Earl Bales

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

As a Holocaust survivor, Peter Silverman is often asked if he wants revenge on the Nazis. His answer is simple. He's already gotten his revenge.

"When I went to Israel, to a public school, I saw hundreds of kids yelling and jumping. This is my revenge. We won. We are here," he said.

Silverman, a co-founder of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, was one of about 2,500 Torontonians to attend the Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah community Holocaust commemoration on Sunday in Earl Bales Park. The memorial – which is sponsored by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem and the federation's Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre– is the second-largest of its kind in the world, followed only by the ceremony in Israel.

As one of the organizers, Silverman spent three months working on logistics. He did it for the same reason that he helped found the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem in 1985.

"We realized that Holocaust deniers are very smart. If they can deny [the Holocaust] when I'm alive, what's going to happen when I'm gone?... At our age, we're losing a few [survivors] every year," said Silverman, who participated in the event's candlelighting ceremony. "[We need to] make sure this is remembered forever."

Lorraine Sandler, chair of the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre, sees the event as a chance to educate the community.

"We have many aging survivors who we need to commemorate," she said. "We also have children and grandchildren who understand their obligation... to be the bearers of [survivors'] stories."

For Sandler, hearing these stories is a way to put a face to a staggering number.

"The idea of six million is so enormous," she said. "For six million people, there are six million stories."

Judy Weissenberg Cohen, a Holocaust survivor who was the keynote speaker at the event, agrees.

At the ceremony, which included a speech by Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general in Toronto, Weissenberg Cohen discussed the role of women during the Holocaust and their unique struggles, which she saw first-hand in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

"The most degrading phase for women... was played out in the death camps. As a survivor of the camps, I'm a witness to this," she said, adding that, for the Nazis, a woman's life was intertwined with her child's.

"To enter Auschwitz visibly pregnant was a definite death sentence," she said. "One of the most heart-breaking tasks was for women to collect empty strollers from the gas chambers."

Keren Romm, 29, who attended the ceremony, sees the event as an opportunity for Toronto youth to humanize the Holocaust.

"I think it allows the survivors to come together and be respected," she said. "[For kids], it takes it out of the classrooms."

The Law Society of Upper Canada, in partnership with B'nai Brith Canada, held a Holocaust memorial event on Monday to mark National Holocaust Memorial Day.

Coverage of the April 12 Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah memorial ceremony in Ottawa can be found at www.cjnews.com.

Federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff shakes hands with Peter Silverman, a Holocaust survivor and co-founder of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, before the memorial event. *[Rita Poliakov photo]*

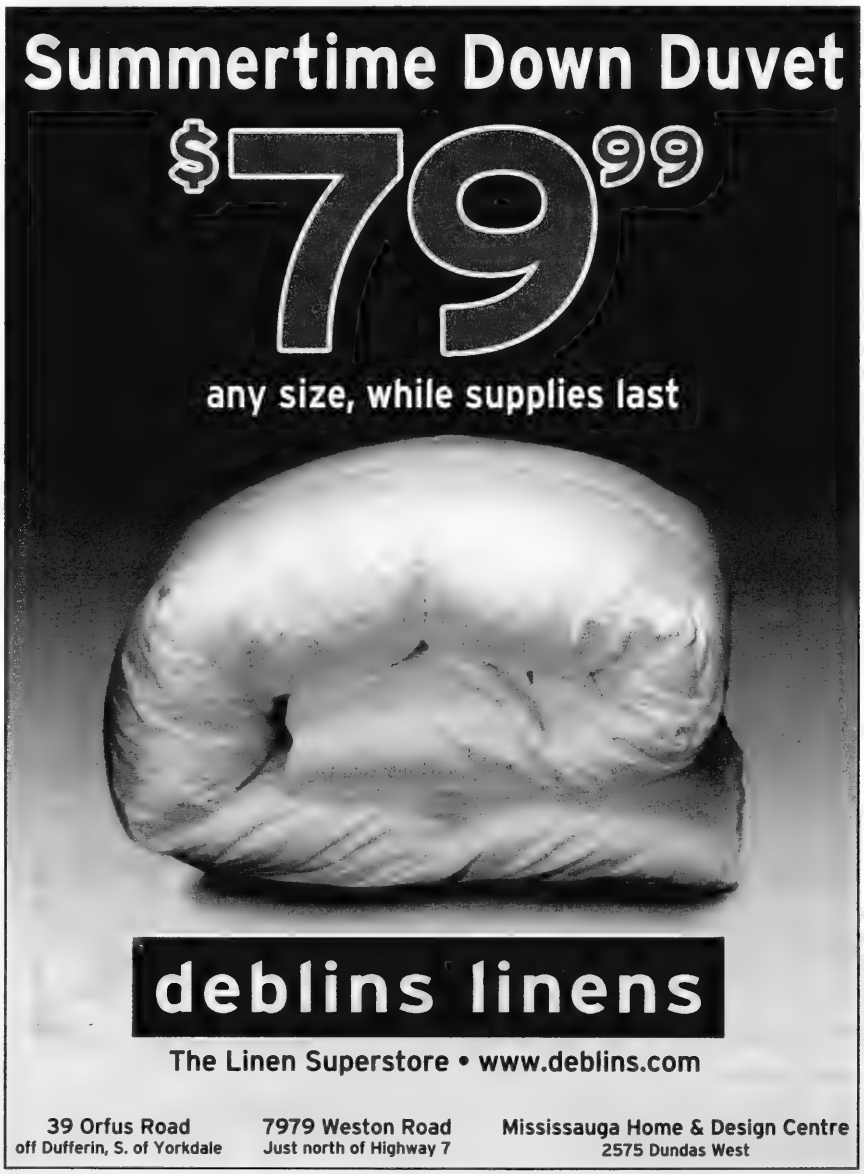
Statement by Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff on Holocaust Memorial Day

"On Yom Hashoah, we remember a crime against humanity whose horror stands through time as a stark reminder of man's capacity for evil. We also remember the courage of those who survived, and we honour those who still live among us.

We remember the righteous among the nations, who risked their own lives to save others.

On Yom Hashoah, as Canadians, we pay tribute to the men and women of our armed forces, who liberated Europe from Nazi tyranny. And we recall, with enduring shame, the indifference of "none is too many."

We will always remain vigilant against all forms of hatred, racism and discrimination. We will keep faith with the memory of the six million, and the lives of the survivors. And we will look forward with hope to a future where the world knows the serenity of tolerance and peace."



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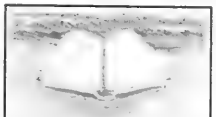
Jewish Life

Paths to enlightenment

By RABBI LEIGH LERNER

The Italians say, "*I medici e la guerra spopolare la terra*," medics and war depopulate the earth. This week's parshah, Tazria-Metzora, discusses the priestly practices concerning skin diseases that might do the same. However, these Torah portions don't really focus on medicine: they focus on keeping "the camp," i.e. the community, holy. They deal with public spirituality.



Rabbinic Reflections

We are in an age of private spirituality. Individual religious concerns centre on the inner being of the person. Wider communal concerns play a smaller role.

Everyone knows the story of the Jewish woman who climbed the Himalayas to meet the Great Guru of Nepal. She was allowed to speak only three words to this Zen master, so she said, "Sheldon, come home." The quest for personal spirituality permits religious seekers to wander far from the tradition in which they were raised.

Maimonides laid out a four-step program for individual spirituality. In his program, the lowest level of spirituality revolves around things. The Rambam considers people who relate to the world through things as at a low level of spiritual development, for all things pass away and are bound to fail spiritually.

Maimonides' next level up the scale of spirituality relates to family. Those who find inspiration in their family have moved a step forward. In family, we find love, joy, a future and a hope, the foundations of Jewish living.

Still, a family without ethical principles may provide love and solidarity, but it fails to improve the wider world. So the next spiritual rung on Maimonides' ladder takes us to the level of ethics. In ethical action, we improve the world around us and practise those mitzvot, those commandments that affect relations between one human being and another.

Maimonides remains convinced, however, that most ethical practices simply reflect the mores of the day, and not some eternal goodness. While moral behaviour deserves the highest respect and manifests a level of spirituality approaching the heights, it does not sit at the top.

What, then, does Maimonides consider the highest level of spirituality? When the Torah describes God as speaking face to face with Moses, Maimonides interprets this to mean that Moses and God were on the same wavelength. In *Star Trek* terms, they had a Vulcan mind meld. Moses could attune himself to the Divine mind and apprehend God's thoughts. Maimonides' peak spirituality might seem to reflect today's individual spirituality, but look at how Maimonides proposes we arrive there.

First, we must be highly educated. To Rambam that meant being steeped in Torah and biblical literature, Talmud and Greek philosophy, the science of his age. With education, the mind could become attuned to divine emanations. Then whoever desired to exercise high-level spirituality must also become a leader, learning how to form the opinions and the actions of his community.

Comparing today's inner spirituality to Maimonides' program, we see that today's concerns, which centre on inner feelings and inner judgment, reflect the influence of romanticism, an exaggerated emphasis on the will and the emotions of the individual. Today's spirituality centres on the quick fix, as opposed to the long and intellectually challenging education. Today's spirituality lacks an emphasis on learning to lead and the ethical service to community leadership requires.

We can be heartened by the emphasis on spirituality today. Perhaps the contemporary world will rediscover forms of training similar to those prescribed by Maimonides, requiring study of texts, training for leadership and service to community. May those who advocate a personal, private spirituality find inspiration in a world far greater than themselves alone.

Rabbi Leigh Lerner is spiritual leader of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom in Montreal.

Case for God is complex but lucid

***The Case for God* by Karen Armstrong, Alfred A. Knopf, publisher.**

Karen Armstrong is an acclaimed scholar of world religions and an astonishingly prolific author.

The Case for God, although lengthy and complex, is at the same time lucid and eloquent. The volume contains informative and enlightening chapters on such subjects as faith and reason, atheism, unknowing, death of God, science and religion and silence.

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

For many readers, her response to the recent outspoken critics of religion will be of greatest interest.

In her introduction to the book she writes, "There is a long religious tradition that stressed the importance of recognizing the limits of our knowledge, of silence, reticence and awe. That is what I hope to explore in this book. One of the conditions of enlightenment has always been a willingness to let go of what we thought we knew in order to appreciate truths we had never dreamed of. We may have to unlearn a great deal about religion before we can move on to new insight."

She asserts that nothing about God can be put into words. The mystery at the heart of religious belief is ineffable, unapproachable by reason or language. God is a metaphor or symbol for the kind of spirituality that flows from immersion in the realms of art or music.

That almost mystical enhancement, the result of sustained effort and practice, is the kind of religion beyond words that can make modern men and women more forgiving, courageous, selfless and helpful.

Much of this seems beyond what the average person would regard as meaningful or useful religious belief. Avowed atheist Richard Dawkins has said that Armstrong must be living in a dream world if she expects fundamentalists of all religious faiths to accept her abstruse, rarified approach to God.

More than 800 years ago, some rabbis, in their opposition to the teachings of Maimonides, argued that a God concept, purged of all anthropomorphism is too abstract to be comforting. "The God of the philosophers is too remote" to be addressed as "Thou." Absolute logic demolishes faith, and no amount of post-logical rationalizing can restore the trust with which the unsophisticated pietist turns to God.

Maimonides' impact on Judaism was least enduring in the realm of theology and philosophy.

The Case for God offers open-minded seekers for new religious insights much to contemplate and digest.

* * *

***Shattering Glass* by Nancy-Gay Rotstein, Penguin Press.**

The author of this absorbing novel, first published some years ago, now available in a splendid new enlarged format, has attracted the attention of readers in 10 countries.

Nancy-Gay Rotstein, acclaimed for her books of poetry, has had extensive experience in the fields of law, politics, business and the arts.

Shattering Glass is the cautionary tale of three successful women who have overcome a variety of obstacles to attain gratifying high positions at an unenviable cost in family dysfunction and breakdown.

Was it all worth it – the strivings, unsavoury compromises, neglect of children, conflict with husbands and unwelcome pangs of conscience?

At the book's conclusion, sharing in the ambience of an Italian spa, Judy, Dede and Barbara are startled by an unexpected ambiguous telegram. Each fears the ominous message it bears. Suddenly, readers are confronted with their anxiety, guilt and multiple fears.

The author, with an unerring ear for dialogue, a poet's gift for language and the limning of character has written a creative work that resonates long after the book has been completed.

Jewish Life

The pros and cons of Shoah education

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

The current status of Holocaust education reflects perhaps a mixed blessing. On the one hand, the level of pedagogy in regard to the Shoah has clearly improved in recent years. Even as recently as 1992, the eminent historian, the late Lucy Dawidowicz, in her essay *How They Teach the Holocaust*, could lament what she saw as the woeful state of affairs in terms of materials that were ill-conceived and unsophisticated and curricula that were overly sentimental and taught badly. On the other hand, the use of the Holocaust in Jewish education continues to escalate, leading to fundamental questions about its actual purpose in a Jewish curriculum and whether it is relied upon too heavily to inspire forms of Jewish identity that have withered in certain quarters.

The automatic gravitas that accompanies the introduction of the Shoah in the classroom clearly has benefits. Teachers can expect a certain level of student attentiveness, given that the usual fidgeting and talking in the midst of a lesson, if it occurred in the midst of the recounting the burning bodies of Auschwitz, would be insensitive to say the least.

But talking about painful death in mass numbers – what Stacy Weiner aptly called "teaching the unteachable" – will certainly test the skill of the teacher to coax the student out of either escaping from the material or, worse, relegating it to the mundane. As Weiner asserts, "Faced with nightmarish images – gassing, cremation, rampant disease and hunger – a student may snatch his mind away as instinctively as he would pull his hand from a fire."

It was Emil Fackenheim who converted memory of the Shoah into a kind of contemporary formula for Jewish continuity. His "614th" commandment – "do not hand Hitler any posthumous victories" – was a rallying cry linking Jewish assimilation and intermarriage directly to post-Holocaust guilt. After Auschwitz, one is commanded to maintain Jewish tradition and marry within the fold so as not to trivialize the sacrifice of six million martyrs or ironically help Hitler "finish the job" that he started.

But despite the initial appeal of Fackenheim's concept, capturing, as David Singer asserts, "the sentiments… of Jewish shoe salesmen, accountants, policemen, cab-drivers, secretaries," it has become difficult from an educational perspective to forge a continuous and positive Jewish identity simply as a refutation of heinous anti-Semitism. (Or as a secular student of mine once remarked, "The Holocaust makes me anti-Nazi, not pro-Halachah.")

Notwithstanding the great amount of resources poured into Holocaust education for both young people and adults, the risk of what Simone Schweber documents in her article *Holocaust Fatigue in Teaching Today* is very real. As Schweber argues, the atmosphere in classrooms has shifted from what she calls "Holocaust awe" to a default position in which the Shoah is seen as interesting, but not awesome: "Where I once worried that the sanctification of the Holocaust stifled learning, I now worry that trivialization of the Holocaust impedes its understanding."

Remembering the martyred Jewish dead is a sacred and solemn obligation. But memorializing them as the sole marker of one's Jewishness is fraught with peril, and ultimately such a strategy will have trouble withstanding the lure of assimilation and, of course – especially as the last survivors leave us – the simple passage of time.

Hebrew and Israeli apps

By MARK MIETKIEWICZ

Last week, we looked at some of the free Jewish-themed apps you can find in Apple's App Store that can be downloaded and run on an iPhone, iPod Touch and soon in Canada, the iPad. The store contains more than 150,000 applications (programs). These apps take advantage of the iPhone's sophistication and portability to provide you with solutions to problems you probably don't even know you have. **[bit.ly/happ01]**

Israeli programmers have been hard at work creating Hebrew-language apps for the iPhone. Many of these deliver the news, help teach you some basic Hebrew vocabulary and maybe even answer your prayers. Most of these apps are in Hebrew only, but even if you're not fluent in the language, try downloading a few. After all, they're all free.

News

• Chadashot 2 (Hebrew) – This is a very impressive app that provides short news summaries as well as comprehensive video reports right to your iPhone. Excellent execution. **[bit.ly/happ12]**

• Hebrew news from Israel's major dailies: Ynet/Yediot Achronot **[bit.ly/happ13]**; nrg/Ma'ariv **[bit.ly/happ14]**; Ha'aretz **[bit.ly/happ15]** and Globes **[bit.ly/happ16]**

• Datili (Hebrew) – News about Israel's religious communities. (This app was not displaying text properly when I tested it.) **[bit.ly/happ17]**

• One.co.il (Hebrew) – Sports news. Some stories are accompanied by videos. **[bit.ly/happ32]**

• Informa.T.V. (Hebrew) – What are Israelis watching right now? Here are the up-to-date Israeli TV listings **[bit.ly/happ18]**

The economy

• Israel Money (Hebrew) – Israeli stock indices and currency information at a glance along with financial news. **[bit.ly/ happ21]**

• ShekelCalc – This standard calculator that has two extra buttons that will convert most major currencies to and from Israeli shekalim. **[bit.ly/happ20]**

Hebrew tutors and translators

• Mila-4-Phone – (English) Flash cards appear and are read aloud to you in Hebrew. Shake for random words. Very nice app thanks to Birthright Israel. **[bit.ly/happ22]**

• Hebrew/English Translator – Type a word or phrase in English or Hebrew and get an instant translation care of Google's translation service. The translation may not always be perfect but could certainly help in a pinch. **[bit.ly/happ23]**

Games

• GeoMania (Hebrew) – Race against the clock to identify cities and points of interest on a globe. **[bit.ly/happ25]**

• Psychobali Lite (Hebrew) – Vocabulary game geared toward Hebrew speakers. Choosing the right meaning for a Hebrew word isn't so easy as the clock ticks down. **[bit.ly/happ24]**

Israel reference and tourism

• ClickATable (Hebrew) – Information about more than 1,000 Israeli restaurants. Sort by region, cuisine and kashrut. When you find something tempting, reserve your table online. **[bit.ly/happ29]**

• Chayot b'Yisrael (Hebrew) – Photos and text about animals, fish, reptiles and insects native to Israel. **[bit.ly/happ26]**

• Dapei Zahav (Hebrew) – Let your fingers do the walking through the interactive listing of Israel's Golden Pages. **[bit.ly/happ27]**

• iTheory IL Lite (Hebrew) – Learn the Israeli rules of the road along with traffic sign info and even a primer on how cars work. **[bit.ly/happ28]**

• Israel Weather (English) – Just what it promises, including forecasts, wave and wind info and a satellite shot of the region. **[bit.ly/happ30]**

And finally, there's @TheKotel (English) – Even when you can't make it to Jerusalem to place a note in the Western Wall, you're always as close as your handheld device. Tap a brief prayer onto your iPhone, click the "Amen" button and your message will be printed out and placed into a crevice of the Kotel. **[bit.ly/happ31]**

* * *

Do you have a Jewish or Israeli app that you can't do without? Do you want to spread the word? Tell me about it and I'll mention the best in a future column.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based website producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be contacted at highway@rogers.com.

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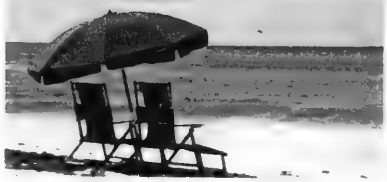

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Yom Ha'atzmaut events focus on Israeli arts

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The Consulate General of Israel is sponsoring a feast for the eyes of Torontonians in celebration of Israel's 62nd Independence Day.

On Tuesday, April 20, an eclectic array of Israeli art and design will be on concurrent displays at galleries across the city in three daylong exhibits.

While the public is welcome to visit the exhibits, the consulate has issued invitations allowing free access for diplomats, politicians and various media representatives so that they can experience Israeli arts and culture as part of this year's Yom Ha'atzmaut festivities.

An installation called *From Melting Pot Into the Fire: Contemporary Ceramics in Israel* will be on display at the Gardiner Museum (111 Queen's Park) from 10 a.m to 6 p.m.

Visitors will have the chance to view ceramic creations by 42 leading Israeli artists.

According to the museum website, guests will be exposed to "37 works of art that were originally shown in 2007 as part of the Fourth Biennale for Israeli Ceramics at the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv. Many of the works in the exhibition are highly conceptual and address complex issues involving questions of identity and the uncertainty of life in contemporary Israel."

The exhibition runs until May 9.

This ceramic creation titled "Hand-warmers" is on display at the Gardiner Museum.
[Leonid Padrul-Kwitkowsky photo]

Meanwhile, on Bay Street, the consulate will also host *From Mediterranean Traditional to Israeli Contemporary Design*, at the Design Exchange (234 Bay St.) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

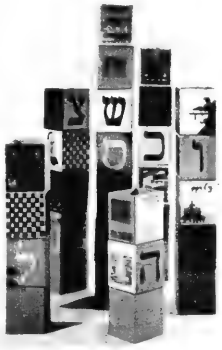
The Design Exchange calls the exhibition one of "current Israeli industrial design, examining what makes this country unique on the world stage. The exciting, dramatic and colourful pieces on display include furniture, lighting, and recreation equipment."

This collection is on display until June 20.

Lastly, in the Distillery District, at the Julie M. Gallery (55 Mill St., Bldg. 37), the newest collection of works by award-winning Israeli painter Anat Betzer, titled "Purple Rain," will be displayed from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Betzer's work will be featured at the gallery until April 25.

Asked why there is a focus on arts and culture for this anniversary, Amir Gissin, Israeli consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, said: "Israeli culture is becoming central to the strategy of our work. We believe that by exposing the public to Israeli culture, our job becomes easier, because they learn about Israel from new [avenues] that they were never exposed to before. Be that design, ceramics or paintings."



Israeli ceramics at Gardiner Museum

He added this is more of a chance for people outside the Jewish and Israeli communities to discover different aspects of Israel.

"This shows our [invited] guests what Israel has to offer beyond the regular, traditional, diplomatic reception," he said.

Gissin said capitalizing on the exhibits – all of which had started their runs in the city earlier this year – was a "natural" decision.

The day will be capped by UJA Federation's of Greater Toronto's Community Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration, an early evening outdoor party from 4:30 to 8 p.m. at Mel Lastman Square (5100 Yonge St.).

Partygoers will be treated to live Israeli music, inflatable carnival rides, arts and crafts, children's entertainment and Israeli food.

The event will also feature a live concert by Jaffa Road, the acclaimed Toronto-based world music group. The group was nominated for a 2010 Juno Award for world music album of the year.

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Temple Sinai honours 'keeper of sacred music'

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Ben Steinberg has spent half his life serving Toronto's Temple Sinai Congregation, where he is composer-in-residence.

On the synagogue's website, Steinberg is credited as "our guardian of tradition and keeper of sacred music." To honour him and celebrate his 80th birthday, which was in January, the synagogue is hosting a musical celebration on Friday, April 30.

The evening will feature the Cleveland Duo and James Umble, a musical trio who as part of their performance will perform *Asei L'cha Rav*, originally written in honour of the retirement of Temple Sinai's founding Rabbi Jordan Pearlson, who died in 2008. The piece features a traditional *misheberach* prayer that blesses those who serve their communities.

In his comfortable and calm office at the temple, Steinberg spoke of his "very close and warm relationship" with the congregation. After he retired as music director in 1996, he was invited to stay on in his current role.

"I'm still composing, and sometimes I continue to do a little bit of lecturing," Steinberg said. His career has included travel to several American cities, as well as Hong Kong and Australia, often as a scholar-in-residence.

A Japanese *koto* – a stringed musical instrument – on display in his office is a souvenir from Japan, where Steinberg has toured four times, most recently three years ago.

A widely respected composer, conductor and lecturer, Steinberg has received numerous awards and honours, including two from the city of Jerusalem, where he was an artist-in-residence in 1978. His 1979 cantata, *Echoes of Children*, commemorating the 1.5 million children murdered in the Holocaust, won a prestigious International Gabriel broadcasting award.

A native of Winnipeg who grew up in Toronto, Steinberg was a child soloist by the age of eight and conducted his first synagogue choir four years later. His father, the late Cantor Alexander Steinberg, who had immigrated from Russia, was serving Shaarei Shomayim Congregation at the time.

Ben Steinberg

After completing his studies at Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music and the University of Toronto, Steinberg got his professional start composing for radio and television shows in the 1950s.

But he never really left synagogue music, he said. "The path I was most comfortable with was synagogue music. I loved it. I remember from my earliest childhood that the two forces that were strongest in my life were music and Judaism. That was my identity."

He had minimal contact with Reform Judaism until about 1950, when he discovered that "good music was going on" within the movement.

"My [Orthodox] father, to his everlasting credit, encouraged my path."

Most of Steinberg's work is inspired by Jewish text, he said. The Hebrew words have "great depth and meaning… [connecting] us to our peoplehood and to our past."

Sounding a lighter, personal note, Steinberg – who is also an amateur carpenter and a grandfather of four – said it's fun to deal with the texts in the context of the music, which may be more modern.

The word "fun" crops up often when Steinberg talks about his work, despite his seriousness about the music and about imparting his knowledge of aspects of Jewish music ranging from Yiddish – his first language – to Yemenite Jewish music.

"You can sweeten the teaching process if you can use humour," he noted. "But the purpose was always very serious. I wanted Jews to learn more about Judaism and our tradition."

That was the basis for the series he founded 40 years ago at Temple Sinai, named – with deliberate intent – "Our Musical Legacy." An affiliated award for young Jewish musicians – some of whom are now affiliated with major symphony orchestras – was renamed in Steinberg's honour on his retirement.

Among the events Steinberg organized at the temple over the years were chamber music performances, and an annual Yiddish night that Steinberg "stretched" to include Sephardi music.

"I got a kick out of that," he said.

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USDS becomes Robbins Hebrew Academy

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

United Synagogue Day School is changing its name to Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA), effective this week.

The change, which is being announced April 15 at a ribbon-cutting ceremony on each of the school's two campuses, acknowledges a $4-million gift from Larry Robbins, a USDS grandparent and Toronto builder and developer.

The gift – which has been designated as an endowment fund to enhance education and ensure the perpetuity of the school – pays tribute to the memory of Robbins' wife, Miriam, who died two years ago.

Education, specifically Jewish education, was very important to her, said Monty Robbins, Larry and Miriam's son. Her father, Rabbi Isaac Aronoff, who died in 2004, had a shul in his home for about 50 years, Monty said.

Larry Robbins

As well, the gift reflects changing times, according to school president Leonard Abramsky. While the word "Hebrew" emphasizes the school's roots, he said, "we felt that 'day school' kind of hearkened back to previous generations... 'Academy' [suggests] a wider scope of educational possibilities in today's vernacular."

Claire Sumerlus, who became head of school in March 2009, told *The CJN* that "our children have to be able to think critically, which has been a major focus for the last year and a half, and they have to know how to problem-solve."

As well, she noted, the school has implemented a new literacy program to help children who are having difficulty learning to read, and also to enhance skills for those who are already reading, and track all students' progress every six weeks.

A committee including board members, parents and staff members chose the school's new name, which was then approved by the board.

RHA will remain an affiliate of the Solomon Schechter Day School Association, the day school network connected to the Conservative movement. The school is one of the largest, if not the largest, in the organization, Sumerlus said.

"My grandchildren have benefited from the amazing education, warm community and strong sense of tradition that is taught at USDS," Larry Robbins said in a statement. "Jewish education was very important to my wife, Miriam, and I am thrilled to be able to invest in this school and its growth into the 21st century."

Claire Sumerlus

USDS began as part of Beth Tzedec Congregation in 1957 and became an independent school in 1961. It serves more than 800 students from junior kindergarten to Grade 8, and operates at two campuses, one at Beth Tzedec and the other at Beth Tikvah Synagogue.

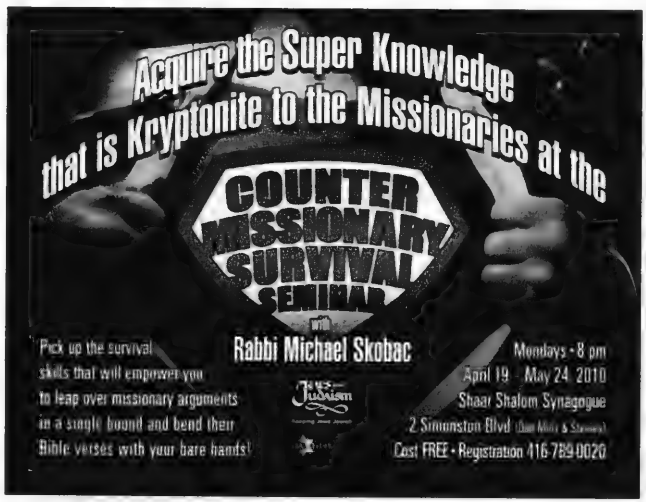
A third campus is planned for the Lebovic community campus in Vaughan, but there is no timeline for that at the moment, said both Sumerlus and Abramsky.

"We're focusing on our existing building and strengthening our existing two campuses before moving on to Lebovic," Abramsky said.

A Richmond Hill branch closed in 2006.

"It's an exciting time to be in our old school and new school," Sumerlus said. "Things are happening and changing."

The idea behind the donation was to sustain the long-term future of the school, Monty Robbins said. "It's very exciting that all the planning is coming to fruition."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A 'SWEET' AWARD: Zachary Winkler received an Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year award from Lieutenant-Governor David Onley on Mar. 29. The nine-year-old Associated Hebrew Schools student has raised a total of more than $6,000 for Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children over the past three years at his annual "Do Something Sweet" event, where he gives out candy floss. Zachary also received a certificate from Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty.

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Entrepreneur donates $2M to World ORT

JTA

Canadian entrepreneur Seymour Schulich has donated $2 million to World ORT, the largest gift ever from a Canadian to the global Jewish educational organization.

Schulich's gift will establish the Schulich Canada Smart Classroom Initiative, which "will bring a new dimension to teaching, generating class interaction with educational software, websites, and other resources," according to a March 31 statement from World ORT.

The initiative, part of Kadima Mada, World ORT's programming arm in Israel, will launch 411 "smart classrooms" in northern Israel. It will include equipment, teacher-training programs, development of learning materials, upgrades and maintenance.

Schools selected for the project have been identified by Israel's Ministry of Education and Ministry for the Development of the Galilee and the Negev as being in areas of "economic and social distress."

The classrooms will be provided with laptops that connect to a wireless network linking students' computers to the teacher's workstation and whiteboard. Some 40,000 students are expected to benefit from the initiative.

Teachers also will be equipped with hand-held tablet computers so they can walk around classrooms. "Smart classrooms" also will be able to access World ORT's videoconferencing network.

"I am extremely grateful to Seymour Schulich for this outstanding donation," Robert Singer, director general and CEO of World ORT, said in a statement. "Today, education is the best investment in the future for the Jewish people and for the future of the State of Israel."

Seymour Schulich

Schulich's gift was partnered through UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Federation president Ted Sokolsky told *The CJN* that his organization is playing a role at the request of Schulich, who is involved in its Jewish camp incentive program, Top Bunk.

The federation's role in the ORT donation included "due diligence" on the project and "stewarding" the gift, Sokolsky said. The federation is involved with ORT on a number of international projects, he added.

"It's a great gift," said Sokolsky, who is familiar with the recipient communities from work the federation has done there. "It's a capacity-building gift… [Schulich] has always had a great belief in the power of education."

The donation will be matched by an additional $9.75 million from World ORT, the Israeli ministries of education and of the Negev and Galilee, local authorities, and ORT donors.

Schulich is well known for his philanthropy, notably to a number of Canadian universities, as well as to the Technion - Israel Institute of Technology.

With files from Frances Kraft

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To send in digital photos, please visit

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and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Happy 50th birthday to Austin Freedman from your loving family and friends!

Mazel tov on your engagement, Aly and Isaac!

Happy 55th anniversary to a pair of aces, Bernice & Irving Buchbinder. With love from your full house, the gantzeh mishpocha.

Happy seventh birthday Matthew Lungen! From your loving family, Paul, Sharron and Geoffrey. Grandparents, Al & Diane Miller.

Zoie Starkman, age 18 months, displays her "Olympic Canada" toque at a surprise party for her aunt, Noa Rothman.

Warren, Deborah and big sister Sadie announce Molly Rebekah's arrival on Feb. 22. Proud grandparents, Minnie & Gerald Goldberg and Lori & Steven Greenwood.

Johnny Pyzer & Amira Posner announce the births of Rachel and Jacob. Proud big sister Sammy. Grandchildren of Roz & Allan Pyzer, Sherna & Jerry Posner.

Joshua and Abigail would like to wish our zaidie, Joe Goldstein, a very happy 65th birthday!

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What's New

By LEILA SPEISMAN

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What's New deadline for the April 29 issue is April 19. Deadline for May 6 is April 26. Phone 416-391-1836, fax, 416-391-0829, e-mail lspeisman@cjnews.com.

This week's column was prepared by Carolyn Blackman.

Thursday, April 15

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rabbi Cory Weiss will discuss "Pirkei Avot: Wisdom of the Fathers" at a Lunch and Learn, Temple Har Zion. Bring lunch. Coffee and tea provided. Noon-1 p.m., Thursdays, until May 13.

FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Beth Tikvah Friendship Group presents **Diana Mingail** speaking on "Rescued from Hitler's Net: The Jews of Bulgaria," 2-4 p.m., $5 including refreshments.

Saturday, April 17

B'NAI SHALOM

Monthly Shabbat service, B'nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel will be held in Oakville. Kiddush follows services. For details and location, bnaishalom.ca, info@bnaishalom.ca or 905-901-9889.

Sunday, April 18

HEALTHY EATING

Beth Emeth continuing education presents "Super Nutrition for Healthy Living" with **Rosalie Moscoe.** Services 9 a.m., breakfast 9:30 a.m., $12 per person. 416-633-3838 to reserve.

ISRAELI SHUK

Guelph Congregation is celebrating Israel's independence with a shuk featuring local artists, jewelry, books. 7 p.m. guelphcongregation.ca or call **Techiya Fisher**, 519-265-1591.

SPRING FASHION SHOW

Shoshana chapter, Canadian Hadassah-WIZO holds a fashion show and private shopping experience at The Bay Centerpoint Mall, 6:30-9 p.m., to support Israeli daycare centres, women's and children's shelters, technical schools. Tickets $25 in advance, $30 at the door. Call 905-881-3588.

ART EXHIBIT

"Into the Light," featuring artwork by guests at Beth Sholom Synagogue's Out of the Cold program. Reception, 2-4 p.m. at the shul. Show Apr. 18-22. All proceeds to artists and Out of the Cold. **Melanie Cheskes**, intothelightshow@gmail.com.

MEMORIAL PROGRAM

The 67th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 2 p.m. Workmen's Circle, 471 Lawrence Ave. W., includes ghetto songs and poems. Guest speaker, in English, is **Goldie Morgentaler.**

DIVA DAY

JWIC fundraiser includes yoga, health issues information, complimentary spa treatments, a lecture by a survivor of abuse. Tickets $125 include light breakfast and lunch, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., 6 Garamond Crt. 416-630-9313. www.divaday.ca.

Monday, April 19

REMEMBRANCE

Mizrachi Canada sponsors its annual community Yom Hazikaron-Yom Ha'atzmaut commemorative service and celebration at Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, 7:15 p.m. Guests include **Cheryl Mandel** of Daniel Mandel Memorial Project. 416-630-9266 for more information.

Tuesday, April 20

CHAI DANCERS

Beth Emeth Club Sameach celebrates Israel's independence with the Chai Dancers led by **Temi Kernerman,** 7:30 p.m. Members $8, guests $10. Reserve by April 16, 416-633-3838.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

Enjoy Israeli music, snacks and songs at Temple Har Zion's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration, 7:45. Members free, non-members $5. 905-889-2252.

Continued on page 25

On the contrary, you go there to live.

At a certain age, retirement suddenly turns back into work. Your health is not what it used to be, chores around the house aren't getting done, and time spent with friends and family becomes less frequent. This is a time when many seniors view moving to an Independent Living community as much more like a beginning than an end.

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FREE
Interfaith Panel Discussion at 10:15 a.m.
The Abrahamic Faiths in Canada:
Challenges & Opportunities

Dr. Victor Goldbloom
Senior Interfaith Representative, Canadian Jewish Congress
Mubarak Nazir
Missionary in Charge of Canada, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at
Nora Sanders
General-Secretary, United Church of Canada

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue
100 Elder Street, Toronto

For more information, contact info@cjc.ca or 1-877-823-8703

The Interfaith Panel Discussion is open to the public. The Canadian Jewish Congress Annual General Meeting is open to "every Jew, eighteen years of age or over, residing in Canada who supports the aims and objectives of the Corporation and is in good standing with his or her local UJA or equivalent Jewish Federation or United Israel Appeal campaign" *(Article VII, S.51, By-Law 67).*

What's New

Continued from page 24

Wednesday, April 21

GIRLS NIGHT OUT

Comedian **Ian Sirota** headlines a Girl's Night Out comedy evening sponsored by Tamid chapter of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO. Glenn Gould Studio, CBC Building, 250 Front St. W. Doors open 7 p.m. for silent auction. Show begins 7:45 p.m. Admission $40 includes door prizes and dessert buffet. Tickets, **Evelyn**, evbuchbinder@hotmail.com

OPEN HOUSE

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School holds an open house, 10 a.m., 750 Spadina Ave., 2nd floor. RSVP **Judy Machtinger**, 416-928-3537, ext. 136, or judy@djds.ca.

POMEGRANATE GUILD

Alice Vandervennen speaks on "Telling the Story Through Textile" at a meeting of the Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles, 8 p.m., Shaarei Shomayim Congregation.

Thursday, April 22

RASHI'S DAUGHTERS

Beth David's library committee and sisterhood present **Maggie Anton**, the author of *Three Women and a Talmud: The Story of Rashi's Daughters*, who will discuss her research into the daily lives of medieval Jews, 7:30 p.m. For information, 416-633-5500.

HAIFA ARTS TORONTO

An exhibition of the work of 40 artists from Haifa opens with a reception, 6-9, p.m., Gallery 33. Proceeds go to Haifa's art centres for children. Exhibition runs to April 26. Call The Canadian Committee for the Haifa Foundation, 647-430-7743 for information.

OTHER NEWS

COMMUNITY AWARD

Beth Emeth honours **Nicholas Winton** with the Yakir Hakahal, Precious to the Community Award, at a gala evening, May 6. Call 416-633-3838 or beby.org.

J-SERVE

Day of community service for Jewish teens, April 25, 11:30-5 p.m. Earn five volunteer hours. Organized by BBYO, USY, Habonim Dror, Hashomer Hatzair, JSU. Information at bbyo.ca/jserve, 416-398-2004, ext. 223.

D.A.N.I.

Parents, professionals and community members are invited to a one-day seminar April 25 sponsored by D.A.N.I. Choice of sessions, including bullying, anxiety, mental health, and a mom's panel. Kosher buffet lunch. Registration and information, 905-731-6606 or dani-toronto.

MINDREADER

Atzmaut chapter of Hadassah-WIZO holds a fundraiser May 2 at Earl Bales Centre with the Magical Mysterion Tour featuring Mysterion the Mindreader, band and Chinese kosher buffet. $50 per person. Reservations until April 23. Information, **Miriam Shell**, 905-771-1931.

SUPPORT GROUP

Baycrest Holocaust resource program is opening a new support group for child survivors of the Holocaust. Contact **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or syaakobi@baycrest.org.

SHABBAT DINNER

Kulanu Toronto Shabbat Dinner with guest speaker **Bernie Farber** is April 23, 7 p.m., at The Wolfond Centre, 36 Harbord St. Students $15, non-students $25, Kulanu members $20. RSVP deadline Tuesday, April 20, to kulanutoronto@gmail.com.

SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

Join Temple Kol Ami for its third annual Barry and Dawn Bernstein Family Scholar-in-Residence weekend with **Rabbi David Nelson**, April 23-25 at Leo Baeck. Friday service and discussion, 7:45 p.m. in the chapel. Shabbat morning Torah study, 9:15 a.m., Room 111-112. Saturday evening lecture, 7:30 p.m. www.templekolami.ca or 905-709-2620

COUNTER-MISSIONARY

Learn how to respond to those who would challenge your Jewish faith with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**, Jews for Judaism. Mondays, April 19-May 24, 8 p.m., at Shaar Shalom Synagogue. No charge. 416- 789-0020

DRIVERS WANTED

Bernard Betel Centre needs meals-on-wheels drivers and visitors for homebound seniors, **Naomi Ziegler**, 416-225-2112, ext. 127.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or www.jfandcs.com, for info.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Six-session group for couples marrying in the next year, offered with the Rabbinical Assembly, begins April 26, 7:30-9 p.m. at First Narayever.

Parenting the Child with ADHD: Four-week group for parents of ADHD-diagnosed children, April 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 4600 Bathurst St., 6th floor. Call **Pam**, 416-638-7800, ext. 315.

Asperger's 101: One-session workshop on Asperger's syndrome with **Margot Nelles** from the Asperger's association and Asperger's et al. April 21, 7-9 p.m. at the Lipa Green Centre. Registration required.

The Challenge of Anger for Women: Six-session group for women to learn how to express their anger in an assertive, non-aggressive way. April 21, 7:30-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

Couple Communication: Four-session group for couples wanting to learn communication skills, April 22, Promenade Mall, Suite 313, 7-9 p.m.

Stepping Stones for Women: Creating Your Journey Toward Employment: One-session workshop for women looking to enter or re-enter the workforce, April 28, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre. No charge. Registration required.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing their life skills. Topics include building self-esteem, time, stress management, assertiveness. April 29, 7-9 p.m., Lipa Green Centre.

BROADWAY

Broadway from the Bimah features **Marvin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** and 45-piece symphony orchestra, May 27, 7:30 p.m., Adath Israel. For tickets, **Sheila**, 416-635-5340 or sheila@adathisrael.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Circle of Care needs volunteers to visit lonely seniors, deliver kosher meals on wheels or drive seniors to medical appointments. **Lysa Springer**, 416-635-2900, ext 496, or lspringer@circleofcare.com

MEKOROT

Join Mekorot for "Hero or Villain? The Life and Thought of Moses Mendelssohn," with **Paul Franks**, April 15-May 6, 9:30-11 a.m. Prosserman JCC.

"Nidah: In-depth Exploration of Laws of Family Purity," with **Rivka Sonenberg**, Mondays, May 3 and 10, 9:45 a.m., hosted at 543 Coldstream Ave.

"How Can We Sing a Song of God in a Foreign Land? Destruction and Healing After the Destruction of the Temple," with **Hindy Najman**, July 15, 8 p.m., Or Chaim Yeshiva. Men and women welcome. 416-877-2050, info@mekorot.ca, www.mekorot.ca.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. $2. Call **Pearl**, 416-635-6317, or **Sheila**, 416-665-3333.

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC: April 15, 1:30 p.m., celebrate Israel Independence Day. *The Beauty of Israel* is presented by **Aviva Reifler**, shlichah, JNF.

April 22, noon, Toronto Jewish Film Festival, $7, followed by coffee, bagel and a discussion, $2. Information, reservations, 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park: Casino Rama, May 12, departure time 10 a.m.; line-dancing, Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m.; social bridge, Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; Sunday dance, April 25, 7-10 p.m. with live music. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Seniors Cultural Club meets Tuesday mornings, 10 a.m. for discussion group, Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. Call 416-630-9444.

PROSSERMAN JCC

PROSSERMAN JCC, Sherman campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

April 28, 10-11:30 a.m. Open house, no charge. Join in and experience Israeli and international folk dance led by **Teme Kernerman** and **Sandy Starkman**, Room 211.

Check out family programs including Sports with Jay, Shabbat Party, and prenatal classes, ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

MILES NADAL JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, or www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays, 8 a.m., and Thursdays, 7:15 a.m. Complete kosher breakfast after services. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

Stars on Spadina, April 26, 7:30 p.m., Al Green Theatre. $180 includes dessert reception. Tax receipt for maximum allowable.Tickets: in person at the Miles Nadal JCC, or call ext. 0 or go to www.mnjcc.org.

Sundays on Bloor, April 18, 9:30-11 a.m. "The Most Passionate Fling: Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Canadian Jews" with **Prof. Hesh Troper.** $9 drop in fee includes light refreshments. Sponsored by Downtown Jewish Community School & Miles Nadal. Information, Joan Schoenfeld, ext. 112 or joan@djcs.org

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Grimman, Josef	March 22/10	5 Fisherville Rd
Dayan, Leonid	March 23/10	Private
Valdman, Maria	March 23/10	Private
Abramovitch, David	March 23/10	
Ostreicher, Elizabeth	March 24/10	6040 Bathurst St
Levine, Edward	March 24/10	745 New Westminster
Berger, Paula	March 23/10	1101 Steeles Ave. W
Relcant, Sari	March 23/10	
Atin, Betty	March 24/10	Private
Landau, Izi	March 24/10	10 Torresdale Ave
Akselrud, Hana	March 25/10	Private
Rosenthal, Herschel	March 24/10	Private
Flom, Morris L.	March 25/10	5430 Yonge St
Malka, Elie	March 25/10	360 Ridelle Ave
Widrich, Thomas	March 26/10	333 Clark Ave. W.
Schwartz, Morris	March 26/10	
Mallin, Michael George	March 26/10	

HEBREW BASIC

Freda Hyatt	Mar 19/10	3171 Bathurst St

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Stanley Berger	Mar 21/10	30 Greenfield Ave
Jeanne Skrow	Mar 23/10	131 Torresdale Ave
Peter Sack	Mar 23/10	268 Poplar Plains Rd
Shari Sugar	Mar 24/10	100 Upper Madison
Alfred Shaul	Mar 23/10	65 Spring Garden
Estelle McCarthy	Mar 26/10	7811 Yonge St
Anne Jaffey	Mar 24/10	535 Sheppard Ave
Mary Otis	Mar 24/10	9 Glen Castle St
Henry Stein	Mar 28/10	260 Heath St
Ethel Goodwill	Mar 30/10	2 Covington Rd
Sarah Willer	Mar 28/10	110 Westbury Crt
Pauline Feigen	Mar 28/10	289 Betty Ann Dr
Michael Zauder	Mar 29/10	250 Franklin Ave
Meyer Stein	Mar 31/10	89 Skymark Dr
Eliahu Mizrahi	Apr 1/10	20 West Lodge Ave
Esther Goodbaum	Apr 2/10	645 Castlefield Ave
Gwen Small	Apr 1/10	22 Applegate Cres
Marion Kert	Apr 2/10	50 Ardwold Gate
Murray Morris Price	Apr 1/10	1 Post Road

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of

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Friday, April 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

Pardes Shalom Cemetery

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Sunday, April 18th at 12:00 noon

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Obituary

York U educator was more than a prof

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Arthur Siegel, a professor emeritus in York University's division of social science and communications studies and a former journalist with Radio Canada International, died April 7 from complications resulting from multiple myeloma. He was 80.

Siegel spent much of the last 34 years teaching at York on the political, economic and cultural dimensions of mass communication.

But to his family and friends, he was much more than a professor. To them, Siegel was a man imbued with natural good humour and a zest for life.

This love of life was etched into his soul early on while growing up in Trinidad – his family fled there from Germany just prior to the start of World War II – where the joyful sounds of calypso music constantly filled the air and where he witnessed his parents constantly practising tzedakah and tikkun olam with their island neighbours, according to his cousin, Pinchas Gutter.

Arthur Siegel

Recalling his "closest friend", Gutter told *The CJN* last week that Siegel was the "kindest, happiest person" he'd ever known.

"He loved humanity, and his *joie de vivre* was such that Arthur made friends wherever he went," Gutter said, adding: "The way I can encapsulate him best is to say that when I first met Arthur, he made me feel like it was the greatest thing that ever happened to him. He was that way with all his family and friends."

A gifted orator, Siegel used this same spirit to attract and endear many of the thousands of students who took his courses over the years.

David Collin, one of Siegel's undergraduate students from 2001 to 2003 at York, who now works as *The CJN*'s promotions manager, said he was always impressed by the professor's "extremely learned" knowledge of mass communications.

According to his immediate family, Siegel was also a talented storyteller who regaled them with many tales of his interviews during his career as a journalist – particularly of talks he'd conducted with star hockey players over the years.

While working for the CBC in Montreal – where the Siegel family lived until 1976 before moving to Toronto – he befriended Montreal Canadiens' icons Maurice "Rocket" Richard and Jacques Plante. The former would lunch with Siegel regularly and the latter knitted him a tuque in appreciation of his friendship and professionalism, his daughter, Alisa Siegel, told *The CJN* just prior to his funeral last week.

She described her father as a "newspaper hound" who would read every paper available. But superseding all else was his devotion as a father, grandfather and husband.

"Arthur was an adoring and incredibly involved father… in the details of our daily lives. He spoke to each of us several times a day, talked to us about anything and everything that was going on in our lives. He showed us again and again that we were his greatest joy. We felt it in everything he did. No matter how busy he was, no matter what was going on, he always had time, made time," Alisa said.

Siegel also made many contributions to the Jewish community, both at home in Toronto and internationally.

Locally, he was an energetic fundraiser for Baycrest in his role as chairman of the honour roll and of the men's executive service group. He also served as president of the Canadian Friends of Tel Aviv University and was a member of the university's board of governors until his death.

Siegel leaves behind Mireille, his wife of 48 years; his three daughters Ariane, Alisa and Maura; six grandchildren and many friends and relatives.

"This is a loss that everyone who knew him feels profoundly," Alisa said through tears.

He was laid to rest at Pardes Shalom cemetery last Friday.

TRENDS 2010

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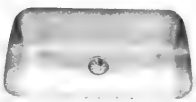

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On Campus

York U 'de-registers' student for web postings

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

A student accused of running an anti-Semitic website has been "de-registered" by York University, a school spokesperson said.

"He is no longer a student at York," Keith Marnoch, the university's associate director of media relations, told *The CJN* last week.

But he said Salman Hossain wasn't formally expelled.

"Expulsion... can have academic [implications]... attached to it. We basically just removed him as a student from York," Marnoch said, adding that this was a university decision.

Hossain has been accused of running Filthy Jewish Terrorists, an Arizona-based website that refers to Jews as "diseased and filthy," "the scum of the earth," "fanatic, genocidal maniacs," "psychotic" and "mass murderers."

The site also said "a genocide should be perpetrated against the Jewish populations of North America and Europe."

York suspended Hossain last month and ordered him to appear before a disciplinary panel.

When asked why Hossain wasn't de-registered earlier, Marnoch said "we had to look at what we were doing in a detailed way to make sure everything was appropriate, but we are satisfied that we did what we needed to do.

Hossain is still the subject of a hate crimes investigation, according to the Ontario Provincial Police, because it's illegal in Canada to support or promote genocide, as well as communicate statements other than in private conversation that willfully promote hatred against an identifiable group.

Ontario's attorney general declined to press criminal charges last year against Hossain, saying the Bangladeshi-Canadian was undergoing rehabilitation with an imam.

Bernie Farber, CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress, thinks removing Hossain as a student was long overdue.

"This is something we believe should have happened a long time ago. It was the only real option that York had," he told *The CJN*.

"[This move] creates a safe environment for Jewish students and faculty at York. It sends a very clear message. While freedom of speech and academic freedoms are cherished values, there is a line drawn in the sand. Advocating the murder of a specific group of people terribly crosses that line."

With files from JTA

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IAW should be barred from campuses: professor

By RHONDA SPIVAK
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Israeli Apartheid Week (IAW) should not be allowed on university campuses, says Helmut-Harry Loewen, a sociology professor at the University of Winnipeg.

Loewen believes IAW is an attempt to instigate "hatred towards the State of Israel" and "to vilify Israel..., an attempt to undermine the right of Israel to exist as a state in the Middle East."

Loewen, who has been active in monitoring hate speech on the Internet with the Canadian Anti-Racism Educational and Research Society, said in an interview that he was involved in the movement to end apartheid in South Africa, and it is an inappropriate term to use with regard to Israel.

"I was one of four Canadian delegates appointed by [then-Canadian prime minister] Brian Mulroney to emergency meetings at the United Nations special committee on apartheid. Apartheid is a crime against international law. We can't use this type of legal category to delegitimize the state of Israel."

Loewen, who is a Mennonite and the son of Russian immigrants, said he was pleased that there was no IAW at the University of Winnipeg, but was unhappy about its taking place this year at the University of Manitoba. He added that other colleagues have similar opinions.

"By vilifying and promoting hatred toward Israel, IAW only serves to propel anti-Semitism on campuses," he said, adding that IAW is not a productive way to educate students about the complex issues in the Middle East conflict.

Loewen has been a longtime opponent of anti-Semitic hate speech. He was one of a number of complainants to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) who spoke out against a hate telephone hotline of the Ku Klux Klan in 1993 that included the sale of "Klan Buster T-Shirts."

He gave testimony before the commission, which found the KKK to have violated Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act. At the time, Loewen was chairing the Manitoba Coalition Against Racism and Apartheid.

Section 13 empowers the CHRC to deal with complaints regarding the communication of hate messages by telephone or on the Internet.

Loewen said this section "has been successful in terminating the most egregious type of hatred on the web" and ought to not be changed.

"I am an advocate of provisions that deal with hate speech both in the Criminal Code and under Section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights legislation.

"There is, unfortunately, a concerted effort from a number of sources to whittle away these provisions," he said, adding that he vehemently disagrees with opponents of this type of legislation.

Over the years, Loewen said he has "consulted and advised Winnipeg city police on laying hate crimes charges," noting that "police must be vigilant in pursuing these kinds of cases."

Regarding the spread of hate over the Internet, Loewen mentioned stopracism.ca, a website that monitors and tracks hate group activity, helps young people leave hate groups, and provides information and advice on filing complaints to stop hate-motivated activity anywhere.

In 1997, Loewen worked with the young leaders of United Against Racism, a Winnipeg-based group, to organize anti-racist rallies in Old Market Square in downtown Winnipeg, an area that has historically been the site of racist activity. In 1934, Jewish anti-Fascists rioted in Old Market Square and confronted members of the pro-Nazi Canadian Nationalist Party, who were marching in uniform.

"In 1997, we created a Nazi-free space," Loewen recalled. "We organized a rally at Old Market Square to commemorate the struggles of the Jewish Anti-Fascist League. It was a symbolic attempt to unite the older generation with younger anti-racist activists... Opposing anti-Semitism is an ongoing task."

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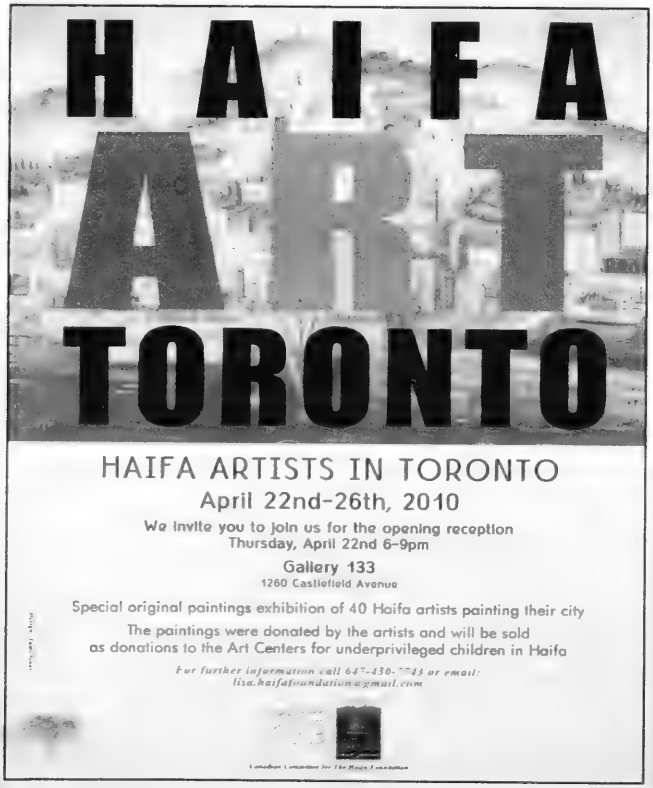
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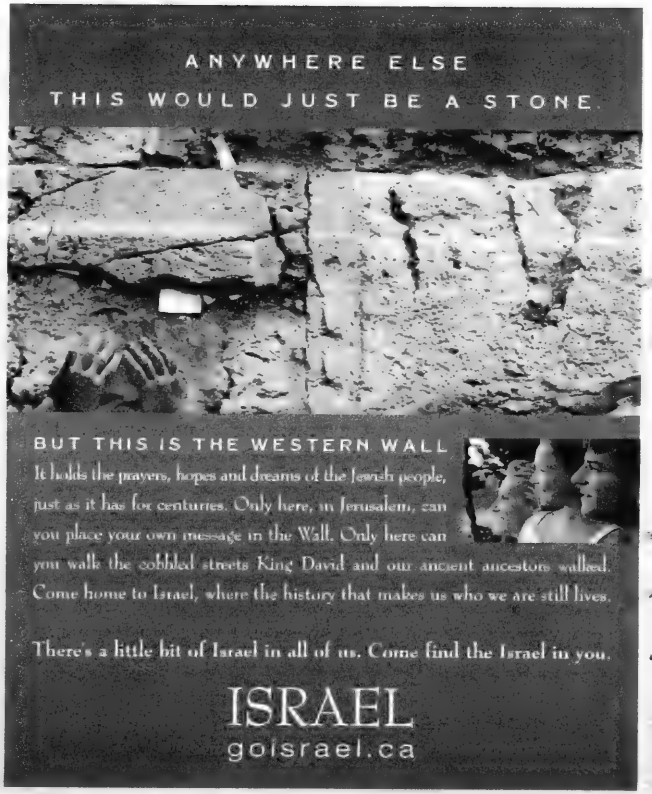
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Crosses mark Jewish cemetery in Ukraine

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

It seemed the meeting went quite well.

At the end of his presentation on preserving a Jewish cemetery in Sambir, Ukraine, Meylakh Sheykhet received a standing ovation from the estimated 200 guests present at a Ukrainian cultural gallery. Both the president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and religious dignitaries applauded his presentation.

Sheykhet, who was visiting Toronto from his home in Lviv, Ukraine, believes his message resonated with the assembled guests.

"I said we should do something together to cement our efforts for countryhood and statehood within which our history was one of the nicest parts of the Jewish Diaspora and which was an example to the gentiles," he said.

Specifically, Sheykhet is hoping local Ukrainian leaders, who are held in high regard in Ukraine, will call upon their compatriots there to right a wrong that has been festering for close to 10 years – the removal of three crosses that stand over the Jewish cemetery in Sambir.

Sheykhet, a former IT lecturer who's made it his life's work to preserve Jewish sites in Ukraine, has been actively embroiled in a dispute with municipal authorities in the western Ukraine city of Sambir, where three 10-metre metal crosses have been placed in a historic Jewish cemetery. Despite apparent sympathy from national and regional governments, nothing has been done to remove the Christian symbols, which were erected by local ultra-nationalists.

As the story goes, following the collapse of communism and the establishment of an independent Ukraine, a Jewish philanthropist from Victoria, B.C., Jack Gardner, who hailed from Sambir, received permission to rehabilitate several formerly Jewish sites, including the cemetery in Sambir.

The grave site had been used by the Jewish community for centuries. In 1941, just prior to the Nazi invasion, Sambir was home to about 10,000 Jews – half the city's population. Several "actions" destroyed the community. In one, on the first day of Pesach 1943, some 2,000 Jews were rounded up and taken to the cemetery, where they were shot and buried.

Mark Freiman, president of Canadian Jewish Congress, said he lost about 100 relatives – grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins – during the war. His parents were two of only 100 Jews from Sambir who survived.

After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in anger at the Israeli military victory, the Soviet government bulldozed the cemetery, removed headstones (some were used in the walls of a candy factory) and turned it into a public park. Actually, it was more of an open field where local farmers grazed their animals or used it as a garbage dump, Freiman, who visited the site in 2007, said.

Sheykhet, who headed local efforts to reclaim the cemetery, said every time steps are taken to mark the site, such as putting up a surrounding fence, "local people came and took it in the middle of the night."

In 2001, after a stone Star of David was placed on the property, vandals tore it up and erected three crosses, which were then painted to look like birch trees, Freiman said.

The national and regional governments say the municipal government has jurisdiction, but it has done nothing to resolve the issue. The Ukrainian judicial system "has been entirely unhelpful and came out with decisions that defy legal rationale. It makes no sense at all," Freiman said, noting a supreme courtw decision ruled that since the cemetery was bulldozed, it lost its status as a cemetery and therefore is not protected as such under the law.

Freiman, a lawyer and former deputy attorney-general of Ontario, noted that Canadians through the Canadian International Development Agency have supported a program of legal education in Ukraine.

Sheykhet said he hopes his message emphasizing the Jewish people's integral role in Ukrainian history and their mutual suffering at the hands of the Communists will prevail upon local Ukrainians to take up their cause with the government of Ukraine.

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פרופ. אהובה שולמן , מרכזת לימודי העברית באוניברסיטת ירדן, מגיבה על "עברית קשה שפה" הראשון:

" קיוויתי את המדור האחרון שלך ובוצעתי להעיר שתי הערות לגבי מה שכתבת על השפה העברית.

לגבי "הדיקי", בנין שזאת נטעת לומר הודיקן (שפרדשה 'השפו ידקים'), אך הצורה הנכונה מאותו שורש (ר"ק) היא 'הֲרִיקִי'. הצורה הוקנו היא צורת משנה שהתפתחה מאוחר יותר משם התואר "רֵיקָן" (שורש רק"ן). כך שהצורה שהצעת אינה הצורה התלמודית היחידה.

לגבי המילה אומן. אתה מבחין בין אומן לאמן ומציין שהחבדל ביניהן הוא הכתיב בי"ו במילה אומן (כשמדובר בבעל-מלאכה), לעומת הכתיב ללא ו"ו כשמדובר באָמָן (ששסק באומנות כגון ציור, ומוזיקה). מדבריך לא ברור לקורא ההבדל המשמעותי יותר שהוא ההבדל בהגייה (U לעומת O): אָמָן (umman) - בעל מלאכה, אדם העוסק במקצוע הכרוך במלאכת כפיים, לעומת אָמָן (omman) – עוסק באָמָנות (ommanut) כגון ציור ופיסול. מדבריך ניתן להבין שיש להגות את המילה אָמָן כ- amman וזאת אינה הגייה נכונה (הקמץ בארת א' הוא קמץ קטן ויש להגות אותו O כגון במילה אָבָּנט למשל). בכתיב חסר-הניקוד נהגים לכתוב ו"ו בשתי הצורות: אומן (בעל מלאכה) ואומן - אדם העוסק באומנות (כגון ציור ופיסול)."

תודה לאהובה.

"תמסור ד"ש לאמא שלך"

אחת הזמרות היותר מרתקות כיום היא נדיה ג'ונס . בתקליטה "Fall" יש שיר מדהים שתרגמתי עבורכם. מזמלין לכל הנשים שהגבר שלהן מתנהג כמו ילד משחק.

"לא אבכה עליך
כשתלך מכאן,
ולא אתגעגע כשתלך
ולא אכפת לי לאן,

תגיד לאמא שלך
שאני מוסרת שלום,
תבל שהיא גידלה אותך
באופן כל כך אידום."

אבל שישאר בינתיים.

מה יהיה

לפני שבועיים כתבתי כאן דברים קשים על תפקוד ממשלת ישראל. בין השאר אמרתי:

"במשאל שערכה מדינה צמח השבוע אמרי רוב הישראלים שממשלת נתניהו אינה מייצגת אותם. סליחה חברים-פעות בידכם-היא מייצגת אתכם כיאות- ככה הצבעתם בבחירות. ... אין לבוא ולו בטענה קטנה לנתניהו ולליברמן-הם עושים בדיוק את מה שהם הבטיחו לבוחריהם, או כמו שהיטיב לומר זאת השר סילבן שלום:"מה חשבו, שבחרנו לבצע את המצע של קדימה?"

מספר חברים שדאגו לשלומי דחוני לי על "תגובת קשות" לדברים שכתבתי. אם חשב מי מיכם שאלה הן דיעות קיצוניות, הינה מבחר קצר מדברים בשם אומרם מן העיתונות הישראלית:

אריק בנדר (מעריב): "מי לעזאזל מנהל את המדינה הזאת? ...איך זה קורה לנו שהמדינה שלנו מתנהלת כמו ועד של קהילה בגליציה?"

בני ליי (ידיעות אחרונות): "בשל התעקשותו לרשום רווח קטן בסעיף "ירושלים", רושם ראש הממשלה עכשיו הפסדי ענק בסעיף :ישראל".

האם הייתי כותב דברים כאלה גם באנגלית? כמובן שלא. הסדר הזה, כמו כן הוא "שישאר בינתיים" הוא מור בעברית, לישראלים, ומה שכתבתי פה זה מה שרובכם אומרים בשיחות סלון של ימי ששי. ושישאר בינתיים.

Coast to Coast

NY Times columnist contradicts himself

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

In the aftermath of 9/11, when it was fashionable in many circles to link Muslim "outrage" over Israel and U.S. Mideast policy to these horrific attacks, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman would have none of it. In a series of pieces, Friedman argued that the Arab and Muslim worlds needed to stop blaming others and instead look honestly and critically at their own failures to provide freedom, economic opportunity and hope to their people.

In his Mar. 31, 2002 column, "Suicidal Lies," Friedman criticized then-Palestinian Authority president Yasser Arafat for refusing to show any interest in Palestinian state-building and for walking away from former U.S. president Bill Clinton's peace plan for the creation of this state. Instead, Arafat was busy attacking Israeli civilians with wave after wave of suicide bombers. Friedman insisted that Israel's defeat of these attacks was "vital to the security of every American, and indeed... to all of civilization." His point was that if this form of terrorism succeeds in Israel, other countries – including the United States – would be at greater risk for the same. "That is why," Friedman wrote, "the whole world must see this Palestinian suicide strategy defeated."

Now, however, even Friedman himself appears to have forgotten what he wrote just a few short years ago. He's joined the more traditional "linkage" crowd, and in a way that is, frankly, shocking in its superficiality.

Linkage argument faulty

In his March 28 *New York Times* piece, "Hobby or Necessity," Friedman maintained that with large numbers of U.S. troops fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are "more in need than ever of Muslim goodwill to protect themselves and defeat Muslim extremists," and that an essential way to achieve this is to secure "Israeli-Palestinian peace," with the onus on Israel.

Linking Israel in this way to broader American fortunes in the region has, for many, a widespread surface appeal, but it's spurious.

While no one would argue that the goal of peace between Israelis and Palestinians isn't important, even vital, this is so for the sake of Israelis and Palestinians themselves. It's not because peace is going to assuage extremists (who in any event demand that Israel be destroyed) or even provide "Muslim goodwill" for the protection of U.S. troops.

Friedman bolstered his argument as follows: "Both [U.S.] Vice-President Joe Biden and Gen. David Petraeus have been quoted recently as saying that the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict foments anti-U.S. sentiments, because of the perception that America usually sides with Israel, and these sentiments are exploited by Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran to generate anti-Americanism that complicates life for our soldiers in the region. I wouldn't exaggerate this, but I would not dismiss it either."

What Friedman did not say, however, is that both Biden and Petraeus have denied making this linkage. (Jeffrey Goldberg accurately explained Biden's position back on March 16 in the *Atlantic*, and Max Boot did the same regarding Petraeus' position in his March 18 blog for *Commentary*.)

On March 25, the *Jerusalem Post* reported that Petraeus called IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi to assure him that comments attributed to him – that Israeli intransigence was a problem for the U.S. military and was fomenting conflict – were not true.

Yet, fully three days later, Friedman referred only to Biden and Petraeus having been "widely quoted" saying, in effect, that Israel's behaviour is putting the lives of U.S. soldiers at risk.

In his April 1 *Jerusalem Post* blog, Alan Dershowitz tore into this "linkage" argument at length, calling it "entirely false," and "dangerous." "There is," he wrote, "absolutely no correlation between Israeli actions and the safety of American troops – none."

Dershowitz pointed out (as have others) that Islamists attack U.S. troops because of their presence in Iraq and Afghanistan (even, more broadly, because of what the United States stands for), not because of Israel, although Israel is for sure always a convenient excuse.

But what an influential columnist such as Friedman needs to rely on are not convenient excuses and myths, but careful, accurate analysis – plus, one might hope, some memory of what he himself has written in the past.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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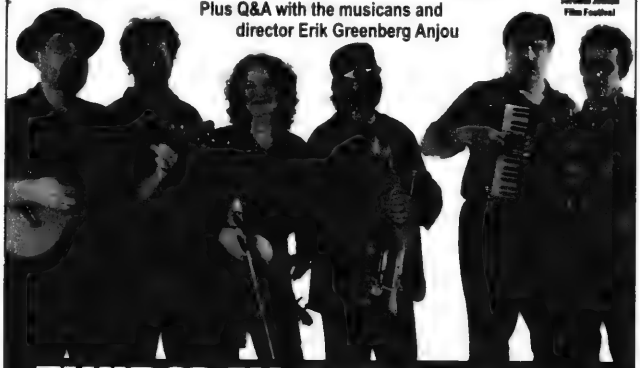

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Coast to Coast

Radio McGill raps Palestinian show

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — McGill University's radio station has found fault with a Palestinian community program that it carries for a report alleging Israeli involvement in the abuse of prisoners at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Responding to a complaint filed by HonestReporting Canada, a pro-Israel media monitoring group, Radio CKUT 90.3FM issued a warning letter to *Under the Olive Tree* and told it to make an on-air retraction and clarification about the report, which aired Jan. 21.

HonestReporting charged that the report was not only "outrageous and unsubstantiated," but that its true source wasn't revealed.

On Jan. 21, the host of the show read a two-minute report that he said was from the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Akhbar*, quoting the commander of the prison, now retired U.S. Col. Janis Karpinski, who was demoted for her role in the scandal, as having broken her silence on the matter.

She is alleged to have said Israeli agents were recruited by the U.S. military as interrogators and that was one of the reasons torture and abuse were rampant at Abu Ghraib.

HonestReporting's executive director, Mike Fegelman, maintains that the true source was Press TV, Iran's state media. Press TV did, in fact, disseminate a similar story on Jan. 20 on the Internet, citing *Al-Akhbar*.

After an investigation, CKUT's programming committee responded to HonestReporting March 23 that it agreed that the host "did not properly cite the source of the article that was read on air" and that the report was ambiguous about where and when Karpinski made the alleged comments. When questioned by the committee, the *Under the Olive Tree* host was unable to provide the source of the quotation.

CKUT told the show to retract "statements made regarding… Karpinski and that Israeli involvement [led] to increased sexual and physical violence in Abu Ghraib."

It also had to "explain to CKUT listeners that Press TV was the source" of the article.

Fegelman is pleased with the reprimand, but he feels *Under the Olive Tree* has not fulfilled the spirit of CKUT's order. He described the clarification that was made March 25 as "one of the most disingenuous and obfuscating 'clarifications' that we have ever heard."

The host did state that the source was Press TV and provided its website address – twice.

Concerning Karpinski, he said that "she did not state explicitly that Israeli involvement in the Abu Ghraib prison is what resulted directly in the increased sexual and physical violence."

Fegelman points out that he did not retract the original claim of Israeli involvement and essentially provided an advertisement for Press TV, inviting listeners to check it out.

Fegelman called Press TV an "anti-Semitic propaganda tool" and that "in insinuating that Israel was responsible for the physical torture and sexual abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, this program spewed a vicious libel against Israel and deserved to be strongly condemned."

Fegelman is also irked that the host's reference to the "hundreds" of e-mails the program received about the report implied that the response was positive, when, in fact, many of them came from HonestReporting's members.

He said that *Under the Olive Tree* should have made an unequivocal statement like the CBC News show *The National* did in 2004 that "there is no evidence that Israel was involved in what happened in the Iraqi prison."

Nevertheless, Fegelman said the show "now has a documented anti-Israel track record with its host station."

Under the Olive Tree should now be more careful knowing that listeners are vigilantly monitoring what they're saying and are prepared to take action," he said.

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Political parties call for government action

Continued from page 3

Both the provincial Progressive Conservative party and the federal Liberals released statements condemning the attacks.

"As recent events such as Israeli Apartheid Week remind us, there is a disturbing market for anti-Semitic activists and their rhetoric at too many Ontario universities," Ontario PC leader Tim Hudak said.

"For these activists, religious bigotry is acceptable as long as it is directed at people of the Jewish faith. It is sad, but not surprising, that this double standard in human rights is now prompting acts of violence."

MP Justin Trudeau, youth and multiculturalism critic for the federal Liberals, said the attacks should remind Canadians to remain vigilant against all forms of hatred, prejudice and intolerance.

Farber said he hopes the attack was a "one-off" event, but Kochman said it's scary for other pro-Israel student leaders and activists.

"If these students can be targeted, why can't I be?" he asked.

Despite the attacks, Bergamini said his support for Israel hasn't wavered.

"If anything, my beliefs are more firm now," he said.

He said he recognizes that not every person who is against Israel would act like this, but it shows what some people are capable of doing when fuelled by anger.

"I hope that people just realize the hatred that exists and take action against that," he said.

* * *

In related news, the Ottawa police hate crimes unit is investigating anti-Semitic graffiti found early last month in a men's washroom at Carleton.

Messages such as "Nuke Israel" and a swastika were found in a stall during Israeli Apartheid week, but police said messages such as "White power" suggest the graffiti was related to neo-Nazis, not the pro-Palestinian movement.

Carleton treated the matter as a hate crime and called police, who have no suspects and say such crimes are hard to solve without witnesses, Canwest News reported.

Clarification

The story "Hydro-Quebec postpones seder night power cut" (April 8) reported that power would be cut by Hydro-Quebec on April 5 from 11:30 p.m. until 4:30 a.m. the next day in the Outremont area. In fact, the electricity was off one day later during the same hours. The load-shedding had originally been scheduled for March 29 at the same time, but the utility responded to complaints from the Jewish community that it would disrupt the first seder. The power was finally cut after Passover concluded on the evening of April 6 .

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto

NOMINATION NOTICE

In accordance with Article VI of our Constitution, the Nominations Committee of Associated Hebrew Schools has prepared a list of ten (10) candidates for election to the Board of Directors for the ensuing term.

David Bercovitch
Claire Glowinsky
Daphna Grossman
Randi Handler
Michael Kerzner
Shaun Kobrin
Elaine Osher
Mayeer Pearl
Ian Zagdanski
Sally Zigler

Additional nominees will be accepted in accordance with Article VI if properly received no later than 5:00 p.m. May 4, 2010 For further information please contact Arthur Landa, Executive Director, at (416) 494-7666, Ext. 200.

DATED April 15, 2010
TORONTO, Ontario

Sheldon Carr, Chair
Nominating Committee

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Oakville bar mitzvah boy camps out for Haiti

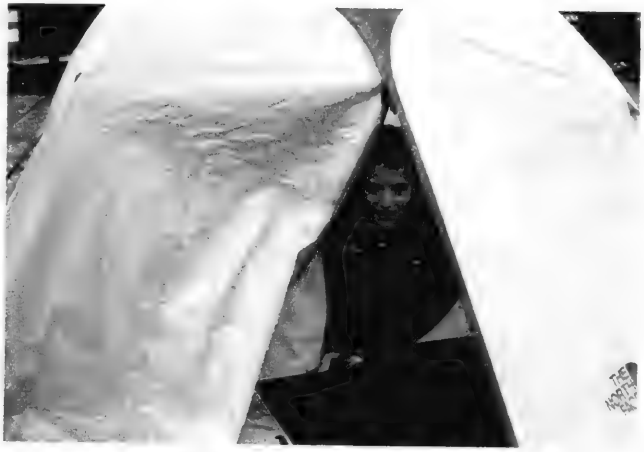
By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Rabbi Stephen Wise, spiritual leader of Shaarei Beth-El Congregation in Oakville, Ont., says that Tommy Tencer's recent bar mitzvah project is "one of the most selfless and inspiring" ones he has ever encountered.

The 13-year-old competitive trampolinist braved windy, rainy and cold weather to spend 24 hours camping outside the synagogue last month to raise money for earthquake victims in Haiti. As well, he donated half his monetary gifts for a combined total of about $2,000.

The project was his own idea.

"I had just heard about the earthquake, and how everyone was sleeping outside in tents," he told *The CJN* in a phone interview.



Tommy Tencer camped out for 24 hours outside Shaarei Beth-El Congregation to help earthquake victims in Haiti.

The news reports prompted him to ask Rabbi Wise about helping out as part of his bar mitzvah project.

As well, Tommy, who likes canoeing and archery at summer camp, said, "a lot of my [bar mitzvah] speech is about trying to get inside other people's heads and see what they're thinking about."

His father Ken, who slept on a couch in the synagogue lobby overnight, said that Tommy had a lot of visitors during his stay in the tent from March 13 to 14. Some of them had read about him in a local newspaper and came to give him hot chocolate, donations for Haiti, and moral support.

Ken described his son – the middle child of three – as a good student who is "very high-energy, very outgoing, with a lot of passion for the things he does with school or athletics or causes."

Among his previous efforts, Tommy took part in Hoops for Heart, a fundraising basketball program, with his school last year.

To pass the time when he was alone in the tent, he read books, drew pictures and listened to music.

"It was fun when people stopped by," he said. Some had blankets or tents destined for the synagogue's "Containers of Hope for Haiti" project.

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YOGA IN MOTION: The April 1 kickoff for Yoga in Motion, a fitness marathon of yoga and zumba to be held April 25 in support of breast cancer research at Mount Sinai Hospital, took place at Nathan Phillips Square. Led by Flirty Girl Fitness instructors, the outdoor zumba dance class at Nathan Phillips attracted more than 100 participants. BBK Showstoppers dance group performed to *Don't Stop Believing*, and Magen Boys DJ pumped up the square with music. Now in its second year, this double fitness marathon will take place at the Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex and will support breast cancer programs at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute at Mount Sinai. Register at www.yogainmotion.ca until April 24. At right the outdoor live zumba class at Nathan Phillips Square; right top photo, Candice Paulson of Flirty Girl Fitness leading a zumba group; and top photo, from left, participant Michelle Epstein, Jenn Konopny, Kailee Mecklinger, Stacey Barish and Candice Paulson.

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Feature

Canadians, Europeans to mark San Remo conference

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Do a Google search of the phrase "illegal occupation," and you'll invariably find the top results link Israel to the term.

Repeated ad infinitum, it has become part of the public discourse on the Middle East conflict and the merits of the dispute between Jews and Palestinians.

But is it accurate?

Not according to a group of supporters of the Jewish state who will be gathering in San Remo, Italy, later this month to drive home the point that all the territory west of the Jordan River rightfully and legally belongs to the State of Israel.

On April 24 and 25, a handful of Canadians will meet with dozens of European colleagues to mark the 90th anniversary of the San Remo Conference.

They'll gather at the Institute for Humanitarian Law where the Allied Supreme Council (Britain, France, Italy and Japan) signed the documents that disposed of the former Ottoman (Turkish) territories by creating the legal basis for a number of new states, including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and, eventually, Israel.

Salomon Benzimra, a semi-retired chemical engineer and amateur historian, said the San Remo Conference is "the source of the legal rights for Israel."

Benzimra, who has been studying the legal issues connected to the Mideast conflict for 10 years, said the documents signed at San Remo were eventually adopted by the League of Nations and formed the legal basis for the State of Israel, which was created in May 1948.

The resolution incorporated the wording of the Balfour Declaration and, in effect, recognized the ancient right of the Jewish people to all of Palestine, then merely a geographical region within the Ottoman Empire.

> ***90th anniversary of gathering that conferred rights to Jews to land of Israel***

Contrary to received opinion, which influences large numbers of people, "Israel is not a colonizing power, an imperial power that came and stole the land," he said. "You hear that at Israeli Apartheid Week and in the *Guardian* and *Independent* [British] newspapers and sometimes in the *New York Times*. It's become a received truth that Jews and Israelis are interlopers who came from nowhere and stole the land of Palestine. That's a major distortion of reality.

"The reality is that the Jewish people after 1,800 years of exile recovered the nation that was their ancestral land, not by stealth but by international law. International documents establish the legal rights of the Jewish people to reconstitute their nation in Israel based on a historical connection. 'Reconstituted,' not 'created,'" he added.

Benzimra believes that for the peace process to move beyond stalemate, the justice of the Jews' claim has to be recognized, not ignored.

Goldi Steiner will be one of the Canadians traveling to Italy later this month to attend the conference. She will address the gathering as founder and spokesperson for Canadian Supporters of Israel's Legal Rights (CASILER), an ad hoc coalition of like-minded people.

The group was founded last fall by Benzimra, the late Israel Kaplan and Steiner to counter "the heavy weight of lies by Muslims who say this land belongs to them."

The Canadian public is largely unaware of the historical merits of the Jewish people's legal claim to the territory, that "it's founded according to international law and not in violation of international law," Steiner said.

Joining Steiner and Benzimra at the conference will be lawyer Jacques Gauthier, whose 1,100-page thesis asserts the Jewish people's legal rights to the land west of the Jordan river.

The 90th anniversary commemoration is being sponsored by the European Coalition for Israel, CASILER, the City of San Remo and the International Institute of Humanitarian Law.

The program on April 24 will feature an international seminar on "the legal significance of the San Remo resolution as it relates to the status of Israel and Jerusalem in international law," followed the next day by an official ceremony commemorating the 90th anniversary of the signing of the San Remo resolution.

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All entries received by 3 p.m. on **Thursday, May 13th** are eligible. The winning entries will be randomly selected at The CJN offices on **Friday, May 14th.** The winners will be notified the same day. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. One entry per person.

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Email your information to "contest@cjnews.com" Re:"**Broadway from the Bimah" Contest CJN1**, or mail to: The Canadian Jewish News, 1500 Don Mills Road, Suite 205, North York, Ont.M3B 3K4 or fax to: 416-391-0949.

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Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd

JERUSALEM — Israel fell silent on Monday morning as a two-minute-long siren wailed across the country to mark Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Day.

When the siren sounded at 10 a.m., traffic came to a total standstill. Drivers stood next to their cars and pedestrians stopped walking, many of them standing at attention or with their heads bowed.

The siren opened the annual commemoration at Yad Vashem, Israel's state Holocaust memorial authority, in Jerusalem. Wreaths were laid at the foot of the memorial for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin, President Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Opposition Leader Tzipi Livni, Knesset members and Holocaust survivors participated in the ceremony.

On Sunday, the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Netanyahu spoke at the state ceremony and called on the world "to confront Iran's exterminatory intentions and act resolutely to stop Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

"The historic failure of free societies to confront the Nazi beast was that they did not face it in time," Netanyahu said at Yad Vashem. "And today we are witness to the old hatred of Jews once again, fuelled by extremist Islamic authorities, led by Iran and its satellites."

Earlier in the ceremony, Peres said the world must not repeat its indifference at the face of new cries for the destruction of the Jewish People.

"Israel will never forget the two decrees which the Holocaust enforced – the firm demand to sustain an independent

Israelis stand at attention as the siren wails throughout the country on Yom Hashoah v'Hagvurah. ***[Israel Sun photo]***

Jewish state, one that holds its security in its own hands, while at the same time, tirelessly seeking peace as well as the demand to treat threats of annihilation, Holocaust denials and terror-mongering with the utmost severity," Peres said.

Also referring to the defence of the Jewish People in light of the lessons learned by the Holocaust, Israel Defence Forces chief Gabi Ashkenazi said earlier Sunday that never again would the Jewish People lack the means to defend themselves.

Speaking at the Yad Vashem memorial, Ashkenazi said the Jewish People "will never again be dependent on the benevolence of others. Never again will Jewish children be fearful or begging for mercy. Never again will an advocate of evil be able to dictate the future of the Jewish people.

"In the name of my father and his family, who fought for a sovereign and independent state, and in the name of the millions who were unable to witness the realization of their dream, I stand here today as the commander of the Hebrew defence force, the Israel Defence Forces."

Ashkenazi talked about the experiences of his father, a Holocaust survivor from the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv.

"On the night of March 9, 1943, my father's family opened their door to find Bulgarian police ordering them to prepare to be deported from Bulgaria within a few hours," Ashkenazi said.

"Along with 6,000 other Jews, my father assembled in the yard of the school and recited the prayer *Shema Yisrael*. In the end, my father and the Jews of Plovdiv were not sent to the death camps. The cancellation of their deportation order arrived when they were already at the train station, a short time before they were supposed to depart."

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SAVE THE DATE
06.13.10

Community mourns death of Polish president

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The Canadian Jewish community has offered its condolences to Poles around the world on the recent death of Polish President Lech Kaczynski.

Kaczynski, his wife, First Lady Maria Kaczynska, and dozens on his leadership team perished in a plane crash near Smolensk, Russia, on Saturday, April 10.

Canadian Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith Canada and the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation of Canada released statements over the weekend, among others, expressing their sympathy and mourning the deaths.

Peter Jassem, chair of the Toronto chapter of the Polish-Jewish Heritage Foundation, recalled Kaczynski's devotion to repairing ties between Jews, Israel and Poland.

"He continued the political course that has now made Poland the closest ally of the Jewish state in Europe and its fervent supporter in the United Nations. He was the first postwar head of Poland to celebrate the start of Chanukah in a Polish synagogue together with Warsaw's Jewish community leaders and the first to light candles in the presidential palace on this important holiday that was once celebrated by one in every 10 Polish citizens," Jassem said.

Bernie Farber, Congress' CEO, remembered the president and first lady as "stalwarts in enhancing Polish-Jewish relations" both in Poland and internationally.

"We grieve at this difficult time with [Polish ambassador to Canada Zenon] Kosiniak-Kamysz and the Polish-Canadian community. We will strive to honour the memory of Lech Kaczynski and Maria Kaczynska by working to bring our two communities even closer together," he said.

Frank Dimant, executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada, said there were no words to "express our deep sadness at Poland's great loss," adding that Kaczynski and Kaczynska were "wonderful people who worked tirelessly to promote Polish-Jewish relations and played a crucial role in healing some of the old wounds between our two communities."

The Polish government declared this week one of national mourning. Memorial services were scheduled in synagogues in Warsaw and Krakow, and Jewish organizations and cultural centres cancelled their programs.

"In the face of an unimaginable tragedy we join the victims' families and the whole country in grief and sorrow," said Joachim Russek, director of the Judaica Foundation Center for Jewish Culture in Krakow.

Kaczynski was a staunch friend of Israel and actively supported Jewish causes in Poland. When he was the mayor of Warsaw, he played a key role in the decision to found a Museum of the History of Polish Jewry, currently under construction on land donated by the city, and he was the honorary patron of the annual Festival of Jewish Culture in Krakow.

On Monday, the annual Holocaust memorial at Auschwitz-Birkenau also honoured the late Polish president.

Organizers of the March of the Living – in which some 10,000 Jewish youths march more than a mile (1.6 kilometres) between the two parts of the former Nazi death camp – which took place on Yom Hashoah, used Monday's Holocaust remembrance program at Auschwitz to issue a tribute to the fallen Polish president and remembered all those killed in Saturday's crash.

Kaczynski was a staunch friend of Israel and actively supported Jewish causes in Poland

"While our program will go on in deference to the memories of the six million killed in Europe during the Holocaust, we are deeply saddened by this terrible loss to the Polish government and people," said Shmuel Rosenman, chairman of the organization.

Israeli President Shimon Peres expressed "pain, shock and distress" in a statement released Saturday.

"The bilateral ties between our two countries were strengthened during his presidency, distinguished by a spirit of friendship and warmth. The State of Israel bows its head, as it partakes in the deep sorrow of the Polish people on the occasion of their dreadful loss," Peres said.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement released Saturday evening: "We share in the profound grief of the Polish people over the loss of President Kaczynski, his wife and all of the members of the Polish delegation. I knew President Kaczynski as a Polish patriot, as a great friend of Israel and as a leader who was very active on behalf of his people and for advancing peace and prosperity in the world.

The late Polish President Lech Kaczynski and his wife, Maria Kaczynska, in a photo released by the Polish Embassy.

"We recently met in Warsaw, in January of this year, within the framework of the events commemorating 65 years since the liberation of the Auschwitz camp and International Holocaust Day. President Kaczynski led an important process for opening a new page in relations between the Polish and Jewish people and developed Polish-Israeli relations."

With files from JTA

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'Enormous progress' expected

Continued from page 1

On Sunday, Obama said that efforts by Al Qaeda to acquire atomic weapons posed the biggest threat to global security, and world leaders meeting this week must act with urgency to combat this danger.

Speaking on the eve of an unprecedented 47-nation summit in Washington, D.C., aimed at thwarting nuclear terrorism, Obama said he expected "enormous progress" at the conference toward the goal of locking down loose nuclear material worldwide.

"The central focus of this nuclear summit is the fact that the single biggest threat to U.S. security – both short-term, medium-term and long-term – would be the possibility of a terrorist organization obtaining a nuclear weapon," Obama told reporters.

"We know that organizations like Al Qaeda are in the process of trying to secure a nuclear weapon – a weapon of mass destruction that they have no compunction at using," Obama said.

Obama's goal at the two-day summit is to get nations to agree to secure vulnerable nuclear material within four years and to take specific steps to crack down on nuclear smuggling.

The U.S. president held a series of wide-ranging talks with foreign leaders on Sunday, including the prime ministers of nuclear-armed foes India and Pakistan. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and South Africa's Jacob Zuma.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cancelled his participation in the conference. Intelligence and Atomic Energy Minister Dan Meridor will take Netanyahu's place at the summit.

Despite Netanyahu's decision not to attend, a top U.S. official said Friday that the administration believes Israel's delegation to the security summit will be "robust."

"We obviously would like to have the prime minister, but the deputy prime minister will be leading the delegation, and it will be a robust Israeli delegation," U.S. National Security Adviser Gen. Jim Jones told reporters travelling on Air Force One. He also said that relationships between the U.S. and Israel are "ongoing, fine and continuous."

Officials in Jerusalem said Netanyahu cancelled the trip over fears that a group of Muslim states, led by Egypt and Turkey, would demand that Israel sign up to the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

A senior government official told *Ha'aretz* that Israel was "disappointed" with developments in the run-up to the conference.

"The nuclear security summit is supposed to be about dealing with the danger of nuclear terror," the official said. "Israel is a part of that effort and has responded positively to President Obama's invitation to the conference."

The official added: "But that said, in the last few days we have received reports about the intention of several participant states to depart from the issue of combating terrorism and instead misuse the event to goad Israel over the NPT."

One hundred eighty-nine countries, including all Arab states, are party to the NPT. Only Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea are not.

Israel is widely believed to have nuclear weapons, but operates a policy of "nuclear ambiguity," never publicly confirming or denying their existence.

Many Muslim countries have voiced alarm at alleged nuclear programs in Israel and Iran, and have repeatedly called for an agreement to ban nuclear weapons from the region.

In late March in a closed-door session, the Arab League called for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, and for a review of the 1970 NPT in order to create a definitive plan for eliminating nuclear weapons.

League members also called on the UN to declare the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free region.

Anti-Semitism on rise in Europe

By CNAAN LIPHSHIZ

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JERUSALEM — The worldwide increase in anti-Semitic attacks following Israel's 2009 incursion into Gaza hit the United Kingdom and France the hardest, compared to all other European countries, according to Tel Aviv University's watchdog on anti-Semitism.

In 2009, the United Kingdom saw 374 manifestations of violence against Jews, compared to 112 in 2008, according to the Stephen Roth Institute for the study of Contemporary Antisemitism and Racism. France was a distant second, with 195 violent attacks in 2009, compared to 50 in 2008.

The total number of anti-Semitic incidents worldwide, according to the institute, was a record number of 1,129 in 2009, compared to 559 in 2008. The institute recorded 566 incidents of vandalism, targeting Jewish property worldwide in 2009, constituting 49 per cent of all incidents.

Four per cent of incidents – or 41 instances – were armed assaults against Jews because of their religion, and 15 per cent were weaponless assaults. Arson accounted for three per cent, or 34 instances. Threats of violence against Jews and Jewish institutions accounted for 29 percent.

The institute's Haim Fireberg noted that Britain had a relatively high level of xenophobic attacks in general, not only anti-Semitic ones.

Race-linked offences in England and Wales jumped from 31,000 in 2003 to more than 38,000 five years later, according to a report released last month by the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, based on British government figures.

"If we are going to be honest, there is not a lot that the Jewish communities can do to end anti-Semitism," said Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress, which cooperated with the university in compiling the report on 2009. "It is important to delineate and monitor so governments and institutions would be prompted to act."

The Stephen Roth institute recorded 138 violent attacks against Jews in 2009 in Canada and 116 in the United States, compared to 33 in Germany, 22 in Austria and 28 in Belgium.

Israel Briefs

U.S. criticizes PA

The Obama administration "strongly condemned" the naming of Palestinian streets after terrorists and rebuked Palestinian Authority figures for denying Jerusalem's Jewish heritage. "We are disturbed by comments of Palestinian Authority officials regarding reconstruction and refurbishing of Jewish sites in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem's Old City," State Department spokesperson P.J. Crowley said. "Remarks by the Palestinian ministry of information denying Jewish heritage in and links to Jerusalem undermine the trust and confidence needed for substantive and productive Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. We also strongly condemn the glorification of terrorists honouring terrorists who have murdered innocent civilians either by official statements or by the dedication of public places hurts peace efforts and must end. We will continue to hold Palestinian leaders accountable for incitement." Two streets have been named for terrorists in recent weeks in Ramallah. The initiatives were launched by Hamas officials on the town council, but without opposition – and in at least the first case, the encouragement – of PA officials. Some mainstream Jewish groups, Republicans and a number of pro-Israel Democrats have said that the Obama administration has failed to condemn such actions, although it has made public its dispute with Israel over new building in eastern Jerusalem.

Trade deal enacted

A pioneering free-trade deal between Israel and a bloc of South American countries came into effect last week. Israel is the first country outside South America to sign such an agreement with Mercosur, a regional bloc that includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and produces more than $3 trillion in combined GDP. With the deal, bilateral trade is expected to increase threefold in the next five years. The final approval for the agreement was announced by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on March 15 during his visit to Israel. Brazil is Israel's largest trade partner in Latin America. The new deal is expected to provide a special boost to trade in agriculture, education, science, medicine and space.

Organ trafficking ring arrested

Israeli police arrested six men from northern Israel accused of being involved in an organ trafficking ring. The suspects include a military brigadier general and two attorneys. The ring allegedly identified potential organ donors through advertisements promising up to $100,000 in exchange for their kidneys. Some were reportedly paid $10,000 and others nothing at all. The transplants took place in Ecuador, Azerbaijan and the Philippines under substandard medical supervision. Some of the donors still suffer from complications. Israel outlawed providing organ donors for financial rewards in 2008. All organ transplants are carried out through the National Transplant and Organ Donation Center.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Shaarei Shomayim, Toronto is a modern orthodox centre of Jewish life which provides its members the means for the fulfillment of religious, educational and social needs. With a philosophy of active engagement, the synagogue seeks to inspire the community to greater commitments to Torah, the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

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And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Student bases a film on experiences at Camp Kadimah

Since the short film *Bunked!* takes place at night, the cast and crew filmed for five straight nights.

Jonathan Oore, left, was flown in from Halifax to play Johnny, a camp counsellor. Adam, a camper, is played by Corey Lof.

Carrie Skurka, played by Laurie Campbell, is one of the love interests in the film *Bunked!*

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It took Orlee-Rose Strauss five nights to film her final project for Ryerson University's film program. She barely slept, the weather didn't co-operate and the camera broke down.

"Anything you could think of that could go wrong went wrong," said Strauss, who will be graduating from Ryerson this year. "We would start [filming] at around 6:30 to 7 p.m. and we would shoot until 7 a.m., until the sun came up... because the whole film took place at night."

Her final product, called *Bunked!*, is a movie loosely based on her experiences at Camp Kadimah, a Jewish summer camp in Halifax where she has worked for five summers.

"I had worked there last summer, I was talking with a friend of mine from camp... about how I had no idea what I would do [for my final project]. He said, 'You've got to do a movie about this. About camp.' It's very special to us," she said.

In the short film, which Strauss wrote and directed, a counsellor on night watch interferes with a camper's attempts to sneak out and meet a girl he likes.

"I started writing the script at the end of August and I wrote it over September," she said. "It's a very simple story, it's essentially two boy-meets-girl stories. To get to the heart of the story, I had to really develop these two main characters and find out why they were different from other males."

The story and script took several months to finish, and went through many rewrites.

"The script went through about 10 drafts. I have a very challenging group of friends at Ryerson," she said. "The story was a definite challenge."

So was the casting. While trying to find someone to play Johnny, a camp counsellor, Strauss decided to fly Jonathan Oore, a friend of hers, out from Halifax for the part.

Preproduction for *Bunked!* took about six or seven weeks, but the most difficult component was the actual filming, which took place at a camp in Fergus, Ont.

"We essentially had to drive about 70 people to and from this campsite... Just getting people there and feeding them and keeping them warm and happy for five days was an incredible challenge," she said, adding that some of the crew drove back to Toronto for school and then would spend the night filming in Fergus.

Strauss, who was inspired by the 1979 movie *Meatballs*, decided to make her film a comedy, which in itself presented a problem.

"Writing a script that's funny not only to you but to other people is a challenge. You want to get other people's opinions and figure out what your demographic is," she said. "I decided I wanted to do a comedy that... was more subtle, like *Meatballs*. I took inspiration from that in terms of my comedy."

Because her comedy is subtle, Strauss was careful when working with the actors.

"[I was] working with actors to try and have them understand the comedic timing and pacing of the piece," she said, adding that they improvised lines while filming. "Thankfully, my actors were fantastic. I did a lot of improv with them, and they were hilarious on their own."

For Strauss, it was crucial to get every detail just right in her movie, especially since it reflected her own experiences at camp.

"The challenge in trying to recreate this experience in my life is that I wanted to really do it justice, to portray the experiences I had at camp and really have those come off on screen," she said. "It was really important to me not only that the story was good but that people can get a sense of what [I loved] about camp... [Camp Kadimah] means so much to me."

Strauss went to Camp Kadimah as a camper from 2000 to 2003, then returned in 2005 as a staff member. This summer, she'll be acting as a section head for the camp.

While *Bunked!*'s story isn't a Jewish one, the setting reflects her culture.

"We have our fair share of Jewish-sounding names... then we have a little art direction, one of our campers wears an Israeli army shirt," she said. "We didn't want to hit people over the head with it. It's very subtle."

Her film, which is still in the editing process, is about 13 minutes long and will debut in Ryerson's film festival in May, although Strauss plans on entering it in several film festivals throughout North America.

While pitching her film to professors at Ryerson, Strauss won the Kodak Film Award, which came with $1,000, and the William F. White International Equipment Award, a grant for renting filming equipment.

Although Strauss loves filmmaking, she didn't originally apply to Ryerson's film program.

Or any film program.

Instead, she spent a year in Israel after high school, then applied to Ryerson's new-media program.

"I wasn't crazy about it. I had no idea what was going on in the program. I was very lost. I knew it wasn't quite right for me," she said.

A professor suggested she switch to film, and Strauss hasn't looked back since.

"[I like] everything. Pre-production, the process of telling the story... working with a group of talented and creative people to help actualize the story," she said. "It's the directorial process that I love the most. It's basically finding the heart of the story through the actors."

Iconic Jaffa orange as a symbol of nationalism

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

This year's edition of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, the 18th, overflows with an abundance of fine movies.

A sampler follows:

Eyal Sivan's documentary, *Jaffa, The Orange's Clockwork*, is a thoughtful primer on the iconic Jaffa orange, an enduring symbol of both Israeli and Palestinian nationalism.

Through the medium of archival footage, paintings, posters, poetry, songs and interviews, Sivan reflects on the economic and ideological significance of the citrus industry in Palestine and Israel. Dominated at first by Palestinian Arabs, the industry attracted Jewish entrepreneurs and farmers. Thanks to partnerships between Arab and Jewish growers and exporters, it served as an example of Arab-Jewish co-operation at a time of rising political tensions.

For Zionism, the Jaffa orange – often described as a "golden apple" – symbolized the restoration of a neglected land, the growth of a self-contained Jewish economy during the British Mandate period, and Jewish idealism. After 1948, it was inextricably associated with Israeli statehood.

To Palestinians today, the Jaffa orange represents a land lost and a memory remembered. By no coincidence, the early national colours of the Palestinian movement were green and orange. One Palestine Liberation Organization poster showed a masked gunman crouching under an orange tree. Lately, the Jaffa orange has shown up in propaganda posters calling for an boycott of Israeli goods.

Contemplating the clash that pitted Jews against Arabs, Haim Gouri, the celebrated Israeli poet, muses that the Jaffa orange pumped up both sides. Zionists saw it as a source of pride in Jewish agricultural prowess, while Palestinians regarded it as a metaphor for "a world destroyed" during the first Arab-Israeli war.

Continued on page 42

The fabled Jaffa orange was an ideological symbol in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

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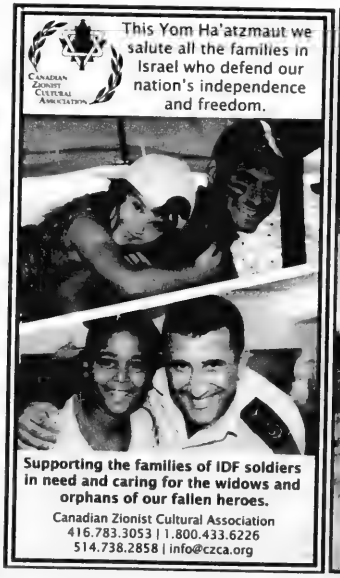
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Restored Nuremberg documentary screens at TJFF

Continued from page 41

The march of time and water shortages have diminished the importance of citrus in Israel's contemporary high-tech economy. But in the hearts of many Israelis and Palestinians, the Jaffa orange still burns brightly as an emblem of progress and accomplishment.

April 20 at 8:15 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema and April 22 at 9:15 p.m. at the Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre

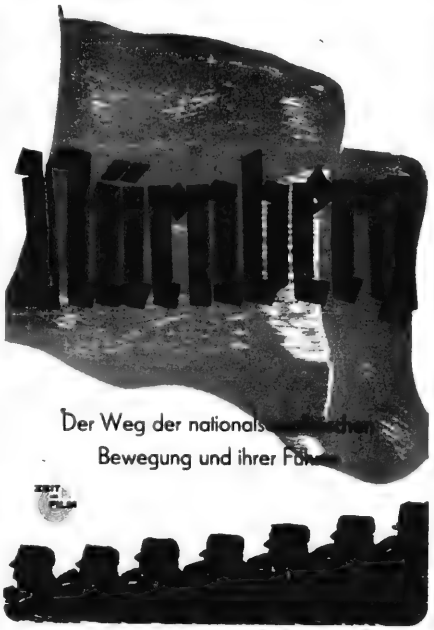
***

Commissioned by the U.S. military government in Germany and screened in German theatres in 1948 and 1949, *Nuremberg: Its Lesson For Today* was shelved and forgotten, much to the disappointment of its director and writer, Stuart Schulberg. His daughter, Sandra Schulberg, and her collaborator, Josh Waletzky, have restored this important and compelling documentary.

Narrated in a stentorian tone by the actor Liev Schreiber, the film is a historical account of Adolf Hitler's rise to power, Nazi aggression and war crimes in Europe and one of the greatest courtroom dramas in the annals of modern times. The black-and-white footage is stark and graphic. The first image of a bedraggled woman holding a baby as she emerges from a bomb shelter in a sea of urban rubble is telling.

Shifting to the postwar Nuremberg war-crimes tribunal, the movie pans on American prosecutor Robert Jackson. He declares that civilization cannot ignore Nazi atrocities and denounces Nazism as a toxic mixture of racial hatred and fierce nationalism.

Nuremberg, in some detail, describes Hitler's ideology, ascent and manipulation of public opinion, as well as Germany's rearmament program and territorial conquests before and after World War II. From the Rhineland and Poland to Norway and Holland, German armies ran roughshod over the continent.



The poster for the original German screening in 1948.

While *Nuremberg* exposes Germany's "criminal treatment" of Polish civilians and the murder of Europeans elsewhere, Jews, strangely enough, go unmentioned until nearly an hour into the film. After cataloguing the horrors of Nazi medical experiments, slave labour and the euthanasia program, it finally acknowledges that Jews were the object of Germany's "greatest crime against humanity." Gruesome clips of the death camps, the gas chambers and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising appear on screen.

The strongest segment unfolds as the Nazi criminals give voice to their feelings. Hermann Goring claims he did not know about the Holocaust, but admits that "excesses" took place. Walther Funk allows that "horrendous acts" were committed against Jews. Albert Speer speaks about the folly of following orders blindly. These mea culpas, of course, can't disguise the fact that Germany descended into hell during the Nazi interregnum.

April 18 at 7 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema

***

The title of *Lone Samaritan*, a film about tradition and alienation by Barak Heymann, is a direct reference to Baruch Tzdaka. He is one of the last remaining followers of the Samaritans, a rapidly shrinking and reclusive religious sect that broke away from Judaism centuries ago and is now based in Holon, Israel, and Mount Gerizim, near the West Bank city of Nablus. *The Lone Samaritan* focuses on Baruch's daughter, Sophie, an Israeli singer and single mother who left the faith with her three sisters, resulting in his excommunication from this exotic community. Interestingly, however, Sophie would consider returning to the fold under the right conditions.

The Samaritans themselves are portrayed as narrow-minded people who consider apostates "garbage." The Samaritan high priest, a rabbinic-looking wizened old man in robes, comes across as utterly and irrevocably dogmatic.

Usually identified by their red fezzes, the Samaritans pray in synagogues that resemble mosques and gather on Mount Gerizim to slaughter sheep and bake them in smoky pits on High Holidays. Heymann's revealing documentary distils the essence of their lifestyle.

April 21 at 12 p.m. at the Al Green Theatre

***

Etty Wieseltier's *Achziv, A Place For Love* turns on the Israeli eccentric Eli Avivi, a phlegmatic free spirit who established a bohemian retreat in an abandoned Arab village in northern Israel several decades ago. Israelis and foreigners who visited Achziv would usually partake of the forbidden fruits of nudity, free love and drugs. This funky film of Avivi's refuge transports a viewer to what is essentially another planet.

April 21 at 3 p.m. at Al Green Theatre.

***

***The Lone Samaritan* focuses on Sophie, an Israeli singer who left the reclusive sect.**

Honor (*Kavod*), directed by Haim Bouzaglo, is Israel's version of *The Godfather*. A moody, sporadically violent and entertaining feature film juxtaposing the sacred with the profane, it revolves around two Moroccan Israeli Mafia families that declare war on each other over a bitter dispute concerning a European casino. Thanks to a competent script, able direction and stellar performances, *Honor* acquits itself quite well.

April 18 at 6:15 p.m. at Al Green and April 19 at 6:15 p.m. at Cineplex Odeon Sheppard Centre

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Acclaimed flick about summer camp can't find a distributor

Coming-of-age comedy stuck in limbo

By JORDANA DIVON
Special to The CJN

Two years ago, Halifax-born filmmaker Jacob Medjuck released a film based on his childhood experiences at summer camp.

It wasn't just any camp movie, either. The film, called *Summerhood*, is narrated by actor John Cusack – currently starring in *Hot Tub Time Machine* and a helpful addition to any '80s youth nostalgia flick – and has played at dozens of festivals around the world to sold-out audiences.

Of the nine U.S. film festivals where Medjuck's film – his writing and directorial debut – has been screened, it has won prizes at seven. He was also personally invited by Pixar to screen the film for its artists, and he lectured Harvard University students on the business of filmmaking.

Yet you probably won't be reliving your camp days at a theatre near you anytime soon. Why? Because *Summerhood* can't get a distributor.

"To market a film costs $35 million, minimum," said Medjuck, a former *CJN* humour columnist, from his Vancouver home.

"These indie films – the ones you love – only cost a few million dollars to make, but they're only going to make about $20 million. So a studio isn't going to want to spend $35 million on a movie that's going to make less than that."

It's an unfortunate reality for filmmakers in tough economic times. Hard-hit studios simply aren't taking many chances on smaller films like *Summerhood*.

Of the 10 to 15 movies that Hollywood studios release per year, executives put a premium on how many dollars they'll get in return for their investment. And with a stable of big-name blockbusters at the gate, it's the rare independent feature that slips through.

"When the first four studios passed on buying us, I felt like, 'I'm not going to the prom. I'm not attractive,'" Medjuck said. "But when they passed on a Tom Hanks movie, I said, 'You know what? It's not my film. It's the industry.'"

Timing appears to be the only element not working in *Summerhood*'s favour. Reviews have been mostly terrific for the film about four longtime friends on the cusp of puberty who realize at summer camp that they don't particularly like each other.

Struggles for social status, burgeoning puppy love and a sadistic camp director all compete for laughs in a story Medjuck said he wrote after years of working on "neutered portrayals of childhood" as a studio animator.

"The movies I was working on weren't true to the memories of my childhood," he said. "And although they were entertaining and wonderful, there was more value to what they weren't touching."

After stumbling upon a childhood diary, Medjuck recognized the potential to create a narrative that included the same rawness he expressed as a 10-year-old kid.

"There's a time when you have to move past the *Munsters* and get into the monsters," he said. "The world is full of trauma, and I just wanted to capture it in an honest way. To me, spin the bottle is traumatic. You put that bottle down and you think it's a good idea, but you know what? Fifty per cent of the time, you're kissing dudes."

Filmed over a three-month period at Nova Scotia's Camp Kadimah, *Summerhood* was a labour of love for Medjuck, who attended Camp Kadimah as a kid and served as the film's writer, director, producer, caterer and occasional background character.

He said he really bonded with the mostly Canadian cast and crew, and one of his biggest frustrations is that their families can't even see the film they worked on.

"You begin to understand why artists leave the country," he said.

There's still hope, however.

Medjuck has mounted an alternative marketing campaign using social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Eventful, where users can "demand" to bring *Summerhood* to their city by simply clicking a button.

He's also partnering with AMC Theatres to "get rid of the middle man" by running the *Summerhood* trailer before other films to garner interest (and put tushes in seats).

In the meantime, Medjuck has parlayed the buzz from *Summerhood* into two big budget animation feature projects from the producer who made Fox's *Ice Age* films.

While he won't have as much creative control as he did on *Summerhood*, Medjuck said the perks are worth it.

"For the value of not having to go door-to-door this time, I'm OK with sharing the workload."

You can learn more about *Summerhood* on the film's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/lazycamper, and view the trailer at www.summerhood.com.

***Summerhood* is based on childhood experiences at camp.**

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

MOONLIGHT AND MAGNOLIAS EXPLORES COMEDIC BACK STORY OF *GONE WITH THE WIND*

Amicus Productions explores a chapter of Hollywood history with the comedy *Moonlight and Magnolias*. The play is loosely based on the true story of the writing of the screenplay for *Gone With the Wind*, which took place after cameras had already started rolling.

Three men are locked in an office for five days with nothing for sustenance but peanuts and bananas. Screenwriter **Ben Hecht** hasn't read the book, so director **Victor Fleming** and producer **David O. Selznick** act it out for him. Their startling and funny interpretation brings out elements of screwball comedy. The play also tackles questions related to the Old South and anti-Semitism. $18, $21. Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr. April 15 to 24. 416-860-6176. www.amicusproductions.ca

* * *

More Theatrical Fare

• *Post Eden*, a "new verbatim theatrical work and live film," is written and directed by **Jordan Tannahill** and stars **Sascha Cole**, **Lindsey Clark** and others. The Suburban Beast production runs at the Abrams Studio Theatre, 46 Gerrard St. E., April 14 to 18. $15, $12. 647-342-8177, www.suburbanbeast.ca

• Encore Entertainment presents the **Neil Simon** comedy, *Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, this month in North York. The play tells the story of middle-aged, faithful, responsible Barney Cashman, who wants to experience one sweeping romantic fling outside of his tranquil marriage before life passes him by. On three different afternoons, he invites women to his mother's empty apartment, all with disastrous results. Behind plentiful laughs is a tender and timeless portrayal of a decent fellow whose personal morals are colliding with the sexual revolution of the day. $28.50, $27. Toronto Centre for the Arts, Studio Theatre, 5040 Yonge St. April 22 to May 2. 416-872-1111, www.encoreshows.com

• Mirvish Productions presents **Jake Ehrenreich** in his unique stage production, *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, described as a "rock 'n' roll true story, Holocaust family, Borscht-belt comedy musical." $25 to $60. Panasonic Theatre, April 28 to May 16. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

* * *

Film Festival Opens April 17: The Toronto Jewish Film Festival returns April 17 to 25, with an international program from 18 countries and four continents. The bill of fare includes some 93 shorts, documentaries and features, from such disparate places as Israel, Argentina, Mexico, Switzerland, Czech Republic, the United States, Britain and Europe. This year's TJFF also features a record 28 Canadian premières. 416-967-1528, www.tjff.com

* * *

Jaffa Road and Yair Dalal: Koffler Centre of the Arts presents **Jaffa Road** with **Yair Dalal** in concert as part of its Musical Melding series. Jaffa Road combines original and ancient poetry sung in Hebrew, Spanish and English with pulsating dub grooves, belly-dance rhythms, ambient electronic textures and improvisations. Yair Dalal, a prolific Israeli musician, interweaves the traditions of Iraqi and Jewish-Arabic music with Balkan, Indian and other influences. $15, $12. Hugh's Room, 2262 Dundas St. W. Sunday, April 25, 2 p.m. 416-531-6604.

While in Toronto, Dalal teaches the master class Bridge to Babylon at the Koffler Centre of the Arts, Monday, April 26, 7:30 p.m. 416-638-1881, ext. 4268, or e-mail registration@kofflerarts.org

* * *

Other Musical Events

• Guitarist-pianist **Brian Katz** and singer-musician **Lenka Lichtenberg** perform a spring concert of (mostly) Jewish music, joined by **Kinneret Sagee** on clarinet and **Alan Hetherington** on percussion. The concert will include several new songs from Lichtenberg's upcoming Yiddish/English CD *Free*, as well as older favourites. Free Times Café, 320 College St. Saturday, April 17, 8 to 11 p.m. $10 cover. Reservations, 416-967-1078.

•The Associates of the **Toronto Symphony Orchestra** presents Five Small Concerts, a varied program performed by the **Toronto Symphony Youth Orchestra**. $18, $15, $10. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. Monday, April 19, 7:30 p.m. 416-485-2717.

* * *

Arts in Brief

• Aeolus House and Israel's Judaica present the launch of *Sapphire Seasons*, a new volume of poetry by **I.B. Iskov**. Come and meet the author; kosher refreshments. Israel's, 870 Eglinton Ave. W. Sunday, April 25, 5 p.m.

• The Koffler Centre of the Arts presents "Auguststrasse 25" by Toronto-based artist **E.C. Woodley**. Situated in an old downtown synagogue, the multimedia installation replicates a middle-class Jewish living room from Germany of the 1920s. Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave. April 22 to May 30.

Israeli rock star Berry Sakharof to play Toronto

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Berry Sakharof has been in the music industry for 25 years.

As an Israeli rock artist, he founded the band Minimal Compact, collaborated with bands like Infected Mushroom, has more than 30 albums out and has toured around the world.

And, for the first time in his rock career, he'll be coming to Canada.

"He's the legend of Israeli culture," said Ravid Dahan, owner of Motek Productions, an event-planning organization that brings Israeli artists to Canada. "All of the famous and successful artists in Israel are connected somehow to him."

Motek Productions, which plans some four concerts a year, tries to expose Canadian-born Jews to Israeli culture through different artists.

"The idea was to bring the top 10 [Israeli musicians], Berry's one of the top 10. He's never performed in Canada," Dahan said, adding that music is a good way to connect Canadians to Israel.

"It's really important to bring Israeli culture to North America, to be connected to Israel. It's not only being connected by donating money, it's to feel the country [through its music]. It's about what's going on in Israel," she said.

Sakharof, who was born in Turkey and immigrated to Israel as a child, started his rock career at 16, in the band Cosmic Dream. Along with friend and fellow musician Rami Fortis, Sakharof played in Israeli rock clubs.

After serving in the Israeli army, he moved to Brussels from 1980 to 1988. While living in Europe, Sakharof formed Minimal Compact, the first Israeli rock band to become successful outside of Israel.

"It's a totally different scene in Europe than in Israel. Professionally, I learned a lot," said Sakharof in a phone interview from Israel. "It was mainly learning. Israel is very small… I was very young at the time, before I went to Europe, I was more into Led Zeppelin, conservative rock. I think that I just learned how to develop more my own style."

His style includes Oriental melodies and a mixture of rock, electronic and dance music. His latest album, called *Ibn Gabirol: Adumei Hasfatot*, includes lyrics taken from the poetry of Solomon Ibn Gabirol, an 11th-century Jewish philosopher. The album incorporates older, traditional Jewish music.

"The last album I did, I met some people that are doing this kind of music… old music that [was passed] from father to son over the years in the Jewish community," he said.

"I really loved it… there were really nice texts, really nice construction with words. It opened to different kinds of music. Some of the things I did [on the album] was very old music… I always liked the rock and roll with a little bit of Oriental flavour."

Berry Sakharof

At his Toronto concert, Sakharof will be singing songs from his older albums, as well as his latest. While the musician has toured in Europe, Asia and the United States, he's yet to play in Canada.

"I don't really know [why]," he said, adding that he was supposed to play in Toronto in the past, but the details never worked out.

"I'm really waiting for [the Toronto concert]," he said.

Sakharof performs on April 20 at On The Rox Live, 1600 Steeles Ave. W. For tickets and information, visit www.motekproductions.com or call 647-899-0071.

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Arts & Travel

Family tries to recover Nazi-looted art in Kacer's latest

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Kathy Kacer, the award-winning author of several children's books about the Holocaust, including *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser*, has written a true story geared toward adults.

In *Restitution*, published by Second Story Press, the Toronto-based author, who is a child of Holocaust survivors, tells the story of the Reesers, a Czech-Canadian family who heroically faced down Nazis, Communists, prejudice and corruption for more than 50 years with the hopes of recovering four stolen paintings, lost after the family fled Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia under the Gestapo's watchful eyes.

Kathy Kacer

Matriarch Marie Reeser and her son, Karl, never gave up their quest to reclaim what was rightfully theirs. In 1990, as communism was falling around them, Karl Reeser enlisted the help of two unlikely saviours – a daring Canadian diplomat and an "honest" Czech-Canadian art smuggler.

Reeser happens to be the father-in-law of Elizabeth Forster, a law partner of Kacer's husband, Ian Epstein.

"Ian is always promoting all of my books throughout the law firm. Elizabeth had a copy of my very first book, *The Secret of Gabi's Dresser*. That story is set in the former Czechoslovakia, and her father-in-law is from Czechoslovakia. I was absolutely riveted when I heard his story. It had everything to do with espionage and adventure," Kacer says.

"I knew almost immediately that I would love to write this book, but at the time, five or six years ago, I knew I wasn't ready yet to write an adult story, so I put it aside. Then about three years ago, I decided to do Karl's story," says Kacer.

Kacer said writing an adult book was both wonderful and challenging. "I find in writing adult stories, I don't have to edit my adult content. I can really write what is in my head.

"The process is different when writing for kids, when I do have to think more carefully about those elements. At the end of the day, it is all about writing a great story… it doesn't matter if you are a kid or an adult – that is what appeals and that is what I try to do," she says.

Kacer writes both fiction and non-fiction, but all of her stories are based on fact and many on real people. In the case of Reeser, Kacer met with the now octogenarian over a period of 2-1/2 years.

"We met in Karl's home, and for me it was having a sense of this story unfolding through Karl's eyes and through his memories," says Kacer, who saw the precious paintings.

"The paintings are beautiful, but more than just the paintings themselves is what they represent to this family, and that is really the essence of this story… one family's resilience in the aftermath of the World War II and their tenacity," Kacer said.

"I think Karl loved the process of meeting with me. What he loved most is the passages about his mother because she is such a heroic and courageous person… really stepping out of the shadow of even what was acceptable for women at that time. She's the one that took charge of the family and got them out [of Czechoslovakia] on the eve of the World War II. I think what Karl loved was a written account of his mother's heroic role in this family. The paintings are one legacy the family has, and this book is now part of that legacy."

Reeser's story is unique, Kacer says without giving too much of it away. It's unique because of the happy ending, since we know that most were not able to reclaim their property after the war.

Kacer, a former psychologist, has won many awards for her children's books, including the Yad Vashem Prize for Children's Holocaust Literature for *Hiding Edith*. Kacer travels around the world speaking to young people about the Holocaust.

She is the mother of two adult children, Gabi and Jake Epstein, both successful actor/singers. Kacer says she doesn't have another adult book planned in the near future, but she will not rule out the possibility of writing an interesting adult story that might come her way. Her next book will once again be written for children. In addition, she's at the beginning stages of writing an adult play about the Holocaust with her son.

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Books & Authors

Portuguese Jewish traders and merchants created commercial networks

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Portuguese merchants, mariners and migrants created one of the most extensive and powerful mercantile networks of the early modern period.

Collectively known as *la Nacion portuguesa*, they forged trading routes from Africa, South America, Asia and Europe, thereby building the foundations of a globalized economy.

A good many of these individuals were Sephardi Jews or Christians of Jewish origin who established Jewish communities in far-off lands, as we learn in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800* (Johns Hopkins University Press), a collection of erudite essays edited by Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan, both of whom are historians at Johns Hopkins University.

In the lead essay *Jews and Crypto-Jews in the Atlantic World Systems, 1500-1800*, Jonathan Israel, a professor of modern history at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J., says that Portuguese-speaking Jewish converts to Christianity based in Hamburg, Amsterdam and Livorno played a dominant role in the import of Brazilian sugar to Italy and northern Europe.

Crypto-Jews made their presence felt in Spanish America – Mexico City, Lima Veracruz, Guadalajara and Potosi – while Sephardi Jews set down roots in Curacao, Jamaica, Barbados, Saint Thomas and Suriname.

According to Israel, Sephardi and Converso networks were far less important to the commerce of the British empire and British North American ports.

In *Jewish History in the Age of Atlanticism*, Adam Sutcliffe, a historian at King's College in London, points out that the Sephardim possessed a "geographical reach" that no other trading diaspora could match.

Sutcliffe adds that Jews in 17th-century Dutch Brazil were dominant in the slave trade, a common colonial practice. And by engaging in sexual relations with their female slaves and fathering children with them, Jewish slaveholders reflected the prevalent norms of plantation behaviour.

Wim Klooster, in *Networks of Colonial Entrepreneurs: The Founders of the Jewish Settlement in Dutch America, 1650s and 1660s*, writes that northeastern Brazil was the first place in the western hemisphere where Jews were granted residential, commercial and religious rights.

Among the men and women who settled there were Jews from the Iberian peninsula. They arrived in Brazil via Amsterdam, says Klooster, a Clark University professor.

By the 17th century, the oldest overseas Portuguese community was composed of Jews, Conversos, New Christians and Catholics, states Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert of McGill University. They were subjected to anti-Semitism in pamphlets, plays, poetry and public processions, which accused *la Nacion portuguesa* of internationalism, materialism and atheism.

In *Sephardi Merchants in the Early Modern Atlantic and Beyond*, Francesca Trivellato of Yale University observes that Jews in Britain played a marginal role in British overseas trade due to their status as "aliens."

Bruno Feitler, in *Jews and New Christians in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654*, says that Holland's short-lived occupation of the northeastern Brazilian coast prompted Jews in Amsterdam to migrate to the colony and establish the first official Jewish community in the New World in Recife.

These Jewish settlers formed strong relationships with local Christians, the descendants of Portuguese Jews who had been forced to convert to Catholicism. Influenced by their arrival, many local New Christians openly declared themselves to be Jews, says Feitler of the Federal University in Sao Paulo.

During the brief Dutch era, he notes, a Jew who returned to Judaism could attend synagogue without fear of persecution.

In *A Matriarchal Matter: Slavery, Conversions and Upward Mobility in Suriname's Jewish Community*, Aviva Ben-Ur of the University of Massachusetts deals with the issue of Jewish identity in a remote slave colony that drew its non-indigenous inhabitants from Africa, Europe, India, China and Indonesia.

As one of Suriname's first non-indigenous settlers, Jews prospered under tolerant British and Dutch rule.

By the mid-18th century, these Sephardi Jews had built Jodensavanne, an agrarian settlement in the jungle south of the capital city, Paramaribo.

Worked by African slaves, it had the distinction of being the largest Jewish agricultural community in the world and the only one in the Americas granted virtual self-rule.

Due to a number of reasons, including soil depletion and slave rebellions, Jodensavanne vanished, forcing most Jews to move to Paramaribo.

Since there was a shortage of women in the Jewish community, miscegenation was inevitable. As official marriages between freemen and slaves had no legal status, Jewish men took African wives in informal marriages. "African-origin women were thus a key component in the growth, survival and redefinition of the Sephardi population," says Ben-Ur.

Put another way, one out of 14 Sephardi Jews in Suriname from 1778 to 1835 was of African origin.

During this period, Suriname was home to the biggest Jewish community in the Americas. "Its Jewish community is the longest lived in South America, surviving until today," Ben-Ur writes.

Peter Mark and Jose Da Silva Horta focus on Africa in *Catholics, Jews and Muslims in Early 17th-Century Guiné*.

Sephardi Jewish traders and merchants who settled on Africa's west coast arrived by way of Amsterdam and were New Christians before returning to Judaism.

In Senegal, they were protected by local African Muslim rulers, say the authors, who respectively teach at Wesleyan University and Lisbon University. As in Suriname, Jewish men formed bonds with local women, preferably with the daughters of dignitaries or wealthy traders. Their offspring were fully accepted members of the Jewish community.

The final, summing up essay in this intriguing volume is by Natalie Zemon Davis, a professor emeritus at Princeton University and an adjunct professor at the University of Toronto.

She says that the entrepreneurial style of *la Nacion portuguesa* rested on an ability to cross borders easily, and that a shared Portuguese background contributed to the formation of trust – a vital ingredient in building a far-flung mercantile empire.

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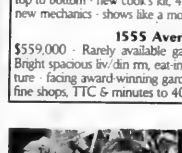

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Israel & the Jewish World

Kyrgyz Jews hold breath amid upheaval

By ANNA RUDNITSKAYA and URIEL HEILMAN
JTA

MOSCOW — As the capital of Kyrgyzstan erupted in violence last week, members of the Central Asian nation's small Jewish community held their breath and sat tight.

The ORT school in the capital, Bishkek, shuttered its doors, sending students home just as they were returning from their Passover break. With public transportation suspended and the city in disarray, only three people made it to morning services at the local synagogue. Meanwhile, Jewish community leaders exchanged frantic phone calls, updating one another about the situation on the street.

By the end of the day last Wednesday, opposition protesters had stormed the presidential compound, overwhelmed the police and taken control of the government. The president, Kurmanbek Bakiev, had fled, and more than 40 people had been killed. Last Thursday, a former foreign minister announced he was leading a new, transitional government, which would last six months.

It was not immediately clear where this one-day revolution would leave the country – or its estimated 1,500 Jews, most of whom live in Bishkek.

"The situation is the city remains unstable, but the Jewish community has not suffered so far," Kyrgyzstan's chief rabbi, Arieh Reichman, told JTA. "All the community leaders keep in touch with each other and with the community members, mostly by phone. I have been contacted by an Israeli foundation that could provide us with humanitarian aid. But the situation is not as bad so far, and hopefully things will calm down in the near future."

More than half of Bishkek's Jews are on community welfare, receiving aid through the local Hesed centre, which is sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Asher Ostrin, the executive director of JDC's operations in the former Soviet Union, said the community was working to ensure that its Jewish welfare clients experience no disruption during the unrest.

"When the rioting spread earlier in the week and then escalated into a full-scale revolution, we established immediate and ongoing contact with our sources in the community," Ostrin said in a dispatch to JDC officials. "There were no reported injuries among the Jewish population. Critically, we were told that services to elderly clients were not interrupted."

A security officer at the synagogue, Valentin Sharov, said the violence came close but did not reach the shul.

"A shop just 100 metres from us was ravaged last night, but no one tried to attack the synagogue," Sharov said last Thursday.

'There were no reported injuries among the Jewish population. Critically, we were told that services to elderly clients were not interrupted'

After shuttering early last Wednesday, all the city's Jewish institutions stayed closed last Thursday, reported Vladimir Katsman, director of Bishkek's ORT school.

"Yesterday we had to finish the lessons earlier than usual and to close the school until the situation gets more foreseeable. We even called the parents to come and take the children, because we were not sure the school bus that usually takes the children home could be safe enough," Katsman said. "Our ORT school is under surveillance. It became more difficult and expensive to keep the security men on duty these days, but we managed to solve the problem."

The Jews of Kyrgyzstan are comprised largely of the second- and third-generation descendants of Jews from Ukraine, Belarus and central Russia who fled here to escape the Nazis during World War II. Most returned home after the war, but enough remained to make an impression in Kyrgyzstan, where many of the Jews went into health care. Even during the era of Soviet state-sponsored anti-Semitism, there was little hostility toward Jews in this remote republic, local Jews said. When the country became independent after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Jewish security remained good. Though three-quarters of Kyrgyzstan's 5.5 million people are Muslim, radical Islam has not really gained a foothold in the country.

"We don't feel any problems because of the Islamic environment," Katsman said. "I haven't heard of any anti-Semitic utterances because of the street violence so far."

However, one journalist in the country told JTA about an encounter with a group of drunken young people demanding to know if the journalist was Jewish. The leader of the group made a disparaging remark about Jews.

The closest Israeli Embassy, in neighbouring Kazakhstan, said it was tracking events closely.

"We ask citizens of Israel who are in Kyrgyzstan to get in touch with us. This is a standard procedure in case of any trouble," an embassy official told JTA. "We do not have plans for an evacuation operation so far. We don't have information on the exact number of Israelis in Kyrgyzstan."

The ousted government, while widely considered repressive, was also pro-western, and the United States has a large air base in Kyrgyzstan that's critical to the NATO campaign in nearby Afghanistan. It's not clear whether the U.S. friendliness toward the former regime – which the opposition denounced and which U.S. observers described as a stance borne of pragmatism – will cost the West in its relationship with the new Kyrgyz government, which has close ties to Moscow. Opposition members who took control said they were interested in creating a government based on "justice and democracy."

Kyrgyzstan is bordered by three other former Soviet republics – Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan – as well as China.

Extremes dominate Hungarian elections

JTA

BUDAPEST — The Hungarian and European Jewish communities reacted with shock to the first round of parliamentary elections, in which the extreme-Nationalist Jobbik party secured 26 seats.

The ultra-conservative Fidesz party and its ally the Christian People's Party took 206 seats in the 386-seat single-chamber parliament and is charged with forming a government by June. It's widely expected to be pushed further to the right by the openly anti-Semitic Jobbik.

The ruling Socialists suffered a humiliating defeat with only 28 seats left in parliament. A new moderate party called Politics Can Be Different won five seats. The Alliance of Free Democrats, that used to attract considerable Jewish support, has disappeared. The second round of the elections on April 25 may well intensify the trend of extremes set by the first.

Jewish community leaders in Hungary have described the election results as a disaster. The German business newspaper *Handelsblatt* expressed fears that nationalist tendencies in Hungarian politics may foster enmity with its neighbours within the European Union.

Jobbik's successes prove that "acceptable" anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism are still alive and well in parts of Europe, according to a statement issued by the European Jewish Congress.

EJC president Moshe Kantor called the results a blow for tolerance in Europe. "This is an example of the political fragility of certain societies in Europe," Kantor said. "As a result of the economic crisis, certain extreme parties are able to deliver a scapegoat upon which to blame all their ills."

"This growing popularity of racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic parties in Europe pose a grave danger to the fabric of Europe and could drag us back to the dark days of the past. We must act now," Kantor said.

The EJC, the democratically elected representative of European Jewish communities, is planning to lobby European governments to introduce greater democratic safeguards through legislation against the growing intolerance in Europe.

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Peer still jubilant over performance in Dubai

By MARVIN GLASSMAN
Special to The CJN

MIAMI — Israeli tennis star Shahar Peer got as far as the third round of the recent Sony Ericsson Open in Miami before losing to Kim Clijsters, the eventual tournament winner.

Despite the loss, Peer was still jubilant – but it had more to do with her remarkable performance in Dubai more than a month ago.

She may have played the best tennis of her life in late February by finishing as a semifinalist at the Dubai tournament. Under heavy security, playing only on an outside court and restricted to her hotel and the tennis grounds, Peer nevertheless upset three seeded players, including top seed and the No. 2-ranked player in the world, Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, 6-2, 7-5 before losing in the semifinals to Venus Williams 6-1, 6-4.

"I will remember this year's tournament at Dubai for the rest of my life. I proved to the world that sports and politics do not mix. I was proud of focusing on my tennis, beating three players ranked ahead of me," Peer said after her 51-minute, second-round victory over Alla Kudryavtseva of Russia 6-1, 6-0 in Miami.

Shahar Peer

Given the scrutiny in Dubai over the recent assassination of a Hamas leader near Peer's hotel, every precaution taken was necessary to ensure Peer's safety at the tournament.

"I can't imagine playing well under these circumstances. Shahar is courageous. I don't think anyone in tennis could have done what she did in Dubai," said Williams, who was a finalist at the Sony Ericsson Open.

Stacey Allaster, CEO of the Women's Tennis Association and former Rogers Cup Toronto tournament director, was impressed with the way tournament officials in Dubai handled Peer.

"The WTA and Shahar were pleased with how the security was handled. Despite the fact that Peer was never featured on centre court and many fans were inconvenienced, Shahar's life and security had to be protected," Allaster said.

Peer has become something of a celebrity to be admired beyond her achievements in tennis – at least in Israel and the worldwide Jewish community. She is in demand to be honoured whenever she travels to tournaments in places with large Jewish populations, such as Miami.

"Shahar had to turn down many more organizations in Miami and elsewhere that wanted to honour her since she was banned last year than she can accept," said her brother Shlomi, who manages Peer's schedule off the courts. Peer was honored in Miami at a reception for the South Florida region of the Maccabiah Games committee.

Only a year ago, Peer was a victim of Middle East politics when the United Arab Emirates refused to give her a visa to enter the 2009 Dubai tournament. But the move to ban Peer backfired: she received worldwide support from the biggest names in her sport, the tournament was fined $300,000 (US) and Peer was guaranteed entry into the Dubai tournament for the next five years.

Her rankings have risen dramatically after a precipitous drop in the immediate aftermath of the 2009 Dubai event. After dropping to 65th she rebounded during the latter half of the year, finishing deep in many tournaments, including a third round finish at the Rogers Cup in Toronto. Peer won two consecutive tournaments in late September and continued her consistent play in 2010 with many third-round and semifinal finishes, raising her ranking to 19th.

"I want to get better and improve. I knew that I could do well and still be in the top 30 and proved to myself that I can compete with the best players in tennis," said the 22-year-old Peer.

Fichman's ranking soars

Sharon Fichman of Toronto, whose aim in 2010 is to be ranked among the top 100 in women's tennis, saw her rankings rise more than 180 places from 302 to a current high of 121. Fichman had her best tournament in late February in Acapulco, Mexico, upsetting the world's 40th ranked player, Soroma Cirstea, of Romania 6-2, 6-0 and fourth seed Mariya Koryttseva of Ukraine 6-2, 6-3 en route to a quarter-final finish.

Fichman won Tennis Canada's Ace award as Canada's most improved player in 2009. With her high ranking, she will be allowed to enter the qualifying rounds of the major tournaments on the women's pro circuit. Fichman won two singles matches in Paraguay and led Canada to victory in Fed Cup Americas Zone competition in February to enhance her status as the third-ranked Canadian in tennis.

"I am pleased with my performance so far and hope to continue improving in 2010. I am playing aggressively with more confidence than ever before," said Fichman following her first round loss in qualifying at the Sony Ericsson Open to Russia's Regina Kulikova 6-0, 6-1.

Sharon Fichman

Barring injury, Fichman and Peer will be competing at the Roger's Cup tournament in Montreal from Aug. 14 to 22. For more information, visit www.tenniscanada.com

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Out of the Cold program hosts art show

Compiled by CJN Staff

"What about these two colours, they rhyme, right?" Peter held up a turquoise and a fuchsia pastel crayon.

The instructor smiled and nodded at the complementary colours. Peter is a musician, and this was his first time creating visual art.

Peter is one of 150 guests who comes to Beth Sholom Synagogue's Out of the Cold weekly program, which has run for 11 winter seasons. The program offers guests a hot dinner, overnight shelter, breakfast, a bagged lunch and clothing donations.

This past winter, Tuesday evenings at Beth Sholom have also included an informal art program. Amid a room of diners and rowdy conversation, one of the round tables is cleared at 7 p.m. to become the designated art table. Paints and pastels are laid out, and guests and volunteers sit down together to share ideas and create artwork.

On April 18, from 2 to 4 p.m., Beth Sholom's Out of the Cold program will be hosting its first art show and fundraiser, "Into the Light." The artwork, created by the synagogue's guests, is for sale, with all proceeds going to the artists and back into the program.

For more information about the exhibit, call Beth Sholom Synagogue at 416-783-6103 or e-mail Melanie at intothelightshow@gmail.com.

One of the many pieces of art that will be on display at the art show.

ELAINE'S ROASTED CAULIFLOWER "POPCORN"

1 large head of cauliflower, cut into medium-sized florets
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1/2 tsp paprika

Preheat the oven to 450° F. Mix all ingredients except cauliflower and pour into a large Ziploc bag. Add the cauliflower to the bag and shake well until the cauliflower is coated on all sides. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper and spread the cauliflower on the sheet in a single layer. Roast uncovered for 30-35 minutes. Midway through roasting, toss or turn the cauliflower over

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About Life

Dear Ella,

My sister Beth and I are in a very uncomfortable position. Jacob, our older brother has recently moved in with his latest conquest, who is 15 years his junior. He is head over heels in love with her, and she can get him to do whatever she wants. Jacob has never been very successful. He is a "get rich quick" kind of guy, trying all kinds of business ventures, none of which pan out. His new lady friend has very expensive tastes, and lately Jacob has been hounding our mother for money. He is always broke, yet drives an expensive car and seems to be lacking for nothing Mom feels sorry for him and has given him a substantial amount of money in the past, but she's feeling very used and has come to Beth and me for advice. I told her to just say no, but she loses sleep at night out of guilt. We could use some advice on how to handle this.

Pushed Too Far

Dear Pushed Too Far

Money issues and family are an old and sensitive problem for which there are no easy solutions. When it comes to money, it only takes one selfish, short-sighted family member to destroy the harmony of an otherwise loving family. The control is out of your hands. Jacob is going to do what he decides to do, and your mother can't help how she feels.

Unfortunately this problem is not unique. I'm going to assume that you and your sister have tried the obvious and have spoken to Jacob about the stress he is causing your mother.

But short of leaving the situation to fester, there is another suggestion: take the decision away from your mother, or at least make it seem that way

There are professional money managers who can take over Make an appointment with one of them and explain the situation. Your mother can empower this manager to be the "bad guy." Next time Jacob comes knocking, she can simply tell him to go speak to the accountant. Obviously, your mother would still have ultimate control over her finances, but the burden and guilt would now shift to the accountant.

Even a move like this is a huge change for your mother, but it may be the answer to solving this rift that is sure to divide you all if you don't take some kind of action.

Readers can submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, e-mail: ella@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthy wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional

Finding your bliss

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

A big part of finding your bliss is having the guts to make a giant leap in the area that you love and that gives you deep fulfilment. You also have to immerse yourself in the sphere that you want to enter.

For instance, you can't say you want to write a book and just think and dream about it. You have to commit to writing every day.

Last year, I was talking to a woman who mentioned that she loved this column and the concept of "finding your bliss." She asked me what my bliss was, in addition to my husband and our children. I answered, "Singing in a jazz club." She then asked me, "Oh, when's your next gig?" I was taken aback. Here I was dispensing advice to others on how to achieve their bliss and I wasn't following my own advice. I responded, "I'll let you know." I immediately got into motion.

First, I found out where there was an open mike night, stepped up my singing lessons and finally called the recording studio where I'd won a three-hour session and booked it. I started practising every day, did that first gig, and the more I entered into the sphere, the further I got along on my path of becoming a singer. I recorded some songs and was told that one in particular could actually be part of an album. When my wonderful husband wanted to make me a party to celebrate a special birthday, he asked, "What would make this birthday more palatable," and I answered, "Singing jazz."

My excellent singing teacher helped me put a fabulous jazz band together, and I kept practising in my car and at home, and took a performance singing class with a group of nine other talented women and learned so much from all of them.

My husband invited all of our closest family and friends to a jazz club, and we had an evening of sheer bliss. I sang a set of 10 songs and was followed by our daughter, who sang three songs with her powerful, belting voice. She hit it out of the ballpark, especially with her final number *I'm Telling You I'm Not Going*. This, of course, was my greatest bliss.

Before that night, when it came to my first open mike night, I didn't have the accompanist I know, didn't know what charts were – which I've since learned all about – and needless to say, it wasn't perfect. At the next gig, there were sound issues.

But it's all good, because each time you put yourself out there, you learn a little more and you figure out what you need to do the next time. And just because you find your bliss, doesn't mean it's going to be perfect right away. You're still going to have growing pains, obstacles and imperfections.

But through all of that, I experienced moments on that magical night, when I felt so transported by singing. I experienced sheer bliss.

Thank you to the people who helped make that special evening happen. You made a dream come true. The best part was that several people wrote to me after the party to say that I inspired them to find and follow their own bliss. That was the greatest gift of all.

Take a chance and make a leap toward finding your bliss. You won't regret it.

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net.

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The Canadian Jewish news

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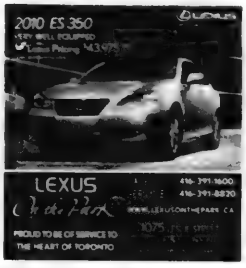

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Birthday of the founder of modern Zionism

Theodor Herzl was born 150 years ago on May 2, 1860. In his 1975 biography of the Jewish leader, Amos Elon wrote: "Almost single-handedly, he built and sustained a movement which, within half a century, through a modern migration of outcasts and idealists, led to the establishment of the modern State of Israel. Herzl did not invent Zionism. Others had done that before him. He forged the instruments that would put Zionism into practice, for politics is the development of power. From nothing, he created first an illusion of that power and then the power itself, which would later make possible the return of the Jews to Palestine."

Please see related stories on pages 4 and 8.

Canada gets failing grade on war criminals

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

An Israel-based Nazi hunter has given Canada a failing grade for its lack of effort to bring Nazi war criminals to justice in 2009.

Canada was lumped together with Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Ukraine and Australia, countries that received a mark of F-2 in the Simon Wiesenthal Center's *Worldwide Investigation and Prosecution of Nazi War Criminals*. That's down from a "D" in 2008, when the Wiesenthal Center criticized Canada for its "minimal effort... which failed to achieve any practical results."

Efraim Zuroff

The F-2 was awarded to those countries "whose efforts or lack thereof have resulted in complete failure... primarily due to the absence of political will to proceed."

"Pathetic is the only word for it," said Efraim Zuroff, who compiled the ninth annual version of the report. "Canada is obviously one of the world's great democracies with a great record in human rights, but on these issues it's almost completely failed in practical terms."

Since 1994, when Canada gave up on criminal prosecutions and turned to the denaturalization remedy, eight Canadian residents have lost their citizenship, "but not one single one has been deported. All are still in Canada or died in Canada," Zuroff said.

"I think there's no political will in Ottawa to bring this to a conclusion."

In a written response to *CJN* queries, Carole Saindon, a spokesperson for the Department of Justice, stated, "The government is committed to Canada's war crimes program that upholds the government's policy that Canada is not a safe haven for anyone involved or complicit in crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide. The policy applies to all crimes, regardless of when or where they were committed. We only commence proceedings when there is sufficient evidence. The government will not hesitate to take appropriate action where justified by the facts and the available evidence."

Zuroff compared Canada's record to that of the United States, which earned an "A" in his report, along with Germany. Both Canada and the United States use a similar profile for alleged perpetrators, and both countries employ the same denaturalization remedy, he said. Yet in the United States, 107 Nazi war criminals have "been defeated in court, 75 or 76 stripped of their citizenship and 35 deported or extradited," he said.

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Zimbabwe reportedly to sell uranium to Iran – please see page 39

The News in Brief

Canada

Human Bones Found

SYDNEY, N.S. — What are thought to be human bones found near a Sydney, N.S., Jewish cemetery don't appear to be from the graveyard's plots, the president of a local synagogue says. On April 5, a TV crew found eight small bones in a field next to the 100-year-old Hebrew Cemetery, in the same area where a boy also found bones on April 3. Samples, including a jawbone, were sent to Halifax for testing. Marty Chernin, president of Temple Sons of Israel, told the *Cape Breton Post* that caretakers examined all 300 graves in the still-active cemetery for signs of disturbance and found none. Police don't suspect foul play, but Joe Parish, an anthropology professor at Cape Breton University who examined the site for the provincial medical examiner, told the *Truro Daily News* the remains appear to be from a single body and to have been disturbed from their original site.

World

Suspect Arrested

LOS ANGELES — Police arrested a suspect in an October 2009 shooting of two worshippers at a North Hollywood shul. Christopher Littlejohn, 37, was arrested April 15 in connection with the shooting in the underground garage of Adat Yeshurun Valley Sephardic Synagogue. A lone gunman shot two men in the knees as they arrived for the early minyan. Police quickly ruled out hate or terror, but hinted about links to organized crime.

Bishop To Appeal

BERLIN — A Catholic bishop from a breakaway sect says he'll appeal his fine for Holocaust denial. Richard Williamson of the Society of Saint Pius X was found guilty April 16 of Holocaust denial by a German district court, which upheld a $22,473 fine imposed in 2009. The British bishop, who lives in London, was fined for an interview in Regensburg in late 2008 with Sweden's SVT broadcaster in which he called the murder of Jews in gas chambers in the Shoah "lies, lies, lies." He also denied Jews were murdered in gas chambers and insisted that not more than 300,000 Jews were killed in all. Shoah denial is illegal in Germany. Bishop Williamson is one of four bishops rehabilitated by Pope Benedict XVI last year in hopes of healing a rift between conservative and progressive Catholics.

Kiwi Embassy Opens

WELLINGTON — An Israeli Embassy opened April 19 in New Zealand for the first time since 2002. The event marked a new era in Kiwi-Israeli diplomacy after a meltdown in 2004 when two alleged Mossad agents were jailed for illegally obtaining a New Zealand passport. Wellington suspended high-level relations for a year before Israel apologized. Ambassador Shemi Tzur, 64, will present his credentials May 7. Israel's embassy in Australia had covered New Zealand since the previous envoy departed in 2002 after budget cuts. New Zealand Prime Minister John Key, son of a Jewish refugee from Austria, has family in Israel.

Teenage Girl Elected

LOS ANGELES — A 15-year-old Orthodox Jewish girl has become Los Angeles' youngest elected public representative. Rachel Lester was voted this month to the South Robertson Neighborhood Council, besting her opponent, a university-educated family man, by a lopsided 144-to-13 margin.

Goldstone Will Attend Grandson's Simchah

CAPE TOWN — Richard Goldstone will attend his grandson's upcoming bar mitzvah in South Africa, following an agreement with local Jewish groups.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies brokered a deal between Goldstone and community groups angry with him for authoring a UN report on the Gaza war seen as grossly unfair to Israel. Under the deal, Jewish groups agreed not to protest the celebrations and Goldstone agreed to meet with Jewish communal leaders, Goldstone and the board said in an April 23 joint statement.

The meeting, to be hosted by the South African Zionist Federation, will discuss the Jewish community's reaction to the Goldstone report, which accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

The Board of Deputies said that it "respectfully requests, in light of the agreement reached, that all parties immediately desist all public activities on this matter so that the young man's bar mitzvah celebration can be returned to the privacy and dignity that it deserves."

Goldstone originally had planned to skip his grandson's bar mitzvah after the Zionist Federation threatened to protest Goldstone outside the synagogue.

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McGuinty readies for first trade mission to Israel

'Israel punching far beyond its weight,' says premier

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

On his first trade mission and visit to Israel, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty won't be looking for milk and honey. Instead, he'll be looking for smart business investments for the province.

"Israel is punching far above its weight. There's something next to miraculous in terms of the dynamism and strength of its economy. It continued to grow during this recession. There is much there for us to learn," he told *The CJN* during an interview with members of the Jewish media last week at the Ontario Investment and Trade Centre.

On the five-day trip from May 23 to 27 – which will see the premier tour Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Ramallah and Bethlehem – McGuinty and a group of 43 delegates representing 34 organizations from the Ontario's life sciences, universities and health sectors will seek out "focused investment opportunities," he said.

Names of the delegates and the groups they represent, as well as a specific itinerary, were unavailable prior to *The CJN*'s deadline.

Asked what he hoped to achieve on his first-ever visit to Israel, McGuinty said he hasn't set "any financial targets" and referred to the trip as strictly an "introductory mission" and an opportunity to "build on the foundation that's already there" between the province and the Jewish state.

"I've never heard of anyone having been on a trade mission [to Israel] being anything less than very pleased with the reception that they've had or the opportunities that they've found," McGuinty said. "Seeing is believing."

According to the province's most recent statistics, in 2008 "two-way goods" trade between Ontario and Israel totalled almost $1.1 billion, up 86 per cent from 2004.

"I'm looking to accelerate" those numbers, he said.

McGuinty reminded reporters that in 2005, the province and Israel – via the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation – signed a "memorandum of understanding" on industrial and technological development co-operation.

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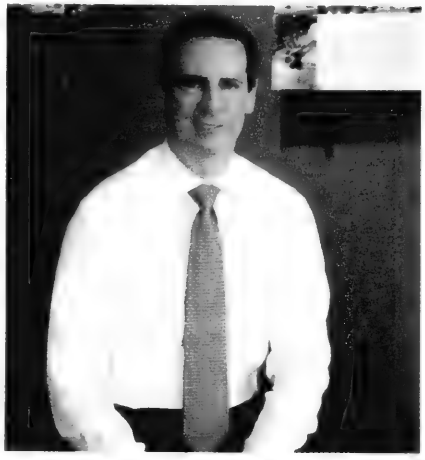

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty

Because of disabled veterans like Matan, there is an Israel for all of us.

Yom Ha'atzmaut is the time to celebrate Israel's independence. It is also a time to remember injured veterans whose lives were transformed as they continued the fight for Israel's freedom.

Matan Berman comes from a family of deeply dedicated Zionists. He wanted to join the most prestigious combat unit he could. His love of dogs led him to enlist in the IDF's canine unit, OKETZ, a special division of the paratroopers.

When the Second Intifada broke out in September 2000, Matan's unit was sent to the Gaza Strip. The area was filled with explosive devices and booby traps. His unit was working diligently at defusing the bombs when one exploded, wounding Matan severely and killing three members of his unit.

Matan's leg, which was previously injured during training, was now far worse. He was left in unrelenting pain. Matan also was plagued by terrible post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that went undiagnosed for years. He blamed himself for the loss of his three friends.

Matan was suffering horribly — psychologically and physically. His pain was so severe that he felt relieved when the decision was made to amputate his leg. Last year, the surgery took place and the years of agony were finally over. However the long road to learning how to function with a prosthetic leg and to overcome PTSD was just beginning.

It was then that Beit Halochem came into Matan's life.

He'd been receiving physiotherapy twice a week. Now, with great determination, he began swimming vigorously at Haifa's Beit Halochem. He started riding a hand bike and taking skiing lessons on the slopes of Mt. Hermon — a program that is fully funded by Beit Halochem Canada.

Every new skill acquired at Beit Halochem bolsters Matan's strength and courage. The friends he has made there — all wounded veterans like himself — have given him a bond of companionship and support he thought he'd lost forever.

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Greater Toronto Area

The brooding eyes of a dreamer

From the editor's desk...

Above all else, Theodor Herzl was a dreamer. This one overriding characteristic emerges in all the famous portraits and photos of the man.

Whether it is the photo of him leaning on the balcony railing outside his hotel room in Basel, looking pensively toward the Rhine River, or the profiled portrait of the man that hung in the room in Tel Aviv behind David Ben-Gurion as he read the declaration of the Jewish state's independence, this one very clear aspect of dreaminess shines from his brooding eyes.

Indeed Herzl was often criticized for lacking the essential quality of practical know-how. His ideas were excessively in the realm of politics and public relations, and insufficiently in the realm of pragmatics, his critics said.

They may have been correct.

Some of his ideas, such as his ostensible willingness to opt for a proposal to settle Jews in Uganda, were muddled and not well thought out. His knowledge and background in Jewish history, tradition and faith were also lacking.

And yet, his coal-black eyes could see far. He predicted a dire future for the Jews of Europe.

His journalist's instincts could sharply focus upon the essence of the story unfolding before him. He was only one of a few, if not actually two (he and writer Emile Zola) to publicly decry the travesty of the persecution of falsely accused and convicted army officer Alfred Dreyfus.

His literary ability could turn a pedestrian phrase into a marcher's rallying cry. "If you will it, it will be no fairy tale."

It is very difficult for us to imagine today, as Israel struggles so determinedly to reclaim the lustre and the loftiness in the term "Zionism," the profound impact of Herzl's brief life.

The promise of universal progress from the Enlightenment and from rapid industrialization had proved emptier and emptier for the vast masses of humanity, and especially so for the vast masses of the Jews.

Herzl substituted hope for promise. He stopped lamenting over and apologizing for the Jewish "condition." Instead, he tried to fix it.

Herzl was born 150 years ago on May 2. It is imperative that we mark the day, note his life, and express our thanks.

"Herzl transformed a mood into a political movement and put it on the European map as one of the national movements aspiring to what in a later age would be called national liberation," wrote historian Walter Laqueur in *A History of Zionism* (Schocken Books).

Theodor Herzl

Despite his western European (Viennese/Parisian) bearing and culture, he was greeted with adulation and frenzied cheers on one famous trip to Vilna in eastern Europe.

Laqueur wrote: "Tens of thousands shouted '*Hedad*' (Hail) as he passed.

About the reception, Herzl wrote in his diary that the day would remain engraved forever in his memory. It was the first time that he had come face to face with the Jewish masses in east Europe. The unhappiness of these oppressed people was only too genuine. He had been warned of the bitter opposition of the Bundists – the anti-Zionist Jewish socialists – and he watched with some misgivings the approach of some young working men, with hard determined expressions on their faces, whom he took to belong to that party. Much to his amazement, one of them came forward and proposed a toast to the day when '*melech* Herzl' (King Herzl) would reign."

Herzl did not succeed in his various schemes to persuade either the Ottomans or the British to provide the territorial space for the Jewish homeland. But it can be argued that he laid the foundation for the subsequent achievements that would crown the efforts of the men and women who succeeded him.

Laqueur recorded that Herzl's "death came as a tremendous shock. For hundreds of thousands of Jews in eastern Europe this was the saddest day of their life. Herzl had created the Zionist movement almost single-handed. He symbolized their dearest hopes and their longing for a better future. He had been the new Moses who would lead them out of the house of bondage to the promised land.

"Herzl had stipulated in his will that he should be buried like the poorest of the poor. But many thousands came to pay their last respects to him."

In 1949, the new State of Israel reinterred Herzl's remains on a mountain on the western slopes of Jerusalem that now bears his name. A plain, sombre, black square of marble with the name Herzl inscribed in Hebrew marks the site. He is, finally, where he wanted to be.

His dreams must now be ours.

–MBD

SeeJN

CUBAN MISSION

A young adult mission from Yaldeinu travelled to Havana earlier this month. The group of six, joined by members of the Macabi Youth Organization, is pictured in front of the Cuban city's Jewish cemetery. Yaldeinu founder Michael Ettedgui is in the back row, fourth from left, and mission chair Alexandra Bronfman is fourth from left, in front. Among other projects, the group repaired damaged tombstones, visited shut-ins and brought medical supplies to the Jewish community.

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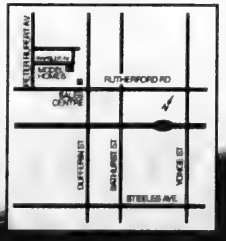

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Yom Ha'atzmaut

Band-tastic fun for Israel's birthday

The Jewish National Fund of Canada's Toronto region celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut with food, drinks and lots of music at the Eglinton Grand last week. This year, JNF moved Band-tastic, an annual dance devoted to party bands, from August to April to mark Israel's 62nd anniversary. Band-tastic, which took some four months to organize, included about a dozen bands. Toronto bandleader Larry Rodness helped start Band-tastic three years ago as a way for Toronto bands to get together and raise money for JNF. Pictured above are JNF Toronto executive director Josh Cooper, right, posing with JNF Toronto president Jerry Werger and a cut-out of Theodor Herzl; and, below, Rodness who performed with singer Kira Callahan, left, and singer-bandleader George St. Kitts, centre.
[Dmitry Zhirotovsky photos]

Yom Ha'atzmaut

Partygoers attending a party for Israel's 62nd Yom Ha'atzmaut were treated to entertainers on stilts, song and dance and lots of flags at Mel Lastman Square last week. Earlier in the day at Queen's Park, the Israeli flag, above, was raised in a ceremony attended by members of each political party in the legislature, as well as community leaders and about 100 girls from Ulpanat Orot high school. *[Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf photos]*

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author of

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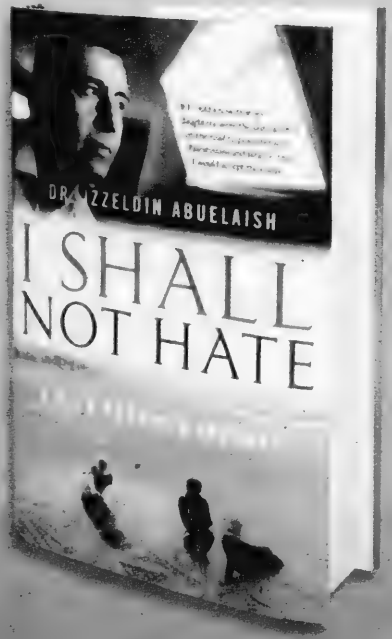

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Theodor Herzl 1860 - 1904

So profoundly moved by his resolve, so overwhelmed by feelings of pride and even by a sense of personal moral indebtedness to him for his courage, many people actually named their children after him. The mere mention of his name often evoked sighs of appreciation and images of biblical grandeur.

Theodor Herzl was born 150 years ago on May 2 (Iyar 10). His life, alas, was too brief, for he died at the age of 44. But the intersection of his life and the line of Jewish history shattered the geometry of ordinary events. The Jewish future would soon tip on a new fulcrum.

Eight years before his death, in February 1896, he published his seminal work *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State). The nub of this small book was a call for the Jews of the world to become sovereign in their own land. His words ignited the low-burning embers in the smouldering Jewish heart, where a return to the historic homeland was already being discussed. And where the discussion had not yet started, he set it in motion.

One year later, in September 1897, Herzl organized and galvanized the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland. He electrified the assembled delegates. "A people can be helped only by itself; and if it cannot do that, then it cannot be helped."

In *A History of Zionism* (Schocken Books, New York 2003), Walter Laqueur described how the message was received. "Herzl was greeted with tremendous applause lasting 15 minutes." The occasion "was a milestone in modern Jewish history."

The non-Jewish world now knew that national Jewish consciousness was stirring.

The Jewish world now had a beacon to cast light into an unclear future. From that moment forward, untold millions of Jews looked with tearful eyes and yearning hearts toward its glow. It became their hope for a safer, better, freer future.

Herzl was jubilant after the congress. He recorded the following notation in his diary. "If I were to sum up the congress in a word – which I shall take care not to publish – it would be this. At Basel, I founded the Jewish state. If I said this out loudly today I would be greeted by laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in 50 years, everyone will perceive it."

He was prophetic.

Fifty years and nine months after he wrote those words, the Jews of Mandatory Palestine – knowing that by doing so they would have to fight to save their lives and their national dream – proclaimed the State of Israel.

For eternity now may it exist. And for eternity too may we always acknowledge the good that Theodor Herzl did for his people and indeed, for the world.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Israel and the United States signed a free trade agreement – unprecedented in the history of U.S. trade policy – to remove all barriers on goods and services exchanged between the two countries. The deal aimed to eliminate the trade barriers in phases over a 10-year period.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones
DAMN!!
THERE'S NEVER A TWELVE YEAR-OLD AROUND WHEN YOU NEED ONE!
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Remembering the Canadians

Last week, on Yom Hazikaron, we honoured the memory of those who died fighting for Israel or were the victims of terror. I would like to remember the 11 Canadian Machalniks, volunteers who died fighting for the establishment of the State of Israel in the 1948 War of Independence.

The list was compiled by the late Eddy Kaplansky, who was a Machal pilot and historian.

George "Buzz" Beurling of Verdun, Que., a World War II fighter pilot was killed near Rome May 20 in the crash of an airplane being prepared for a flight to Israel. He was buried in the Haifa Military Cemetery, non-Jewish section.

Harvey Cohen and Ed Lugech, first cousins from Toronto, served in the Palmach Yiftach Brigade. They were declared missing and believed waylaid by Arab irregulars near Sarafand in late June.

Reuben Schiff of Toronto served on the Aliya-Bet ship Paducah. He was killed July 1 near Abu Jab while looking for shipmate and Palmach comrade Lou Ball, and buried in Nachlat Yitzchak.

Sidney Rubinoff of Toronto served with the Palmach in several battles. He was wounded at Latrun July 17, died on the way to hospital and was buried at Nachlat Yitzchak.

Sidney Leisure of Toronto served in the 7th Brigade, 72nd Battalion and was killed Sept. 7 in the battle for Tamra hill in the Galilee. He was buried in Nahariya.

Leonard Fitchett of Vancouver, an ex-RCAF pilot, served in the 103rd Squadron and was downed in his Beaufighter on Oct. 20. He was buried in the Haifa Military Cemetery, non-Jewish section.

Wilfred Canter (pilot) of Toronto, Willy Fisher (navigator) of Winnipeg, Fred Stevenson (co-pilot) of Vancouver: the three RCAF veterans served in the 103rd Squadron. During a night supply run to Sedom on Oct. 24, their C-47 exploded in the air after an engine caught fire. Canter and Fisher were buried in Rehovot, and Stevenson was buried in the Haifa Military Cemetery, non-Jewish section.

Ralph Moster of Vancouver, a pilot, was killed Dec. 7 with three others when their Grumman Widgeon crashed into the Sea of Galilee during a training flight. He was buried in Nachlat Yitzchak.

Wilf Mandel
Toronto

* * *

March participants focus on the future

The March of the Living is about survival ("'Hitler did not win,'" Perspectives, April 8). It commemorates those who throughout the course of the Holocaust would not succumb to inhumanity, degradation, hate, cruelty and senseless murder. If we forget the Holocaust, history is destined to repeat itself.

If someone shares her or his first-hand experience from the depths of her or his soul, if the heart-wrenching accounts backed by powerfully moving evidence in front of them are shared in person, there is a better chance that we will *remember*. It is also more likely that we will internalize the consequences of hate and ignorance.

Those who marched during the Shoah shuffled slowly and weakly. The exhausted shells of once-healthy men, women and children were often brought to their knees, their eyes forced to look only at the ground. Now, old and young, Jew and gentile, walk together with vigorous animation, strength and resilience, their eyes and minds focused on the future.

There is yet another ominous force expanding insidiously throughout Europe and beyond. The extremist form of Islam is rapidly changing the face of Europe. The need for awareness, vigilance and proactive initiatives are now even more critical to our continued survival. God bless and protect the March of the Living program and all those who participate in its ongoing activities. May it continue well into the future as our future may be significantly influenced by March participants' gentle but strong hands.

Judy Clodman
Toronto

* * *

Seeking her uncle

I recently received a stunning piece of information from the International Tracing Service. My uncle, Menachim Jehuda Galas (also known as Yehuda or Moniek), apparently survived the Holocaust and was liberated from Theresienstadt (Terezin).

Jehuda, my mother's beloved brother, was born in 1920. He was in the Lodz ghetto, then deported to Skarzysko-Kamienna, and then Buchenwald. He stayed in Buchenwald until April 1945 and was apparently deported to Terezin, which was liberated in April 1945, but I do not know what happened to him or others liberated from this camp.

I have been told that many Jews in the furrier-leather business came to Canada. My Galas family members were in this business in Lodz. If any of your readers can provide further information about my missing uncle, could they please contact me?

Debbie Long
123 Woodleaf Drive
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27516
d_long@mindspring.com
919-968-3742

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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U.S. Jewish leaders criticize, defend Obama

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

With anxiety over the White House's Middle East policy mounting in some pro-Israel circles, several Jewish organizational leaders have found themselves in a discomfiting position: criticizing the Obama administration in public while stridently defending the president in private against the most extreme attacks.

It's an upside-down version of what pro-Israel groups usually do: lavishing praise on the U.S. government of the day for sustaining the "unbreakable bond" while making their criticisms known quietly, behind closed doors.

The criticism has come in the form of mostly polite statements and newspaper ads questioning Obama administration pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, particularly regarding building in eastern Jerusalem. Such criticisms are voiced as well in private meetings with administration officials.

The defence comes up in dealings with irate donors and constituents, in phone calls, e-mails, addresses to small Jewish groups and shul talk. The theme of the complaints is consistent, and shocking, said multiple leaders, who all spoke off the record, and reflect the subterranean rumblings about the president heard during the campaign: his sympathy lies with Muslims, he doesn't care about Israel, he's an anti-Semite.

The Jewish Federations of North America is sufficiently concerned about the phenomenon to have convened a "fly-in" of Jewish organizational leaders to Washington for an as yet unannounced date in May. The leaders will meet with White House, State Department and congressional officials, in part to "to convey concerns about U.S.-Israel relations" – but also, insiders say, to allay those concerns.

One recent flood of anxious queries followed the Obama administration's announcement earlier this month of its long-awaited nuclear policy. The reality of the policy was a pledge not to threaten with nuclear weapons those nations that provably disavow their nuclear weapons capability. Nations that continued to maintain a threatening nuclear posture, the policy made clear, would still face the prospect of a U.S. nuclear response should they attack the United States or its allies.

Obama named Iran as such a nation.

Yet instead of being reassured, donors and members of national Jewish groups flooded Jewish leaders with anxious queries about a posture that they interpreted as being aimed at embracing a nuclear Iran and forcing Israel to abandon its own reported nuclear capability.

Another persistent – and unfounded – rumour has it that Obama removed the phrase "Next Year in Jerusalem" from the White House seder in March.

"Where… are they getting this?" asked a senior official at an organization that has been publicly critical of Obama since last summer.

Angst was stoked, too, when Obama spoke this month of peacemaking throughout the world necessitated by the cost of "American blood and treasure" through involvement in conflicts. It didn't help that a *New York Times* analysis suggested the president had said that the lack of Israeli-Palestinian peace threatened U.S. troops in other parts of the globe – even though the transcript of Obama's remarks did not bear out any such linkage, and other Obama administration officials flatly denied one existed.

Jewish officials said a share of the blame lay with the Obama administration, partly for not adequately reaching out to Jews and to Israel, and partly because of the emergence of what appears to be internecine policy wars.

"The real story of the *New York Times* story is not that he's changing Israel policy," said another leader of an organization that has not been shy about criticizing the Obama administration. "The real story is, why are officials leaking" misrepresentations of his policy "to the *New York Times*?"

On the other side, one leader blamed the Netanyahu government for sending mixed signals on how to handle the tensions between Israel and the United States over settlement policy.

"Some are saying quiet is the best answer, and others are saying loud noise is the best answer," the Jewish organizational official said.

The official cited reports that Netanyahu personally approved public letters – from Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress (WJC), and Elie Wiesel, the internationally known Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace laureate – criticizing Obama's demand for a halt in Jerusalem building.

Despite mounting criticism by some Jewish leaders, polls show that Obama's support among Jews in general remains strong. His backing has dropped from astronomical highs after he was elected, but remains about 10 points stronger than in the general population. Moreover, to the degree that it has eroded, the dissatisfaction with Obama appears to have more to do with unhappiness over his handling of health care and the economy than it does Israel.

Those who are expressing their concerns, however, are among the most active members of the pro-Israel community and help set the tone for the trilateral U.S.-Israel-Jewish leadership ties. Some are acquiring their information from anti-Obama e-mail blasts and consistently partisan critics of Obama.

A file photo of Senator Barack Obama, as he then was, speaking to the annual AIPAC conference in Washington. *[RNS]*

Richard Baehr, writing in the conservative online magazine the American Thinker, cited the *New York Times*' misreading of Obama's remarks in arguing that "this president is the greatest threat to the strategic alliance of the U.S. and Israel since the founding of the modern Jewish state in 1948."

McLaughlin & Associates, a GOP polling firm, touted signs this month that Jewish support for Obama was eroding, but its survey questions were premised on shaky assertions. One question posited that Obama would support a unilateral declaration of Palestinian independence, although U.S. officials have consistently said they would oppose such a move. Another suggested that Obama was ready to force Israel to give up the Jewish quarter in Jerusalem's Old City, although there has been no such pressure.

Administration defenders cite signs suggesting that beyond the settlement rhetoric, the relationship is improving: Obama has increased defence co-operation, for instance, and strategic consultations between officials of both nations are more frequent than they have been in a decade.

"Our bond with Israel is unshakable and unbreakable, both as it relates to security, as it relates to a common set of values and also as a common strategic vision, because the threats to Israel are similar to some of the threats the United States faces," Rahm Emanuel, Obama's chief of staff, said last week on Bloomberg TV.

Jewish leaders welcome such reassurances, but say they are made defensively, and they repeatedly call on the Obama administration to become proactive.

Robert Wexler, the former Florida congressman who was Obama's chief Jewish proxy during the election and now heads the Center for Middle East peace, suggested a more proactive posture was in the offing.

"Actions in the next several months will begin to reflect it," he told JTA.

Notably, Emanuel held a behind-closed-doors meeting last week with a group of leading Orthodox rabbis.

Meanwhile, Jewish leaders are walking a tightrope trying to balance traditional deference to the administration with concerns over the tensions. They also object to what they see as the unwarranted pressure on Netanyahu as opposed to relatively little pressure on the Palestinians to join talks that Israel has embraced with enthusiasm. Israel, they hasten to argue, remains America's best friend in the region.

Lee Rosenberg, the president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, made the Israel-is-our-best-friend case last week at Israel Independence Day celebrations, sharing the stage with Obama's top political adviser, David Axelrod.

"Israel stood by America in spirit and in action after the tragic events of 9/11," Rosenberg said. "As both our great nations fight the same scourge of terrorism and Islamic extremism, it is Israel which serves on the front lines as an outpost of American interests in a dangerous part of the world."

The Wiesel and Lauder letters offered a suggestive contrast on how to handle the tensions.

Wiesel's critique was oblique, not naming Obama, and deferred to U.S. orthodoxy that a final-status agreement must accommodate Palestinian claims to the city.

"What is the solution?" Wiesel asked. "Pressure will not produce a solution. Is there a solution? There must be, there will be."

Lauder, by contrast, directly addressed Obama and suggested the president was sacrificing Israel to improve relations with the Muslim world.

"The administration's desire to improve relations with the Muslim world is well known," said Lauder, an active Republican. "But is friction with Israel part of this new strategy? Is it assumed worsening relations with Israel can improve relations with Muslims?"

One of the Jewish leaders said the contrast was instructive.

"For all intents and purposes, the WJC's relationship with the White House ended last week," he said of the group Lauder heads. "That's not a relationship that pro-Israel groups can afford to have over the next couple of years."

Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League has publicly criticized the administration on several Israel-related fronts. Still, he said, Jewish leaders have a responsibility to defend the president "when talking to those who accuse him of being an enemy of Israel or a Muslim."

"For many years, you had a lot of Jews who didn't vote for President Bush who would say, 'I don't like Bush but I love what he's doing on Israel,'" Foxman said.

"Now the paradigm is changing. A lot of Jews are saying, 'I like Obama, but I don't like what he is doing on Israel.'"

Foxman added that the most frequent question he hears when speaking to Jewish audiences is whether Obama is a friend of Israel.

"I say yes, but what's wrong is the implementation of what he promised. What's flawed is the strategy, not the goal," Foxman said.

The ADL leader quickly added that despite promises to learn from past mistakes, the administration's handling of Israel-related issues is "going from bad to worse."

In search of identity

Nowadays, when both religion and Zionism are often hijacked by extremists, Jewish leaders are in search of new slogans to appeal to the mainstream.

In the decades after the Holocaust it was "survival," turned into a religious category: Emil Fackenheim's 614th commandment not to give Hitler a posthumous victory.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

Later we heard a lot about "Jewish continuity" as a way of linking the past with responsibility for the future. Now it's "identity," a term that echoes this age of the therapeutic and implies that a whole person is one who knows who he or she really is – in our case, Jewish.

Identity became the catch phrase of the meeting of the board of governors of the Jewish Agency earlier this year. Its new head, Natan Sharansky, offered identity as an alternative to Zionism. As Israel's population is steadily growing and that of the Diaspora diminishing, it's no longer enough to bring Jews to Israel. Judaism and Israel must now be brought to Jews wherever they live. His views were echoed in speeches by Israeli President Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

This is music to the ears of many Diaspora leaders, particularly the Americans, who perceive Zionism in philanthropic, not ideological, terms. To have their views confirmed by the leader of the organization that has historically been responsible for bringing Jews to Israel can be seen as a vindication of the "post-Zionist" way.

It's motivated by the fact that whereas the Jewish population of Israel is steadily increasing, albeit nowadays because of the high birthrate among haredi anti-Zionists, the number of Jews in the rest of the world is declining. Having accepted that its ability to bring Jews to the Jewish state has greatly diminished, the Jewish Agency now appears to want to concentrate on education that will strengthen the commitment of non-Israelis to their Jewish heritage.

As the assumption implies that this can be done without either ideology or religion, it's bound to fail. Jewish identity, together with Jewish survival and Jewish continuity, will soon end up as yet another footnote in the history of contemporary Judaism. For there can be no Judaism, especially in the Diaspora, outside its religious framework.

That's why the modernist religious movements in contemporary Judaism stand a much better chance to succeed in their endeavours to reach out to those on the margin, particularly the intermarried. Instead of mouthing empty slogans and undermining the religious streams in the Diaspora, Israel's political leaders must pay more attention to those who know that survival, continuity and identity are all by-products of serving God.

What is pluralistic Jewish education?

There is growing interest across the Jewish world, in Israel and the Diaspora, in pluralistic Jewish education. In North America, some of the energy in this movement comes from the growth of community schools, day and supplementary, and this development is partly due to a post-denominational preference among young families. Synagogue membership isn't the primary community-identification factor it once was, and schools are now seen as a basis for community.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

In this usage, the word "community" has double significance. It indicates a school with a broader ideological base, but it also speaks of potential for a mini-community of specific interest based in schooling.

In Israel, much of the interest in pluralistic Jewish education came as a reaction to the religious/secular split in the population and all of the varieties of public schooling that represent different ideologies. Institutions such as Elul, Kolot, Almah, Machon Hartman and Oranim, along with schools such as Keshet, Dror, and the Meitarim chain now constitute a movement that cares deeply about Jewish literacy, gives equal respect to Jewish texts and values across the ages and from a rainbow of sources, and honours all the movements in Jewish life – from the early Israelite cult to the latest post-modern manifestations.

In both North America and Israel, there's a great deal of ambiguity about how one translates the lofty goals of a pluralist setting into curriculum and daily life. Whether it's at a community day school in Toronto or a mixed religious/secular school in Tel Aviv, the problems present themselves from the first day. There's so much past history to overcome and such an unclear future to chart. Teachers, themselves, come from ideological settings. Students, too. How does one stand tall in the belief system one starts with, yet show deep respect for the other and be willing to grow and perhaps change? Is change in any direction respected by all?

Let's get concrete. Are observant parents willing to see less observance in their child as a result of mixed classes? Will a Reform Jew be pleased if her son suddenly spouts Orthodox ideas? And how does one train (or in most cases, re-train) teachers to teach in a pluralist fashion?

Perhaps there's a path that, in its dynamic process, will search for curricular questions, create a research atmosphere that's pluralistic, bridge Israeli education and Diaspora Jewish education, and ultimately produce materials that can be successfully utilized in pluralistic settings.

There are certain values unique to Jewish life that can be explored in pluralist settings. They must not become the sum total of Judaic and Hebrew studies, but they could constitute a large part of the content in a Jewish curriculum. While it's clear that not all Diaspora Jewish schools, nor all Israeli ones, would be interested in such a program, those institutions that are community-based and want to pursue a pluralistic approach could network with each other to discuss values such as chesed, tzedakah, shalom, Shabbat, kashrut, or *la'goyim* (kindness beyond the law, the just distribution of wealth, the fullness of peace, special time, sacred eating, light unto other nations), etc.

Certainly, there will be no full agreement on any Jewish value (except perhaps to answer a question with yet another question!), but that's the very spirit and substance of pluralistic education. There are, to be sure, certain clarities that can be taught with little disagreement, but the ability to believe strongly in one position and yet see the possibility of another human mind and heart believing something quite different is at the core of such an approach.

Being able to modify one's own beliefs also enables the teacher to imagine a student being transformed by new ideas. Missionary teachers need not apply, but teachers with a pluralistic mission are the ones most qualified for this kind of dialogue with students and subject matter.

If we bridge this attempt across the ocean, Israeli Zionist education will come to include new approaches to world Jewry, and conversely, Diaspora Jewish education will mature in its views of contemporary Israel and Israelis.

We are our ancestors – and then some

Perhaps it was inevitable, a natural progression, that the era of the memoir would give way to the era of genealogy.

Memoir, from the French word for memory, is a personal account of its author's lived experience, especially (but not only) in relation to historical events. Cultural critics have noted the burgeoning of memoirs written over the past few decades, and a surging readership for the genre.

Genealogy, from the Greek *genea*, or generation, is the study of family lineage. Web-based resources, access to archives, and air travel have facilitated genealogical research. Recent popular media have shown an increased attention to the details and complexities of family history.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

The memoir asks: who have I been, where have I been, what have I witnessed, discovered, determined? It probes individual memory to learn about the self in time, culture and history.

Genealogy ventures past the limitations of individual memory. It asks: where do I come from, or more precisely, whom do I come from? By implication, it asks also: how does what I cannot personally recollect shape who and what I have become?

It is not surprising to see a particularly Jewish interest in both areas. After all, Jews have a longstanding attachment to memory and a way of intertwining personal and collective memory. Genealogy in particular carries a Jewish resonance. Our Jewish names use ben or bat, son or daughter of, rather than more generic last names. We honour our ancestry, make pilgrimages to graves and recycle given names through untold generations. The concept of *z'chut avot* – the merit of ancestors – dates back to ancient sources.

Not only Jews are drawn to genealogy. We are, you might say, outdone by Mormons, who invest major resources in researching lines of ancestry. Mormons believe that salvation may be granted to the unconverted dead, whose ancestors may save their souls by baptizing them posthumously and by proxy.

But it is not only religious or cultural motives that draw people to genealogy. The growing interest in lineage and family history is evidenced not only by the clubs and websites dedicated to the study, but by the popularity of television programs focused on unravelling the tangled bits of family history.

Harvard professor of African American studies Skip Gates created a miniseries, *Faces of America*, that traces the genetic roots of several well-known contemporary Americans. The British series, *Who Do You Think You Are*, has, since 2004, mapped the genealogical past of a diverse collection of celebrities, including cook Nigella Lawson, actors Jeremy Irons and Kim Cattrall, and talk show host and agent provocateur Jerry Springer. A Canadian version of the series was inaugurated in 2007, an American one in 2010. There are Australian, Irish, Swedish, Polish and other versions.

As episodes of these programs illustrate, researching one's past brings new information, confirmation or debunking of family lore, amid an intensification of emotion. Who are we with relation to our ancestral past? Meryl Streep stated it succinctly in the Gates series: "We are nothing but them."

Streep's statement pinpoints both the reasons people develop such an intense interest in uncovering their roots, and at the same time, the dangers of this interest. There is an "aha" moment, a sense of recognition, in uncovering an ancestor whose talents, temperament, virtues or even flaws resemble our own. We sense, too, how our identities, forged on North American soil, bear the traces of other, earlier cultures, places where our ancestors dwelled. We learn to respect the complexity of our coming into being, especially if we may infuse it with pride in where we have come from.

At the same time, there is the danger of reducing the past into a kind of narcissism, where the people who came before us serve nothing more than to highlight that most fascinating of subjects – ourselves. Even more dangerous is to develop a kind of essentialism – the idea that everything about us can be explained by our familial lineage, the notion that we are, as Streep put it, "nothing more" than the sum of our ancestral parts.

Call it my modernist sense of endless possibilities, or my Jewish sense of the soul's potential. From where and whom we come matters, but it does not determine our destiny.

The Kirshner File

Kazin was a stellar figure in American culture

Alfred Kazin, one of America's most widely read and influential literary critics, rose from the poverty of Brownsville – a mainly Jewish neighbourhood in Brooklyn frequented by immigrants like his parents – and made his debut in 1942 with a masterful study of American literature, *On Native Grounds*.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto.

Only 27 when it was published to much acclaim, Kazin proved he was not a one-book wonder when, nine years later, he wrote *A Walker in the City*, a classic about the Jewish immigrant experience in the United States and a central text of American-Jewish writing.

For the next four decades, Kazin, who had close personal ties with a brilliant group of writers and academics known as the "New York intellectuals," produced trenchant criticism (*The Portable Blake and A Lifetime Burning in Every Moment*), a pungent memoir (*Starting Out in the Thirties*) and reams of book reviews for publications ranging from the *New York Times* to the *New Republic*.

Dead now for more than a decade, Kazin was a great man of letters. In recognition of his manifold talents and contributions, Richard M. Cook, a professor of American literature at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis, has written *Alfred Kazin: A Biography* (Yale University Press), a rounded but sympathetic portrait that draws on Kazin's private journals and correspondence and on numerous conversations with him.

Thorough in scope, Cook's work ranges far and wide, examining Kazin's childhood, his days as a City College student, his development as a writer, his troubled marriages, his relationships with important figures and his connection with Israel.

Born on June 5, 1915, Kazin was raised in an insulated corner of New York City populated by the largest concentration of Jews after the Lower East Side. He would recall that Brownsville was like an eastern European shtetl where Yiddish was the lingua franca. His parents, Gedalia (Charles) and Gita, were Polish Jews who had settled in the United States in 1907. His father was a housepainter who was often unemployed, while his mother was a garment factory worker. A self-admitted mama's boy, he considered her the dominant force in his youth. Her death sent him into shock and sadness.

Desperately poor, the Kazins lived in a cold water tenement freezing in winter and unbearably hot in summer.

Shy and insecure, with few friends and no "gang" or "movement" to occupy him, Kazin turned to books and writing. "I was happiest when alone, reading," he observed in a notebook.

Fortunately, one of his high school English teachers, having spotted his writing talent, strongly encouraged him to pursue it. At 16, he enrolled at City College, where tuition was free, and there he cultivated his taste for literature. City College was an incubator of talent and among its graduates in the 1930s were two Nobel laureates in science, Robert Hofstadter and Arthur Kornberg, and a galaxy of writers from Irving Howe to Bernard Malamud.

While still a student, Kazin contributed book reviews to major publications, on Elizabethan poetry, British detective novels, American immigrant fiction, contemporary criticism and the philosophy of William James. He would remain a book reviewer until his death on June 5, 1998. Kazin was a natural reviewer. He had an appetite for new topics. He was intensely curious. He could bore to the core with effortless ease.

To supplement his income, Kazin taught the occasional course at City College and dramatized stories by Edgar Allan Poe for a Brooklyn radio station, but it was a hand-to-mouth existence.

In the summer of 1938, he received a master's degree in history, and shortly afterward, one of his teachers, the critic Carl Van Doren, suggested he write a critical history of modern American prose. He spent the next five years on it, conducting his research at the New York Public Library, usually for 12 hours a day and five to six days a week.

It was a risky undertaking, since he could not be sure whether he could produce a publishable manuscript. But *On Native Grounds*, which dealt with the period from 1890 to 1940, was praised for its ambition, buoyant style and balanced judgment. Kazin would remember this project as one of the happiest times of his life.

Shortly after immersing himself in the book, he married Natasha Dohn, a research bacteriologist of Russian Jewish descent. But Kazin had a roving eye, and the marriage broke down. It was the first of several marriages that ended badly, Cook notes.

A socialist, Kazin initially opposed the United States' entry into World War II, but he changed his mind as Germany expanded its grip on Europe.

The week *On Native Grounds* was published, Kazin was hired by the *New Republic* as its literary editor. In this capacity, he met a procession of writers and critics from Lionel Trilling to Dwight McDonald. In 1943, he accepted a lucrative paying job from *Time-Life* publisher Henry Luce to be a writer on the staff of *Fortune* magazine.

Alfred Kazin in 1986, 12 years before his death.

Kazin thought his think pieces on American prophetic literature would find a place in its pages, but he was wrong. And much to his disappointment, he also discovered that Luce would not send him abroad on war reporting assignments. So Kazin quit, eking out a living reading manuscripts for a well-known publishing house and selling book reviews.

Kazin was an unobservant Jew before the Holocaust, but in its wake, he became "much more consciously Jewish," Cook quotes him as saying. Years later, he wrote the first major review of Elie Wiesel's novel, *Night*, and befriended the heretofore unknown author.

With *A Walker in the City*, a tender memoir that Cook hails as "a canonical text" but some critics panned, Kazin's reputation was assured.

Yet Kazin had to scramble to make ends meet, and did so by teaching at universities (Amherst and New York University), lining up magazine assignments and writing more books, notably *New York Jew*.

Like many of his friends and acquaintances, he resided in New York's Upper West Side, which the Columbia University sociologist Daniel Bell described as as sort of "intellectual kibbutz." In *New York Jew*, Cook notes, Kazin satirized the members of "the Upper West Side Hebrew Relief Association" as a sour lot who were disillusioned with their politically radical past.

Although he considered himself a man of the left, Kazin was hostile to Marxism, complained about the "complacency" of the New Left and warned of the perils of Soviet expansionism and the spread of "totalitarian" communism.

In 1960, shortly after the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann was caught by the Mossad, Kazin was invited to Israel. He had never been a Zionist, saw no need for a Jewish state, paid little attention to Israeli affairs and was uneasy about its growing nationalism and militancy. Kazin grew to care about Israel, but he deplored the policies of the Likud.

By the 1960s, Kazin was at the top of his game, appearing regularly in the *Reporter*, *Partisan Review*, *Commentary* and the *New York Times Book Review*, but regretting his one and only appearance in *Playboy*.

In the years before his death, he was always busy. By Cook's reckoning, he published five books and more than 50 articles and reviews, and taught dozens of courses. He was a stellar figure in American culture, and Cook portrays him as such in this illuminating biography.

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Greater Toronto Area

Congress hosts interfaith panel

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

In a first for a meeting of Canadian Jewish Congress, representatives of the three Abrahamic religions came together last Sunday to discuss and promote their commonalities as sources of strength and hope.

At the same time, the members of the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths tiptoed around the one issue that has proven divisive, namely, Israel.

Nora Sanders, general secretary of the United Church of Canada and Mubarak Nazir of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community joined Victor Goldbloom, CJC's senior interfaith representative, in a wide-ranging discussion on the subject, "The Abrahamic Faiths in Canada: Challenges and Opportunities."

The interfaith panel took place immediately after CJC's annual general meeting, held at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. The program drew about 100 people.

Israel came up only fleetingly in the multifaith discussion, and Sanders mostly avoided referring to the recent tensions that have bedeviled relations between the United Church and the Jewish community.

In his talk, Goldbloom, who once headed the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews (CCCJ), said that the CCCJ, over its 62 years, has helped the two faiths "work through a great deal of misunderstanding, and transformed that into understanding." That has included work on social problems as well as a better understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus, Goldbloom said.

From left, Mubarak Nazir, Nora Sanders and Victor Goldbloom at last Sunday's interfaith panel.
[Ron Csillag photo]

A "very well-kept secret" is "the scope and intensity" of dialogue among Jews, Muslims and Christians in Israel, he added.

Said Goldbloom: "Yes, there is an anti-suicide bomber barrier in Israel," which has "saved a remarkable number of lives."

And he said he "cannot understand" why Israeli Apartheid Week occurs annually on university campuses.

Later, in response to a question, Goldbloom said he couldn't provide a legal definition of apartheid, but he hinted that the annual week of anti-Israel activity is counter-productive. "Peace will come only when the two sides stop blaming each other."

In his first time in a synagogue, Nazir stressed that like Jews, Ahmadiyya Muslims have known their share of bigotry. Rejected as heretics by traditional Muslims for their unique beliefs, followers of the Ahmadiyya branch are oppressed in places such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia.

"We are persecuted," Nazir stated, adding, "our definition of jihad as primarily a war to correct our inner animal passions is at variation with [that of] many other Muslims."

He called the boundaries separating the three Abrahamic faiths "artificial. The bonds that bring us together are tolerance. We must learn from each other. We are children of the same compassionate, merciful and benevolent God.

"When will the killing stop?"

Sanders provided an overview of the history and structure of the 85-year-old United Church, Canada's largest Protestant denomination, which she said has a "range or perspectives and views."

She said the 2001 census found three million members of the church, but church rolls tally just 650,000 members. It was the first national church in Canada to give full recognition to gays and lesbians as both members and clergy, Sanders noted.

Except for referring to the daily difficulties that Palestinians face, Sanders didn't touch on the recent Israel-related issues emanating from the church that have strained relations with Jews.

She did refer to a groundbreaking document the United Church issued in 2003. "Bearing Faithful Witness" was intended to strengthen relations with Jews and acknowledge a history of anti-Judaism within Christian theology and the United Church.

But things boiled over last summer when the church's General Council brought forth several resolutions calling for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. They were defeated, but not without heated debate. The church also left open the possibility that future anti-Israel resolutions could be introduced.

The church was also discovered to have ties with Independent Jewish Voices, a small anti-Zionist group. A published report said the church had made a $900 grant to offset travel expenses to a 2008 conference where IJV was founded.

The church later distanced itself from IJV, saying it would not partner with it in the future.

In January, Congress CEO Bernie Farber said the United Church and CJC had reached a "breaking point" in their relationship. A Feb. 1 meeting between church delegates and CJC was intended to begin mending the frayed relationship.

In her remarks, Sanders said some resolutions come from the church's executive, while others come "from other parts of the church." She said she's hoping that a church task force will be appointed "to listen to all concerns" on the Middle East.

Meanwhile, "there are no simple answers."

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Revitalized Stashover-Slipia shul turns 100

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

In the last few years, the average age of members at the Stashover-Slipia Congregation has decreased markedly – testimony not only to the passing of the 100-year-old shul's most senior members, but also an indication that the small, unpretentious congregation has started to succeed in its efforts to attract younger congregants.

On Shabbat morning, "sometimes we have five to six kids five and under," said Jay Safer, the shul president. As well, he noted, there are two bar mitzvahs and two bat mitzvahs scheduled for May and June, the first in "probably a year."

Four years ago, Safer said, an average Saturday morning service had about a dozen people, and now there are between 25 and more than 30. The synagogue also holds services on Sunday mornings and Jewish holidays.

The congregation will celebrate its 100th anniversary at a dinner May 16 in the Rooftop Salon of the Park Hyatt hotel. *CJN* editor Mordechai Ben-Dat, whose late father was gabbai at the shul for many years, will be the guest speaker.

Aside from the fact that the dinner venue can serve a kosher meal, it was chosen for its location on the hotel's 18th floor.

That was the impetus, "as silly as it sounds," said Safer, a 61-year-old third-generation member whose maternal grandparents came Stashov, Poland.

"It's perfect for our synagogue," he added, referring to the Hebrew letters that denote the number 18 and spell "*chai*," the word for life.

The Sultana Avenue synagogue – which has more than 100 member families and recently increased family dues to $400 a year – operates "on a shoestring" and is solvent, Safer said.

The congregation is an amalgamation of two synagogues established by Jewish immigrants. Its current building, just off Bathurst Street dates back to 1964, three years before the merger.

In an effort to infuse new life into the shul four years ago, changes such as allowing women to have aliyot and shortening Shabbat services to about two hours were introduced.

The Saturday morning services, at which men and women sit together, are preceded by coffee and rogelach. They are followed by interactive learning sessions led by educator Jack Lipinsky, who has led the services for 28 years. Congregants use Orthodox prayerbooks.

Carol Jupiter, a Toronto teacher who hadn't been affiliated with a synagogue for many years, joined Stashover-Slipia with her husband, Henzel, a couple of years ago, and both now serve on the board. She said she likes the non-judgmentalism and lack of formality.

"Nobody worries about decorum, which is the primary focus of some of the synagogues. Everybody participates."

Young children often help wrap the Torah, noted Jupiter, who is in her 60s. "It is really nice… It doesn't offer all the things, or any of the things, that the larger, more established synagogues have. But it offers a lot in the way of being very human."

Members organize kiddushes and clear the tables afterward, she said. "It's not a place of glamour. It's like your home."

"Everyone pitches in, and it's heimish," Lipinsky said.

He noted that, for many people, the social aspect of shul – particularly at the pre- and post-service programs – "is really powerful."

He added that guests at the shul are greeted, and someone sits with them. "We learn from the olden days… It was always informal. They davened in houses. It was very volunteeristic.

"It's fun. I think shul should be fun."

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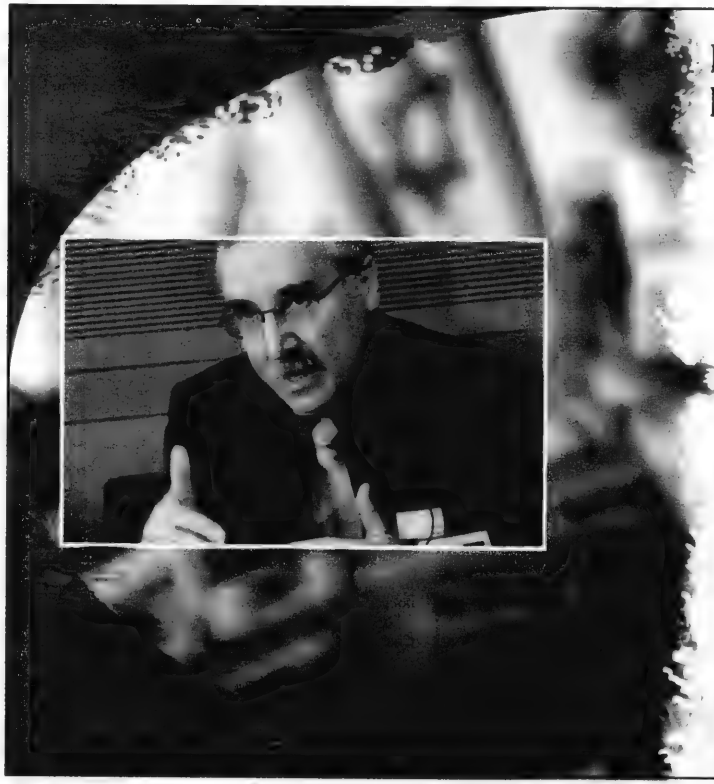

How the anti-Israel movement has hijacked human rights organizations

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Canada's 'system doesn't work'

Continued from page 1

The American efforts are ongoing, he said, pointing to the case of John Demjanjuk, who was removed to Germany, where he is on trial for alleged crimes committed at the Sobibor and Majdanek death camp. Research in the United States in the lead-up to his deportation uncovered evidence against another alleged killer from the Belzec death camp, who, like Demjanjuk, served in the SS training camp at Trawniki. He is under investigation by German authorities.

In Canada, meanwhile, the case of Helmut Oberlander remains unresolved 10 years after a court found he lied about his involvement in a Nazi murder unit. Clearly, Canada's "system doesn't work," Zuroff said. Numerous appeals followed. "You can't go on ad infinitum and make a mockery of the system." The United States streamlined its system from seven potential appeals to three, ensuring suspects received due process. "The United States does not want Nazi war criminals. They prove it year after year. But I can't say the same about Canada."

In its reply to *The CJN*, the Justice Department stated, "It must be understood that the likelihood of commencing new cases from the World War II era diminishes with the passage of time, due to the age and availability of witnesses and the challenge of discovering new evidence relevant to these cases.

John Demjanjuk, currently on trial in Germany

"There are a series of World War II files that are under review. Our last published annual report indicated that we had 20 active files. The current number of active files is less than 20.

"We have completed approximately 1,500 files since the beginning of the program and have taken action in 21 cases. We continue to work on the remaining World War II files, employing our standard investigative procedures that include ongoing archival research and co-operation with other countries involved in this work."

Zuroff's report noted "a major change in Germany's prosecution policy," which resulted in two new trials, an indictment and numerous new investigations.

> ***'You can't go on ad infinitum and make a mockery of the system'***

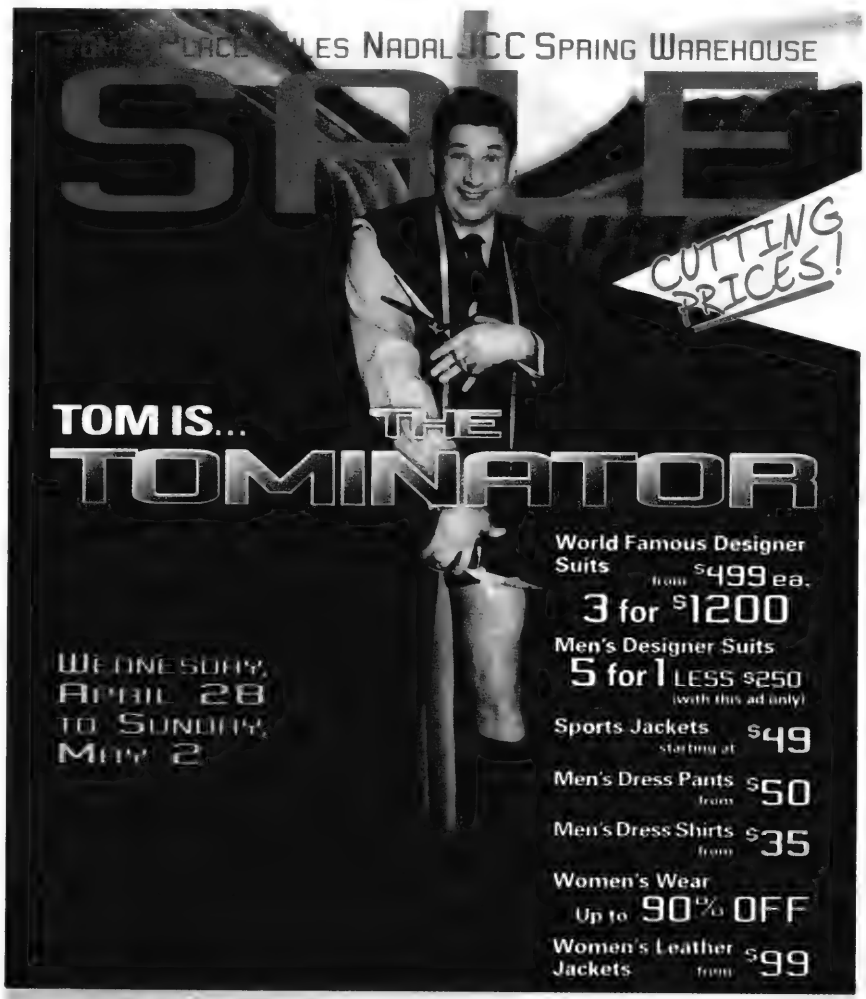
Underscoring Zuroff's argument was a report from Germany last week that prosecutors in Hanover reopened an investigation into the case of a 95-year-old former SS captain accused of being involved in two 1943 massacres of Jews in the Polish city of Lublin.

However, a lack of political will remains a major obstacle to achieving justice in post-Communist eastern Europe, Zuroff said, and arguments that suspects are too old to prosecute are fallacious, as since 2001, at least 77 convictions have been obtained internationally and 51 new indictments filed.

"The success achieved by dedicated prosecution agencies, and particularly in the United States and Germany, should be a catalyst for governments all over the world to make a serious effort to maximize justice while it can still be obtained," he said.

The report includes a 10 most-wanted list, which continues to be headed by Alois Brunner, a key operative of Adolf Eichmann who was responsible for the deportations of tens of thousands of Jews from Austria, Greece, France and Slovakia to death camps. A resident of Syria for decades, Brunner was last seen in 2001 and if alive would be 98.

Others on the list includes Aribert Heim, a doctor in the Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Mauthhausen concentration camps who murdered dozens of inmates by lethal injection; Sandor Kepiro, a Hungarian gendarmerie officer who participated in the murder of at least 1,200 civilians in Novi Sad, Serbia; and Milivoj Asner, the police chief of Slavonska Pozega, Croatia, who resides in Austria and who allegedly deported hundreds of Serbs, Jews and Gypsies to their death.



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Globe *column caricatures Mideast conflict*

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

In the April 6 *Globe and Mail*, Ian Brown wrote about his interview with New Yorker editor David Remnick, author of the recently released and much praised biography of Barack Obama, *The Bridge*.

When the conversation turned to the simplistic stereotypes of Obama promoted by "Rush Limbaugh and the Fox News dogs" (as Brown put it), Remnick dismissed such treatment with an expletive but quickly explained his own approach: "All I'm insisting on, as a journalist, is complexity. Everything is always more complex than the cartoon."

Looking at much of the reporting and commentary on Israel cannot but make you regret that Remnick's insight is not more widely shared. Instead of complexity, all too often there is the cartoon instead.

Currently, the cartoon about Israel amounts to the following: Israel's in occupation of Palestinian land and must act to end the occupation, except that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu refuses to comply and so the conflict continues. Full stop.

If one objects that this characterization is itself a caricature of what's passing for analysis of Israel in some prestigious circles, consider what veteran columnist Jeffrey Simpson had to say in the *Globe and Mail* on April 20 ("Cracks in the bedrock of U.S.-Israel relations?").

Simpson wrote about "[t]he failure of Israelis and the Palestinian Authority even to talk to each other," without noting that Netanyahu has repeatedly urged the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table without preconditions. PA President Mahmoud Abbas refuses to do so, using U.S. President Barak Obama's tough approach with Israel over the settlement issue as an excuse to avoid taking Netanyahu up on his offer (even after Netanyahu agreed to a 10-month moratorium on settlement construction). Abbas even refuses to enter into indirect talks with Israel, using Obama's disagreement with Netanyahu over Jewish housing in east Jerusalem as an additional excuse not to engage with Israel.

Yet in Simpson's account, Abbas' refusal to speak with Israel was simply not mentioned. It's as if it doesn't really matter. For Simpson, the onus for the failure to return to negotiations falls entirely on Israel. Virtually ignoring what Netanyahu has said, Simpson argued that "Netanyahu occasionally says he's willing to talk, but little in his long career suggests he is committed to serious discussions, let alone formal negotiations." Netanyahu's policy is reduced by Simpson to one term – "obduracy."

Simpson's only reference to the Palestinians is to describe them merely as innocent victims of the "grave injustices that have systematically been done to [them]" by Israel, in particular by Israel's settlement policy.

According to Simpson, Abbas and the PA, and Hamas, bear no responsibility at all for the impasse in the peace process. Since Simpson ignored history, there was no mention of the fact that Abbas refused former Israeli prime minister Ehud Olmert's offer of a Palestinian state, an offer made during a negotiating process that wasn't conditioned on the cessation of settlement activity. For all of the controversy that surrounds them, settlements aren't the core of the impasse. (As this column has noted before, while a complicating factor, the settlement issue is resolvable, unlike the far deeper and seemingly unresolvable Palestinian rejection of Jewish sovereignty and their insistence on the "right of return" to present-day Israel.)

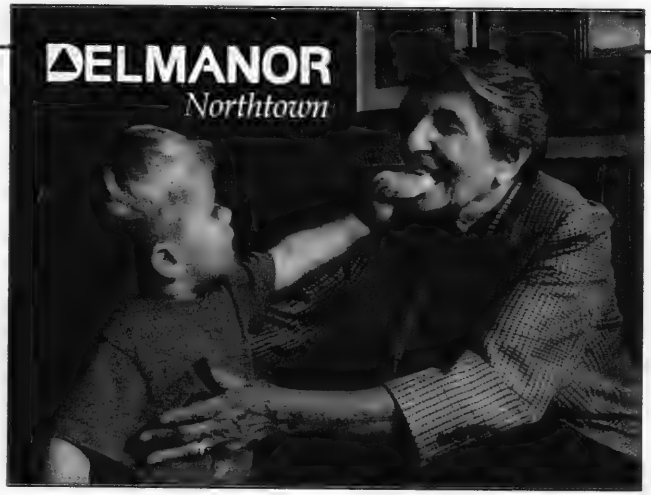
But, again, in Simpson's simplistic rendering, Palestinian rejectionism is not a factor since, apparently, Palestinian intentions and actions are of no concern.

All that matters is putting pressure on Israel alone. "That the Israelis can't be pushed [toward a deal] is obvious to objective observers," Simpson wrote, no doubt counting himself among this privileged "objective" crowd.

By failing to acknowledge the Palestinians as central actors with moral responsibility for their fate, and by reducing Israel's leaders to obdurate officials refusing to be "pushed' to a deal (under the wholly unwarranted assumption that a deal is just waiting to be had), Simpson drew what amounts to a caricature – a distillation of convenient clichés and what passes for conventional wisdom these days.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell met last week in Jerusalem with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the hopes of getting talks started with the Palestinians. ***[Israel Sun photo]***



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Uprising memorial features second generation

'To be a child of survivors is to have congress with ghosts'

By LAURA STRICKER
CJN Staff

Before dozens gathered to commemorate the 67th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, in which the Jews remaining in the ghetto battled their German captors, a University of Lethbridge professor spoke about her second-hand Holocaust experience as the daughter of survivors.

Speaking at the Workmen's Circle-sponsored annual event on April 18, Goldie Morgentaler – the daughter of famed abortion-rights crusader Dr. Henry Morgentaler and Yiddish novelist Chana Rosenfarb – gave an impassioned speech on the difficulty of trying to make sense of what happened in the Holocaust without having experienced it personally.

"As time passes," Morgentaler said, "it takes with it the personal memory of personal experience. The result is that we who have not lived through this ordeal must, however unwillingly, become its historians.

"To be a child of survivors is to have congress with ghosts – to be overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility… an obligation to never let the dead be forgotten [and] to defend their honour, their names, their humanity [and] their valour."

Another problem with the passing of time, Morgentaler added, is that eventually all knowledge of the Holocaust will come from fictionalized and romanticized books and movies.

"The Holocaust is everywhere today," Morgentaler said, mentioning recent movies such as *Defiance*, *The Reader* and *Inglourious Basterds*.

"These movies cash in on a kind of easy emotion that is closer to entertainment than it is to historical reality. They evoke horror and a sentimentalized sense of redemption at the same time, all of it at a comfortable remove from what actually happened.

"I am afraid that as time goes by there will be more and more such fictionalizations… cut off from the reality of what actually happened. No one likes unadulterated, unmitigated horror. No one wants to believe that suffering the Jews experienced during the Holocaust has no purpose, that the dead can never be avenged. We want to be able to sleep at night. We want to feel that something good came out of something bad, even if the good is fiction."

Much of the memorial program was in Yiddish, with a variety of songs and poems presented. In particular, the poems of Holocaust survivor Abraham Sutzkever, who died this past January at age 96, were featured.

Avra Fainer, whose singing in Yiddish was featured throughout the program, said the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising has personal significance to her and her family.

"I'm named after my great uncle Avram, who was a fighter in the Uprising," Fainer said. "My family memorializes the uprising at our Passover Seder each year, along with participating in the Workmen's Circle memorial.

"Having heard the [Holocaust] stories from those who experienced them first-hand, I think it's crucial that I be able to at the very least participate in events such as this to help preserve the memories and keep them alive to the extent I'm able."

Another important reason to participate, Fainer said, is to preserve the Yiddish language, an overarching theme of the entire memorial.

"I feel like I am able to help preserve what many perceive as a dying language, since a great deal of people who spoke Yiddish died in the Holocaust. By singing in Yiddish, I feel like I'm helping to keep the language alive."

Morgentaler finished speaking by reciting a poem written by her mother, first in Yiddish, then translated into English.

"So He must come now and prove to me that one can burn, and be burned, and still remain God."

For more information about The Workmen's Circle, visit www.toronto-workmens-circle.org.

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Anti-Israel slurs threaten gay parade's funding

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Pride Toronto says it's taking a closer look at applicants this year after complaints from Canadian and Israeli gay rights activists who documented what they call acrimonious anti-Israel and anti-Semitic propaganda at the 2009 event by a pro-Palestinian group.

Following the complaints, the City of Toronto has threatened to withdraw funding from the city's annual Pride Parade if the anti-Israel group is allowed to participate.

Tracey Sandilands

The city believes that its anti-discrimination policy was violated by the participation of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid (QuAIA) in the 2009 Pride Toronto parade, to which the city gave $121,000, the *Toronto Star* reported last week.

The decision by the city – which is among the world's gay-friendliest – came after repeated complaints by Martin Gladstone, a Toronto lawyer and gay rights activist, who made a film about QuAIA entitled *Reclaiming our Pride*. In the film, activists at Pride Toronto's 2009 parade call Israel an "apartheid state" and one of them wears a T-shirt with a crossed-out swastika.

Gladstone contends the group is falsely branding Israel and uses Nazi imagery to infer a linkage between the Jewish state's actions on Palestinian issues and those of the Third Reich.

His said that while groups such as QuAIA can espouse whatever beliefs they want, they have no place doing so at the parade, which is supposed to be strictly about celebrating gay achievements and issues.

Tracey Sandilands, Pride Toronto's executive director, told *The CJN* last week that she understands "the presence of QuAIA is problematic for many people" and that the group's message is not "a queer issue."

She said that as of last week, Pride had not yet received an application from QuAIA to participate in the 2010 parade, although the deadline is June 4.

If the group applies again this year, Sandilands said new "terms and conditions" have been added to the parade application package for prospective participants to "ensure [Pride] was covered from a liability point of view.

"If anything happens during the parade that could incite violence… and property is damaged or someone is injured, there are measures in place to remove them from the parade, to prevent them from participating in future parades and to take legal action against them." These new rules now apply to all participants.

As to whether QuAIA specifically would be accepted at Pride again this year, Sandilands said the "core messaging or theme" of its entry will be much more scrutinized than it was last year, because Pride now realizes it could be in contravention of the city's anti-discrimination policies, which she said her organization didn't understand last year.

The only difference from last year to this year is that the updated terms and conditions now provide for "consequences of breach of contract which weren't there in the past. We now intend to apply these terms and conditions across the board, where before it was very much *laissez-faire*," she said.

Pride's parade committee will review and approve or reject applications.

"There have been rejections in the past," she said, adding that this year, rejected applicants have the option to challenge the rejection and appeal it to Pride's board.

The city's threat to pull funding follows the announcement and cancellation last month of a Pride policy that would have parade signs reviewed by an ethics committee.

Elle Flanders, a Jewish member of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, objected to the city comparing a political opinion on apartheid to hate speech.

"They're trying to compare it to hate speech, and I find it deeply offensive, as somebody who's been fighting human rights battles for a really long time, to hear that criticism of the State of Israel is somehow hate speech. No way," Flanders told the *Star*.

With files from JTA and Ha'aretz.

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Jewish Life

Discrimination: the ongoing, painful saga

By RABBI YEHIEL BEN AYON

Through A Sephardi Window

You will remember the case: the community of Immanuel in the West Bank was a town with only one school for girls. One school, yet one functioning with two exclusive educational streams. One school, but two curricula. One school, but two assemblies, two outings, two uniforms and two recesses. One school where even its playground was divided in two – one for Ashkenazi students, the other for the Sephardim.

This division resulted in predictably irate parents bringing the case before Israel's Supreme Court.

The court ruled that the "discrimination is blatant" and "must cease immediately." Follow-up inspections were inconclusive, as Ashkenazi students mysteriously disappeared into truancy, only to later reappear. This time, the lines of division weren't delineated on ethnic background, but rather on the basis of chassidic and non-chassidic orientation.

Witness again: one school, two streams, two uniforms, two re-cesses, etc. The Supreme Court ruled that the school was engaging in "a disingenuous ruse… It is nothing if not the same as the original, only semantically has the school replaced Ashkenazi and Sephardi with chassidic and non-chassidic," as virtually all Ashkenazi students were chassidic (Slonimer), and all non-chassidic girls were Sephardi.

Still, the school resisted. Impatiently, the Supreme Court imposed a fine of 5,000 shekels (roughly the equivalent of $1,500) for each day thereafter that the school was in contempt of the court order. For any school, this sum would be enormous, but for one such as this, the amount was downright crippling. Indeed, it put its very survival into serious question.

The venerable Rebbe of Slonim cried tears of sorrow. He called out, and as a respected individual, others lent an ear. An urgent meeting of leading Agudath Israel rabbis was convened in the New York area. This is an organization whose members function primarily through consensus. They commiserated with the Rebbe of Slonim and took sides with the school and against the Israeli Supreme Court.

In a subsequent press release, the Agudah said the ruling has no basis in legality, as it is unprecedented that the affairs of a separate and private school should in any way be regulated by anyone other than itself.

In the meantime, the situation continued.

Ours not yet being a perfect world, this problem will nevertheless resolve itself. It will do so in the very way it has throughout Israel and in communities confronted with similar situations. A new, exclusive school will soon be born, one that will be exactly as it wishes to be.

Thus, the immediate problem will – seemingly – be resolved. At the same time, another will be created, for with it another wall of division will be erected.

The Jerusalem of today, for instance, comprises many such walls – virtual walls separating neighbourhoods, shopping centres, schools and, as of late, bus lines. There are too many such walls of segregation being built, rather than bridges of integration.

We can rightly be proud of the kaleidoscope of vibrant Jewish life that has been taking shape and growing before our very eyes in Israel, all in the relatively short period of the past two decades.

We are, nevertheless, at a stage in our maturation that causes us to set up dividing lines in order to cement our own identities.

This will not be forever so. One day, future generations will look back puzzled and bewildered as to why one nation, united under God, felt the need to segregate themselves to this extent.

Lag b'Omer: picnics, bonfires, mysticism

Jewish & Digital
By Mark Mietkiewicz

How can one day remind us of Judaism's links to Kabbalah? Be a time to dance surrounded by a time to mourn? And also be the time for an Israeli pilgrimage that is reminiscent of Woodstock? Lag b'Omer is all of those things. The seven-week period between Passover and Shavuot is a time of semi-mourning, but on the 33rd day, Lag b'Omer, weddings are permitted and the day is celebrated with bonfires and parties. This year, Lag b'Omer falls on Sunday, May 2.

If Lag b'Omer is identified with one person, then it must be Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai. Rabbi Shimon was a student of Rabbi Akiva whose 24,000 students perished during the Roman conquest of Jerusalem 1,900 years ago because, as the Talmud tells us, "they did not show proper respect for each other." **[bit.ly/omer18]**

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was one of the very few scholars to survive. The Aish Hatorah website explains how he and his son sought refuge and studied Torah in a cave for 12 years. Rabbi Shimon is believed to have died on Lag b'Omer but just before his death, he revealed to his students the Zohar, Judaism's great kabbalistic work. **[bit.ly/omer19]**

And the bonfires that mark the day? Ohr Somayach explains that "on the day of Rabbi Shimon's passing, a great light was revealed to his students when he uncovered many of the hidden secrets of the Torah. This was written down in the Zohar (lit. "shining"). The bonfires symbolize the light of the hidden wisdom that Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai revealed on Lag b'Omer." **[bit.l0y/omer20]**

Some of the biggest bonfires take place in Meron, a small town in northern Israel. Meron is also believed to be the burial place of Rabbi Shimon; so every year, it becomes the focus of a mass pilgrimage. Here's how Judith Fein describes her visit. "Was this Meron or Woodstock?… The town was like an Orthodox carnival. From makeshift booths, vendors sold crafts, religious objects, clothes, books, dates, nuts and soft drinks. Families camped out in tents. Men with long beards asked for charity or offered blessings. According to tradition, if a couple cannot conceive a child, on Lag b'Omer, the man distributes drinks until he has served 18 bottles of wine to cure the barrenness. In the street, young men pressed glasses of wine on us. We drank, of course. It would be rude not to honour their desire for children." **[bit.ly/omer21]**

As you ponder how to mark the day, you can peek in to dozens of videos of Lag b'Omer bonfires and celebrations, too. **[bit.ly/omer23]** The Jewish Theological Seminary's Lag b'Omer site focuses on kids. In addition to the history of the day, there are rabbinic tales and essays to spark discussions. **[bit.ly/omer28]** Over at Orthodox Union, there are links to a Lag b'Omer poem and an explanation why the day is associated with playing bows and arrows. **[bit.ly/omer25]**

For many Israelis, Lag b'Omer is a great day to get out, have a picnic and throw a few potatoes on the fire. Joni Schockett's menu is a bit more exotic. It includes Stuffed Grape Leaves and Focaccia with Tomatoes, Feta and Garlic. **[bit.ly/omer29]** Daniel Rogov's picnic boasts Spinach Salad with Honey and Oranges followed by Chicken and Artichoke Salad topped off by Arak Cookies. **[bit.ly/omer30]** And then there's a Mediterranean Lag b'Omer menu with Sangria, Chilled Almond Soup with Grapes, Broiled Chicken with Garlic Sauce and more. **[bit.ly/omer31]**

While you're feasting at your picnic, why not break into a rendition of a traditional tune? Lag b'Omer songs may not be as famous as Pesach or Purim melodies but they do exist. So, if you really want to impress the folks over at the next bonfire, brush up on holiday songs from Tunisia, Greece, Iraq and Galicia. **[bit.ly/omer32]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

Machete attack leaves campus reeling

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

We have all heard the story. It has been plastered all over the news: two Carleton University students, Nick Bergamini and Mark Klibanov, were attacked on April 5 at around 1:45 a.m. after a night on the town in Gatineau Quebec.

The two roommates were walking away from La Volt, a popular nightclub, when they were greeted with shouts of "Zionist" and anti-Semitic slurs. Soon they were surrounded. Things later escalated when one of the assailants grabbed his 12-inch machete out of the trunk of his car and further threatened the young men.

Neither Bergamini nor Klibanov can be sure who was the target of this hate crime. Bergamini, who is not Jewish, is vice-president of student issues for the Carleton Student Association and an avid supporter of Israel. In the past, he has campaigned for Israel advocacy and he has protested against Israeli Apartheid Week, making him a public figure who could have easily been recognized.

Klibanov is an Israeli student who, at the time of the attack, was campaigning for election as president of the Israel Advocacy Committee (IAC) of Carleton and the University of Ottawa, a campaign that he would later win.

Klibanov says he believes the attackers were directing their comments at Bergamini, though he cannot be sure.

"We believe that he recognized Nick or me. I thought the remarks were directed at Nick, but both of us are prominent members of the Jewish community who speak out and support Israel," he said.

Bergamini called the attack "totally unprovoked," and both students believe the act was a hate crime. "They were yelling, 'Jew' and 'Zionist.' It's not like it was motivated out of anger and it came from an argument. We were completely passive the entire time. We were just walking home. It was motivated by what we believe to be a hate crime," he said.

Bergamini was quick to say he does not blame Carleton, but he says he does know that one of the attackers was a Carleton student.

Klibanov agreed, saying, "Carleton campus is safe, security is very good. Heated debates have happened, but nothing that led to violence."

His new role as IAC president will give Klibanov a more active role in working to prevent events like this from arising in the future, and he plans to deal with this actively. He believes that a way to prevent violent and aggressive attacks is to put a more human face on the conflict by "trying to create an atmosphere with open dialogue with Palestinians, because that's the best way to remedy the situation."

He acknowledges that this will not end the debate, but believes that meeting and discussing issues in a safe environment may create more human empathy and discourage violence.

The attack has been reported to Gatineau police, as police spokesperson Isabelle Poirier acknowledged. "We received a call concerning an armed aggression and it's under investigation," she said.

Bergamini and Klibanov are also working alongside campus security trying to recognize who the Carleton student involved in the attack is. So far, they have had no such luck though they remain optimistic.

Jewish service isn't zero-sum

Class Act
By Daniel Held

Last Sunday, thousands of Jewish teenagers took time away from their homework, extracurricular activities and extended sleep schedules to offers a few hours of volunteer service under the banner of J-Serve. Celebrating its fifth year, J-Serve is an annual day of service for Jewish high school students that crosses organizational and denominational lines.

In Toronto, youth movements from across the Jewish spectrum partnered under the aegis of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to paint a sukkah, volunteer at the Hadassah telethon and assemble tzedakah boxes for Zareinu Educational Centre. Hundreds of miles away, I helped a group of teens distribute lunches to the homeless, clean up a local park and canvass for the ethical treatment of restaurant workers.

It's hard to argue against the value J-Serve. As the organization says, it "provides teens with the opportunity to fulfil the Jewish values of gemilut chasidim, acts of loving kindness, tzedakah, just and charitable giving, and tikkum olam, the responsibility to repair the world." All this while instilling a sense of peoplehood that blurs denominational lines and engaging teens who would usually snub a Jewish event.

J-Serve has filled an important niche.

It's also emblematic of a growing tide of Jewish service learning. In this column, I have previously described the powerful experiences of Jewish students doing disaster relief work in New Orleans, delivering Passover food to Toronto's hungry and volunteering in a rural Mayan village. These experiences have a three-fold purpose: they serve those in need, they teach Jewish values and they offer a forum for the exploration of active Jewish communal living.

Repair the World, a new umbrella organization established by funders such as the Schusterman and Jim Joseph foundations, is investing millions of dollars to make service a defining part of Jewish life.

This mission has come under fire.

In the March edition of *Commentary* magazine, Jack Wertheimer bemoans the Jewish service learning movement as yet another example of Jewish philanthropic money and volunteer hours being sunk into non-sectarian causes. Wertheimer argues that in the current economic climate, with Jewish organizations and Jewish families devastated by economic hardship, this movement is funnelling resources away from Jewish needs.

Wertheimer recognizes that "Jews in their teens, 20s and 30s are deeply invested in contributing to the world at large… and to get their attention, Jewish organizations must harness their idealism and teach young people that their quest to aid fellow human beings is in fact congruent with the deepest teachings of Judaism."

He asks, however, why this effort to repair the world can't extend to aiding fellow Jews? Instead of Teach for America, we should create teaching fellowships in day schools. Instead of disaster relief in New Orleans, we should seek out those in need in our own community.

This debate between the particularistic and universalistic ideals of service was given voice in Sunday's J-serve experiences. Toronto teens volunteered at a synagogue, Hadassah, JACS and other Jewish organizations. The teens I worked with served the homeless, the parks conservatory, and restaurant workers. I can't say if the points of service were chosen based on convenience, ideology or any number of other factors. The distinction, however, is clear.

Wertheimer is correct is saying that we often gloss over the needs within our own community. Today, an unprecedented number of Jews are living under the poverty line, while day school tuition has reached a critical level and communal institutions are threatened by shrinking budgets.

What Wertheimer doesn't recognize, however, is that service isn't a zero-sum game. The investment in young Jews living, working and learning together to serve those in need – Jewish or not – will, in the long run, pay dividends for the Jewish community and the greater world.

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Exhibit highlights photographer's career

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

There are about 65 faces in Toronto's Market Gallery. Some are laughing, some are smiling, some are lost in thought.

Talk-show host Larry King is there. Former Toronto mayor Mel Lastman is there. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is there. And they all have one thing in common.

Well, one person.

Al Gilbert.

Gilbert is a Toronto photographer who is known not only for his expert use of light and ability to bring out his subject's personality in a few shots but also for the subjects themselves.

Gilbert, whose career has spanned more than 60 years, has taken photos of hundreds of celebrities and politicians, including U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden, former Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion and, one of his personal favourites, Beverly Harvard, the first black female to run a major police department in the United States.

About 65 of Gilbert's photos are on display at the Market Gallery in St. Lawrence Market. Called "Facets of Fame," the exhibit, which launched last week and runs until Sept. 11, explores both Gilbert's career and the evolution of his studio, Gilbert Studios, which was founded by his father, Nathan Gittelmacher, in 1922.

"I ended up in the early years learning to print [photos] and work with glass plates, but [my father] realized early, if my son doesn't learn to see light, he'll go nowhere," Gilbert, who started experimenting with natural light before colour photos came out, said at the exhibit launch.

"I would play with colour pieces of paper and have it reflect... in someone face. In the late '40s... colour hit... it was a miracle."

When he was still in school in the 1950s, Gilbert asked a local radio station if he could photograph the celebrities that the station interviewed and create postcards to sell. The first celebrity he photographed was singer Frank Sinatra. Since then, he has taken shots of hundreds of celebrities, and has donated many of his photos to the Ontario Jewish Archives, which organized the Market Gallery exhibit.

Taking photos of celebrities and political figures is a hobby for Gilbert, who relies on his reputation.

"Once you have that, it's easy to get the rest. You say, 'I'm going to be in Washington, I'm going to photograph an ambassador.'"

One of his more memorable subjects was Ben-Gurion, who visited Toronto in 1960.

Gilbert was tipped off by a Toronto rabbi.

"[He] said, 'Al, get your damn camera and get to the Royal York [Hotel].'" Gilbert said. "When they opened the door and let me in, [I saw] there was a meeting going on... [Ben-Gurion said], 'How many [shots] do you need to take?' I said four, he said, 'You can take five.'"

Looking around at his photos, Gilbert insisted that he has never been intimidated by his subjects.

"I've never been nervous to take a photo. I take charge," Gilbert said. "I prefer doing portraits. It gives me the chance to work with people, to be able to control them, and it's exciting."

Al Gilbert has photographed everyone from talk-show host Larry King to former Israeli prime minister David Ben-Gurion.

The "Facets of Fame" exhibit, which was organized by Ellen Scheinberg and Melinda Richter of the Ontario Jewish Archives, includes a section for prominent Torontonians and prominent Jewish Torontonians Paul Reichmann and Mel Lastman. The exhibit also has a section dedicated to family photos taken by his father.

For Scheinberg, the director of the Ontario Jewish Archives, these are some of her favourites.

"I love the Gilbert Studio photos from the '20s and '30s. His father had a sense of humour," she said, using a photo of Gilbert's mother in a pirate costume as an example. "It's just so charming."

For Esterita Rajsky, who visited the exhibit's launch last week, the photos are more than just headshots.

"He captures expression. They're not just pictures, it's not just a still. They all look as though they're pensive or laughing," she said. "I think he's a fine photographer."

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"Growing up a Russian Jew in Wartime Shanghai" by guest speaker Luba Schiller. Her fascinating talk will be followed by a Chinese Tea party.

Wednesday, May 12th • 3:00 pm
DESTINATION: ITALY
Guest speaker is Dominic Irula from the Wine Judges of Canada. Ciao!

Wednesday, May 26th • 2:00 pm
DESTINATION: MOROCCO
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TEAPOT ART AT THE GARDINER MUSEUM
A selection of ceramic teapots from the Shiff Collection of Contemporary Israeli Teapots is currently on display at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto. Above is the Sabra Cactus Teapot by Gaia Smith (2009). Below, from left, are works by Gitit Tan Pai (1995), Stella Kahav (2007) and Meira Una (1989) [*Hudson Taylor photos*]

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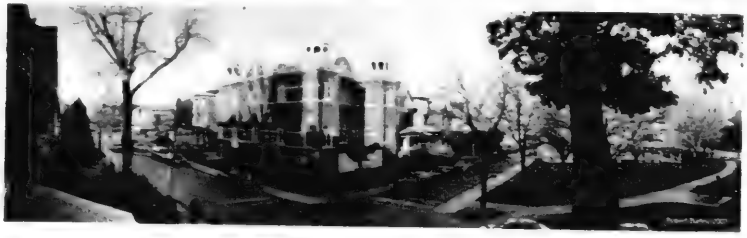

E.C. Woodley: *Auguststrasse 25*

April 22 to May 30, 2010 | Koffler Gallery Off-Site at the Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave | FREE
Inside the historic sanctuary of the Kiever Synagogue, a multimedia installation recreates a living-room environment of a Jewish home from 1920s Germany, initiating a convergence of past and present and bringing together the secular domestic environment and the sacred space of worship.

From Kiev to Kensington: A Walking Tour of Old Jewish Toronto

Sunday, May 2, 1 – 3 PM | There are a limited number of spots, to register go to: janeswalk.net
A walking and exhibition tour of old Jewish Toronto and the Koffler Gallery's *Auguststrasse 25*. Followed by a special kofflerkultura reception at 3 PM for Jewish Russians in their 20s and 30s.

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Tuesday, May 18, 6 – 8 PM (Kiever Synagogue) | 9 PM – 5:30 AM (Miles Nadal JCC) | FREE
Visit the installation, then follow a historic walk to the MNJCC for the evening's events, including a series of talks about architecture, historic synagogues, and contemporary art practices related to *Auguststrasse 25*.

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The Culture Beat

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www.ontariojewisharchives.org

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www.hgjewishtheatre.com | www.milesnadaljcc.ca

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Through educational, cultural and engagement programs, the Committee for Yiddish fosters and promotes Yiddish language and culture as a vibrant part of contemporary Jewish life and as a vital link between the Jewish past and future. **www.jewishtorontoonline.net/home.do?ch=content&cid=6052**

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For application forms and further details, please send an email specifying the scholarship(s) in which you are interested to:
Paul Shaviv, Director of Education
pshaviv@tanenbaumchat.org
Completed applications must reach the school by Thursday, May 13, 2010

UJA FEDERATION

Greater Toronto Area

Israel mission part of Ontario government's economic plan

Continued from page 3

The premier said he chose this year to finally visit the Holy Land because it "fits perfectly with our new agenda, our new five-year [economic] plan called 'Open Ontario.' In order for us to succeed and thrive in this post-recession world, we have to be open to and embrace new possibilities and trade ties. We see Israel as a very bright spot. We think it holds tremendous promise as a trade partner."

As for what business or investment opportunities awaited Ontarians in the West Bank portion of the mission, McGuinty said that part of the trip would be less about strategic provincial investment and more about how Ontario can help "strengthen Palestinian governance, education, small business creation and community development."

McGuinty noted that Diaspora Jews have been key to Israel's success, and Ontario's 200,000 Jews have a real sense of "commitment to Israel. They're helping build their economy as well as ours. And [the province] wants to have a stake in the growth of the Israeli economy. We intend to capitalize on it."

Aside from the business aspect of the trip, McGuinty said he "very much looked forward" to finally being "on the ground to get a better understanding" of Israel geographically, culturally, historically and economically.

He said Jewish MPPs have told him time and again how he'll "never understand" Israel until he visits.

Accompanying McGuinty will be Minister of Economic Development and Trade Sandra Pupatello, and although the premier's office couldn't provide a final list of MPPs who will be going on the trip, published reports said it will include Toronto-area Liberal MPPs Monte Kwinter, David Caplan, David Zimmer and Mike Colle.

Thornhill Tory MPP Peter Shurman – who represents the riding with the highest concentration of Jews in the province – said he's "upset about" being left off the mission. He said he was told only Liberal caucus members would be going.

RECOGNIZING EARTH DAY

The Toronto Heschel School celebrated Earth Day on April 22 with its second annual Walking School Bus, along with friends, family and school trustee James Pasternack. From left are Taryn Simon, Jennifer Katz, Claire Merbaum, Jacob Katz, Pasternack, Natali Shachar, Sarah Abel, Ellen Kessler, Perri Leibovich, Catherine Birkin, Martin Lebi and school principal Gail Baker.

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UJA FEDERATION
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Jews for Judaism

Teacher/healer took circuitous route to classroom

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Yehudit Shier Weisberg remembers thinking years ago that if she could do things over, she would have studied Jewish education. But having completing two bachelor's degrees and a master of science in behavioural sciences and management, she wasn't about to start anew.

"It's almost like this was meant to be," she said in an interview last week over herbal tea in her plant-filled living room.

A therapeutic touch practitioner, storyteller and ventriloquist, Shier Weisberg also teaches children at two Jewish supplementary schools and adults at the Florence Melton Mini School.

At the Downtown Jewish Community School, Shier Weisberg teaches Grade 5 Jewish studies, and Grade 5/6 Hebrew and prayer. As well, she teaches an eight-week option called Israel Advocacy.

Farther north, at Hebrew's Cool, based at Beth Torah Congregation, she teaches Grade 4 Jewish studies and Hebrew.

Shier Weisberg has been on staff at both schools for about four years.

A Toronto native who attended United Synagogue Day School and grew up at Beth Tzedec Congregation, she spent eight years in Israel, where she studied sociology at the University of Haifa as an undergraduate and obtained her master's degree at the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology before returning to Toronto in 1981 at age 26.

A lesson from the teacher: *"I give my students two rules at the beginning of the year: to show derech eretz (respect for others) and to ask questions."*

An interest in music – she plays the recorder – led her to study for a second bachelor's degree at the University of Toronto's faculty of music.

She never saw herself going into teaching, but she took on her first recorder student after seeing an ad at the faculty and found she loved the work. Once her own children were in school, she taught recorder at public schools, using her summers to write stories.

It wasn't until after she started to study therapeutic touch 16 years ago that she reconnected with Judaism in a new way.

"I think it was the energy healing that got me thinking differently about so many things we do in Judaism, and I started seeing all these deeper meanings," Shier Weisberg said, her enthusiasm evident in her smile and tone of voice.

"For example," she said, "Havdalah is the original aromatherapy."

And *Birchot Hashachar* – the blessings that begin the daily morning prayer service – are "almost a recipe" for different elements of energy healing. "It makes you focus on what you have rather than what you don't have. It just puts you in a different frame of mind."

As well, *Tashlich* – the symbolic casting away of sins – is an "amazing" concept, and similar to some of the healing approaches she has encountered.

In addition to her love of Judaism, Israel and prayer, Shier Weisberg likes to think she brings "a calmness" to the classroom that originates in her healing work. She also facilitates healing services under the auspices of the Jewish Healing Program, run by Jewish Family & Child.

Yehudit Shier Weisberg – who teaches at two Jewish supplementary schools, and is also a ventriloquist – is seen here with "Yossel." *[Frances Kraft photo]*

Somewhat reticent about being the focus of this article, Shier Weisberg clarified, "What I really want you to put in the article is [for students] to know our history and to be proud of who we are, and to know our moral and our legal rights to the Land of Israel."

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Class Acts

TIME TO CELEBRATE: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School students dance with parents and teachers at the Miles Nadal JCC in celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut before parading outside in song at Bloor Street and Spadina Avenue.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: Students Natalie Urbach, left, and Rachel Leboff of Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly United Synagogue Day School) dressed in blue and white to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut.

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TanenbaumCHAT is a member of the OTPP.

We appreciate your interest but we regret we can contact only those selected for an interview.

We regret that last week's advertisement for staff was inserted in error.

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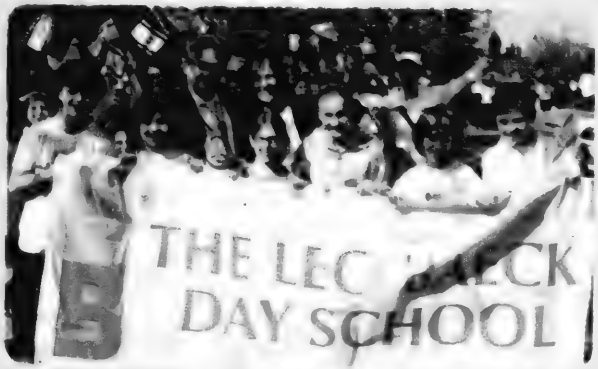
Class Acts

ISRAEL PARADE: Some 1,000 students from Associated Hebrew Schools, Leo Baeck Day School, Netivot HaTorah Day School and Zareinu Educational Centre took part in an annual Yom Ha'Atzmaut parade last week in Thornhill. Pictured, front from left, are Netivot students Noy, Maya and Orly, and, back row from left, Toby, Aviva and Rena. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*



BANNER BEARERS: Grade 6 students at Leo Baeck Day School's north campus – from left Kyle Maresky, Kyle Bloomberg, Nicole Ptasznik, Bailee Kleinhandler, David Greiver and Cory Katzman, accompanied by principal Howard Laderman and Yvette Burke, dean of student services – carried the Leo Baeck banner during the Yom Ha'atzmaut parade on Atkinson Avenue in Thornhill, along with students from Netivot HaTorah Day School, Associated Hebrew Schools and Zareinu Educational Centre.

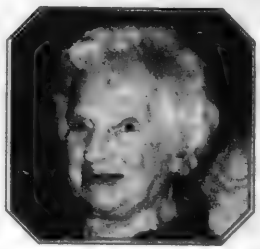
DESERT LANDSCAPES: In a month filled with Israel celebrations, Bialik Hebrew Day School Grade 3 students worked with art teacher, Martha Fleury, to create Israeli desert landscapes out of clay. Pictured, from left are Kacie Smith, Talia Goldbloom and Ethan Lapid.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy eighth birthday Alex. Mazel tov to your proud parents Heidi & Paul Giannoulis. Love Bubbie Leanna Starke and Great-Bubbie Trudy Kugelmass.



Mazel tov to Minnie Strauss who turned 100 years old on April 4! She will mark this joyous occasion in celebration with her loved ones.

Mazel tov to Shira Stein & Jason Silver on their engagement. Love and best wishes from your parents, grandparents and siblings.

Happy first birthday to Jillian Hope Kivenko, daughter of Sari Shaicovitch & Gary Kivenko. Adored 'Baby Jilly' to sisters Emma and Leah. We love you!

Happy sixth birthday Jarod, son of Marla & Ronald Struminger, grandson and great-grandson of Betsy & Lou Fruitman and Mary Dale. Forever missed, David Dale.

Happy fourth birthday Phoebe, daughter of Marla & Ronald Struminger, granddaughter and great-granddaughter of Betsy & Lou Fruitman and Mary Dale. Forever missed, David Dale.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@cjnews.com or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Lelia Speisman, is away on medical leave.

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What's New deadline for the May 13 issue is May 3. Deadline for May 21 is May 10. Phone 416-391-1836. Fax 416-391-0829. E-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Thursday, April 29

BUSINESS LUNCH LECTURE

"Seeking Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East." **Ibrahim Abu Shindi**, director of the Arab Community Center in Jaffa, is speaker. Moderater is **Stewart Bell**, *National Post* reporter. 12 p.m. Fogler, Rubinoff LLP, 95 Wellington St. W., Suite 1200. $20. Reserve at 416-966-0722 or projectmanager@speakersaction.com.

KIDNEY DONOR

Chabad Communities of the GTA: "Stranger than Kindness: Why I Donated my Kidney to a Stranger," with **Rabbi Ephraim Simon**. A 24-year-old community member needs a kidney. Find out how kidney donation can save lives. Free. 7:30 p.m. Chabad Lubavitch, 770 Chabad Gate. Every attendee eligible to win two tickets to Israel.

BOUTIQUE NIGHT

Temple Sinai Congregation holds its Eighth Annual Boutique Night. Accessories, stationery, artwork, beauty and wellness items, kitchenware. Free admission and prizes. 4-9 p.m. Call **Marcie**, 416-487-3281.

Friday, April 30

MUSICAL CELEBRATION

Temple Sinai Congregation presents Ben Steinberg Musical Celebration, recognizing Jewish music and musicians. Performances by **Cleveland Duo, James Umble and Igor Gefter.** 8 p.m. Free.

Saturday, May 1

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (Thornhill) meets at Reena Battle Centre, 927 Clark Ave. W. Shiur 9 a.m. Services 9:30 a.m. Kiddush following. tpmnorth@gmail.com.

Sunday, May 2

HUMANISTIC JUDAISM

Oryanu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism presents "An Introduction to Humanistic Judaism." 10:15 a.m. 131 Fenn Ave. RSVP to **Roby**, 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org.

AUTISTS GALA

A gala celebration of art and jazz supporting youth with autism. Starts 5 p.m. with silent auction. Koerner Hall, The Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. **Chaka Khan** and **Matt Savage** perform. Tickets start at $65. **Hindy Abelson**, 416-322-7877, ext. 307. www.theautistsgala.com

LAG B'OMER

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda invites you to Sing with Israel, a sing-along evening with **Mickey Lewin.** In celebration of Lag b'Omer. 7 p.m. Free. 416-633-3838.

CHARITY CONCERT

Varsity Jews in Technicolour, a University of Toronto Jewish a cappella choir performance. 7:30 p.m. Beth Torah congregation. General admission $18, $12 for under 18, $8 for university students. $72 for sponsors. Prices go up $2 at the door. Proceeds go to Ve'ahavta. 416-913-2424 for tickets.

Monday, May 3

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

The Temple Emanu-El Spring Lecture Series presents "Architecture in the Age of Shakespeare: Castles, Courts and Wonders" with **Christy Anderson,** professor of fine arts. 2-4 p.m. $10. 416-449-3880.

TRIBUTE TO HERZL

"Rabbi Feder's Personal Musical Tribute to Theodor Herzl," presented by **Rabbi Avraham Feder.** On occasion of Herzl's 150th birthday, a concert of Hebrew, Yiddish and English favourites. Beth Tikvah, 8 p.m. $10. **Esther**, 416-221-3433, ext. 303.

Continued on page 27

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Continued from page 26

JEWISH HEALTH ALLIANCE

Jewish Health Alliance presents "Maimonides' Cure of the Soul: Medieval Precursor of Psychoanalysis" with author **Dr. David Weiss**. 8 p.m. Pine Villa, 1035 Eglinton Ave. W. $10. 416-208-0610 to RSVP.

Tuesday, May 4

LUNCH AND LEARN

Matthew Teitelbaum, CEO of the AGO, speaks at Beth Tikvah on "Building the new AGO: Challenges and Pleasures." 12:15 p.m. Reserve. Tickets $20 each. Beth Tikvah members, 4 for $65; non-members, 4 for $75. 416-221-3433, ext. 352.

CASTING CALL

Broadway revue to benefit Ve'ahavta. Be part of a team of amateur performers who can make a committment. Mandatory information session 7-8 p.m. Bialik Hebrew Day School multi-purpose room, lower level. RSVP at playitforward123@gmail.com.

TE'AMIM

Tobie Strauss, postdoctoral fellow at U of T, speaks on "The Melodies of the Te'amim" – what they signify, how their tunes differ across bibical books and Jewish communities and how they help convey meaning. 7:30 p.m., First Narayever Congregation. Information at 416-927-0546.

SARAH SEFER SOCIETY

Women are invited to discuss *The Elegance of the Hedgehog* by **Muriel Barbery.** Reviewed by **Marilyn Herbert.** Free. Beth Sholom, 7:30 p.m. Information, andrea@bethsholom.net or 416-783-6103.

GERMANY IN THE 1930S

Beth Tikvah presents "The Wedding Dress," about how laws passed in Germany during the early 1930s impacted women. 8 p.m. Speaker **Doris Bergen,** Chancellor Rose and Wolfe Professor of Holocaust Studies at U of T. Non-members $5. 416-221-3433, ext. 303.

Wednesday, May 5

BOOK STUDY

Rabbi Aaron Flanzraich speaks on **James Carroll's** book *Constantine's Sword*. Beth Sholom, 7:30 p.m. Following is a viewing of the film by Oscar nominee **Oren Jacoby.** Free. andrea@ bethsholom.net, 416-783-6103.

Thursday, May 6

SEPHARDI ZIONISM

Sarah Taieb-Carlen, professor in the Centre for Jewish studies at York University, speaks on "Sephardi Zionism: From Biblical to Modern Times." Beth David, 7:30 p.m. Free. 416-633-5500.

AT SHAAREI TEFILLAH

Spring lecture series starts with "Judaism and Vegetarianism" with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. 8 p.m. Free. Register at 416-789-0020.

Other News

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill seeks volunteers for its organ and tissue committee – for community outreach, administration work, serving as interpreters and assisting at an organ and tissue donation information evening in September. **Jon Levy**, 905-764-0656, ext. 224, jlevy@bellnet.ca or **Heather Lamasz,** 416-409-4080.

FILM SCREENING

Po-lin: The Slivers of Memory, Beneath the Eye of Time and *Painting Daddy*. Commentary by **Prof. Piotr Wrobel** follows. May 10, 7:30 p.m. Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto. Suggested donation: $5 members, $8 non-members.

LOSS, GRIEF AND HEALING

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario holds a family program: "Loss, Grief and Healing in the Book of Ruth" with **Rabbi Rena Arshinoff,** chaplain at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Thursday, May 13, 7:30 p.m. Congregation Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave. 416-638-7800, ext. 202, to RSVP.

CULTURAL CONCERT

Juno nominee **Aviva Chernick** performs at Pride of Israel with **Aaron Lightstone, Ernie Tollar and Adam Campbell.** May 16. Silent auction 7 p.m., concert 7:30. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

BROADWAY MUSIC

Broadway from the Bimah, a concert of Broadway music and show tunes. **Martin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** perform. May 27, 7:30 p.m. Starting at $36. 416-635-5340, sheila@adathisrael.com.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney,** 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or go to www.jfandcs.com.

Note: registration required for all programs.

Life Skills for Today's Woman: Six-session group for women wanting to make a change in their lives by enhancing life skills. April 29, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Centre.

For Men after Divorce: A six-week group for men experiencing separation or divorce. Topics include how to let go of grief and sadness over the loss of your relationship and being an effective single parent. Starts May 3. Promenade Mall, Suite 313. 7:30-9 p.m.

Looking Ahead: A six-session group for newly separated or divorced people dealing with feelings of loss, anger, loneliness and wanting to move forward. Starts May 5 at Promenade Mall. 7-9 p.m.

Dating in Midlife: A six-session group for men and women in midlife (40+) who have been single for 2 or more years and are looking to nurture a lasting relationship. Starts May 12, Lipa Green Centre. 7-9:30 p.m.

Social Networking in the 21st Century: Workshop for parents on the dangers and realities of what kids may be sharing with the world. With **Chris Vollum.** May 13, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Centre. Space limited.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC: May 13, 1:30 p.m. "The Rise of the Early Toronto Jewish Community." **Bill Gladstone** speaks. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

Adath Israel Congregation: Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. Everyone welcome. $2. Call **Pearl,** 416-635-6317 or **Marcia,** 416-932-1229.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Sunday dance, May 16 7-10 p.m., live music; Casino Rama, May 12: departs 10 a.m.; line dancing Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m.; bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m.; social bridge Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie,** 416-395-7881.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

Tuesday, May 4. Lecture, "The Nobel Prize and the Jews" with historian **Gerald Ziedenberg.** 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

Wednesday, May 5, wellness lecture. "Brain Health and Memory Wellness" with **Dr. Norman Park.** 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

Thursday, May 6. Book talk and tea with author **Sylvia Welsh** discussing *The Queen of Unforgetting*. 1:30-2:30 p.m. $5 members, $8 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881 or www.prossermanjcc.com.

"What are SUPERFOODS and how do I eat them?" **Ricki Heller** gets you on the path to healthy eating. May 5, 7-9:30 p.m.

May 11, 1-1:30 p.m. Ages 3-5. Register for the Living Rhythm Drumming program. Drum to the beat, stomp your feet! Sing, play, move and create a rhythm circle. Space filling up fast. Parent participation. $10.

Contact registration desk to recieve a $25 discount on courses from the Department of Adult Programs, including Ryerson/Chang course, theatre classes, dance, mahjong and more. Ext. 4235.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www. mnjcc.org.

Enter the 2010 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. $1,000 prize for the winning playwright. Deadline is June 30. Submission guidelines at www.mnjcc.org or contact **Esther Arbeid** at theatre@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

Thursday, May 6, The Toronto Comic Arts Festival presents author **James Sturm** on his new graphic novel *Market Day*. Special guest **Miriam Libicki.** Free. publicity@drawnandquarterly.com or media@torontocomics.com.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

LEARNING ABOUT WORLD WAR II: From left, Maurice and Ruth Miller of Montreal joined their grandson Daniel Troster, a student at Crestwood Preparatory College in Toronto, when about 50 World War II veterans and Holocaust survivors shared their personal histories with students and some grandparents on Apr. 20. The event was part of the school's oral history project spearheaded by history teacher Scott Masters. The school has been compiling a digital archive for several years.

[Vera Gillman photo]

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Murray Sweigman	Apr 13/10	1166 Bay St
Fira Kadysiewicz	Apr 13/10	205 Cummer Ave
Sara Verhnjak	Apr 12/10	2655 Bloor Street W
Sophie Lehrer	Apr 14/10	3292 Lawrence Ave E
Shirley Young	Apr 15/10	561 Avenue Road
Marty Aidelman	Apr 16/10	1 Maison Parc Court
Frances Brickman	Apr 15/10	38 Carscadden Drive
Leni Bobrowsky	Apr 15/10	67 Millersgrove Drive
Arthur Schwartz	Apr 17/10	92 Whitehorn Crescent

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Goizman, Leonid	April 7/10	4 Marbrook St
Kopstick, Max	April 7/10	1201 Steeles Ave. W.
Brik, Polina	April 7/10	Private
Samuels, Faye	April 4/10	Private
Rutitsky, Miron	April 7/10	Private
Fox, Bernard	April 8/10	4001 Bayview Ave
Cohen, Lucie	April 8/10	22 Idelswift Dr
Frenkel, Amiram	April 8/10	
Sherman, Srol	April 9/10	Private
Kosoy, Theodore	April 10/10	112 Fairholme Ave
Yakubovic Samuel	April 11/10	3000 Bathurst St
Aptekar, Zhenya	April 11/10	Private
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On Campus

University of Waterloo

Jewish studies program celebrates 10th anniversary

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

When Paul Socken first started developing a Jewish studies program at the University of Waterloo 10 years ago, he had one mantra: if you build it, they will come.

"And that's what happened," said Socken, who teaches French Canadian literature at UW. "The interest I knew would always be there. The question was could we get it started?"

In 1993, Socken was approached by Brian Hendley, then dean of arts at UW, with the idea to start a Jewish studies program at the university.

"Back in the early 1990s, neo-Nazis were coming in [to Kitchener] to fundraise," Socken said.

In response to this, Trinity United Church hosted a rally for the Jewish community in Kitchener-Waterloo, which Hendley attended. This is what inspired the idea for a Jewish studies program.

"He was very stirred, very moved. After that, he saw *Schindler's List*. The two hit him," said Socken, "He called me. I didn't hide the fact that I was Jewish."

As Socken, a former president of Kitchener's Beth Jacob Congregation, started building the program, he found that his biggest problem was funding.

"I had to begin the whole process of starting a program. It really was creating something from nothing," Socken said. "That was the time universities didn't have money to spend."

Socken turned to private philanthropists, who always seemed to have one question.

"People would say, 'Waterloo? Why?,'" he said, adding that, compared with cities such as Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo had a small Jewish population.

"The uniqueness of Waterloo is the ability to reach out to non-Jewish students. [The Jewish studies program] is important because too often Jews speak to Jews. And that's very nice, that's very good, but it's equally important that the non-Jewish community understand Jewish contributions."

Socken eventually raised enough money to hold a speaker series that focused on Jewish culture and philosophy. About half of the people who attended the lectures were non-Jews.

As word spread about Socken's initiative, he was able to raise enough money to start an official program in the religious studies department, which could be taken as a minor, in 2000.

This is where James Diamond came in.

Paul Socken

James Diamond

Diamond was a lawyer with a PhD in Medieval Jewish thought. But he never planned on teaching.

"I did it for myself," he said of his PhD. "Law was a profession. That [Jewish studies] I loved."

Still, when he learned about the new program, he decided to take the leap.

"I figured you don't get many chances. I applied and I fit the bill."

When developing the program's courses, Diamond, who is UW's Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies and the program's only full-time faculty member, made one thing clear.

"Originally, when I got the job, I told them I wouldn't teach about the Holocaust. People have started to identify Jewish identity with the Holocaust," he said. "It's something we didn't contribute to the world."

Instead, Diamond wanted to focus on Jewish philosophy and culture, but there was too much of a demand for Holocaust education from the students, so he compromised.

"[I teach] how Judaism has formulated a response to innocent suffering," he said, adding that about 25 per cent of the content of his courses is about the Holocaust.

Because Diamond teaches many non-Jewish students, he had to tailor the curriculum of the program accordingly, which included exploring the link between Christianity and Judaism.

"I try to cater the courses not as selling religion, but rather as academic courses. I'm not here to make Jews out of you. That's not my job," Diamond said. "My job is to inform them and have them really appreciate the central contributions Judaism has made to the world."

Diamond and Socken, who is retiring this summer, are hoping to expand the program to focus more on Israel. Socken's goal is to work with universities in Israel to create an exchange program, as well as to create more endowments, which would allow professors to teach courses on contemporary Jewish issues.

On Campus

Ryerson AEPi stripped of status

By MICHAEL ISENBERG
Special to The CJN

Alpha Epsilon Pi at Ryerson University is finishing the year off strongly: it has 25 members, it just finished a bone marrow drive and it's planning an end-of-the-year party.

But only a few months ago, the fraternity almost disappeared from campus completely after the chapter there was stripped of its status for only having four members.

"Things just went downhill," said Adam Vogler, a third-year member of Ryerson's AEPi outpost, called Pi Rho.

"Guys start[ed] getting fed up with things – just not liking the way AEPi was being run – and dropped out. Our pledge master left and we had no one to fill his void [for recruiting]."

Founded in 2004, it was projected that Pi Rho would be popular. According to Vogler, AEPi alumni hoped that being in the heart of downtown Toronto at a rapidly growing university would help it become one of the more recognizable chapters in North America.

But having few members and no attention-grabbing events made gaining traction difficult.

"Our biggest issue was lacking creativity," Vogler said. "We were big on tradition, but all we did was what had been done – no new events, no innovations to old events. Tradition's great, but so is blending it with the new."

By December 2009, Pi Rho was down to just four members and AEPi International took away the chapter's status.

Programs continue despite declining membership

"That was a huge blow for us," Vogler said. "But they said they wanted to see us start again and see us succeed."

With its status stripped, AEPi at Ryerson is now officially referred to as a colony, a probationary state in which it functions as a regular chapter, but receives no aid from the international fraternity.

Colony president Jamie Levine said he's not concerned about the rebuilding phase.

"Most people have an image in their heads of a stereotype frat and stereotype frat guys, but we're not like that," said Levine, a third-year business management student. "We're going to show everyone we're better than that. We like to party, sure. But we're leaders, activists, caregivers. We're the new AEPi at Ryerson."

Levine, like half the current colony members, was recruited by Ryerson AEPi alumni in January, who lured new members in with the prospect of becoming founding fathers of a revitalized chapter.

"It was a chance to become a Jewish leader for the Jewish community," Levine said.

Since January, Pi Rho's membership has grown to 25, and the executive board is optimistic about continued growth next year, banking on attracting people through innovative events.

Levine said an annual event is in the works for Ryerson to call its own, similar to the University of Western Ontario chapter's Rock For Research breast cancer initiative.

In addition, there will be more social events to raise money and interest.

Its next event, Lights Out, on April 30, will be a party where participants receive special markers and will be encouraged to draw on each other. The markers can only be seen under black light, which will be turned on at midnight.

"This will be awesome," Vogler said. "It will put AEPi at Ryerson on the map."

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Coast to Coast

Mezuzah-bearing cabbie back in court

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Cote St. Luc cab driver Arieh Perecowicz finally got his day – actually, two days – in Municipal Court last Wednesday and Thursday in his lone crusade to overturn six tickets now totalling more than $1,600 for carrying a photo of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, two mezuzot and other verboten items in his west-end taxi.

But incredibly, the case is not likely to be resolved until at least a year from now, Perecowicz, 66, told *The CJN* after court adjourned April 22.

One day of the trial took place last fall, and two additional days were already set aside for June, ostensibly to finish up the case.

But last Thursday, Municipal Court judge Dominique Joly scheduled an additional two days in December, another two in January 2011, and yet another for next April.

Perecowicz, who has been driving a taxi for 44 years and is handling his own defence, said Joly set aside so many dates because at least one day will be needed to question each of the inspectors who ticketed him.

He said Joly was "furious" on Wednesday after she asked the parties to sit down and try to resolve their dispute in order to avoid a trial, only to have them return 90 minutes later and ask her to clarify her instructions.

The trial then proceeded.

Received six tickets for displaying religious items

Perecowicz's problems date back to December 2006, when he was issued his first ticket for allegedly breaking Section 98 of the city's taxi bylaw prohibiting taxis from carrying "objects or inscriptions" that are "not needed" to operate the vehicle.

Besides the religious items, Perecowicz also had a poppy, a Canadian flag, photographs and newspaper clippings in his taxi.

The prosecution's case is that Perecowicz was fined for breaking the bylaw, that the objects in his car posed a hazard to passengers in the event of an accident, and, as one inspector testified last fall, that his cab was "dirty."

Perecowicz's defence is that, while he's willing to keep his cab cleaner, the regulation is unconstitutional because it infringes on his religious freedom.

He's also alleging the tickets were issued in retaliation for his protesting the prevalence of unlicensed taxis in the city. No other cabbie, he is also arguing, has ever been issued a ticket for breaking Section 98, even though most taxi drivers carry personal items in their vehicles.

Perecowicz also has filed a complaint with the Quebec Human Rights Commission, but he said that body won't address his case until the trial is over.

So far, Perecowicz said, he is satisfied with how the proceedings are progressing.

"I feel very well," he said.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE

A group of children dance the hora at the Yom Ha'atzmaut rally in Montreal last week. Spontaneous horas, chants of "*Am Yisrael chai*" and blaring klezmer music commingled with cacophonous kids and the celebratory chants of everyone who walked to Place du Canada from Phillips Square at the Israel Independence Day community rally organized by the Jewish Unity Partnership. According to organizers, 13,000 were at the rally, some of them bused in from Jewish schools.

ש'שאר י'נ'ט

גידי קורן וחברים

יום הזכרון- ישראל בת 62

לפני שנתיים הגעתי ארצה ישר ליום העצמאות, אבל כזה שנים רבות לא יצא לי להיות בארץ ביום הזכרון. אני כותב את הדברים האלה באמצע יום הזכרון, דקות ספורות אחרי הצפירה, זו ללא ספק ליבת החוויה הישראלית, חוויה קשה ויחודית שזר יכול להבין אותה אך לא להרגישה. אמש הייתי בעצרת הזכרון של עיר ילדותי, קריית ארבע, שלא נכחתי בה שנים רבות. עזבתי את העצרת הזו כשהיו לקריית ארבע מאות מעשרים נופלים, ואתמול נכשכה הרשימה ליותר מכאה, כחלק מעשרים ושניים אלף ישראלים שאיבדו את חייהם במערכות אימה, בצה"ל ומחוצה לו, חזי מסטר מדהים, ואין ישראלי שלא נגע במשפחתי הקרובה או הרחוקה יותר.

הרדיו, העיתונות והשוטות הטלביזיה הביאו כאות סיפורים אישיים של שכול, אובדן והתמודדות. אבל כאיד בלט בעיני שהמילה "שלום" נשמעה פחות. הרבה פחות. נדמה לי שהישראלים הפסיקו להאמין שזה אפשרי. נדמה לי גם שהם אינם אוהבים לשמוע "שלום" בכוילה חסרת תבלית. ואולי זה קשור בכך שהמשלחת הנכחתת אהבה פה- אקטיבית כקודמתה ברצה הסכסוך עם הפלשתינאים. כראה שהשילוב של כל הגורמים האלה ביחד הוא הסיבה לכך שמדברים על הגנת הבית, האויב הגרעיני, הטלם טילי נגדנו, אבל לא על איך להביא שלום. אבל שישאר בינינו.

למה מתכוונת סין

מנהיג סין נפגש עם אובאמה ובתום הפגישה הודיע הנשיא האמריקאי בסיפוק שסין תתמוך באמצעדות נגד איראן. לא נקפו שעות אחדות והנשיא הסיני חזר לביתו והודיע שהוא נגד המלחמה. ב"קול ישראל" ראיתי את שגריר ישראל לשעבר בסין שגיחך בקול רם על זה שהאמריקאים אינם מבינים ש"כן" של סינים אינו כן בהכרח, ישהם אינם אנשים ישרים כמו שהאמריקאים מאמינים.

חשבתי לעצמי שגם מנהיגי ישראל אינרים לאמריקאים כל מיני "כן" בעניין פשרות עם הפלשתינאים, ויתך דקות אומרים דברים הפוכים בארץ, ואחר כך מודעים ש"לא הבינו אותם ויסלחו את דבריהם".

לאחרונה דרשה שרת החוץ קלינטון מישראל "יותר כנות בשיחה הסכסוך המדיני", ללמדני שהיא מבינה היטב עם מי יש לה עסק.

די מגיחך שאנשי ממשלה ישראליים סברים שהם נחשבים בעיני העולם לדמוקרטיה מערבית מוצלחת. אין ספק-ישראל היא דמוקרטיה, אחת היחידות באזורה התיכון (לא היחידה, כמו שאנחנו אוהבים לומר- טורקיה גם היא דמוקרטית), אבל עוד הדרך רבה.

ענת קם ועיתון הארץ

חיילת בשירות סדיר נבזה בזמן שירותה מאות מסמכים סודיים ומסרה למי בלאו, כתב עיתון הארץ. כתב עיתון הארץ סירב להסגיר את מקורות המידע שלו אבל השב"כ זיהה אותה ללא עזרתו. הוא נתון עכשיו לחסרנות. החיילת, שעומדת לפלוח שנים רבות במלא, "שתירה" אותו מסודיות, בתקוה להמתיק את גזר דינה. ואני תרשב לעצמי: לעזאזל, מה זכותו של כתב עיתון, או כל אזרח, להחזיק מסמכים סודיים, מה עוד שהוא יודע שהם נובבים?

אם אני כרשה מחזיק בביתי מסמכים רפואיים של חולה-אני עובר עבירה המודה, ואם אני קונה אופניים נובבים אני עובר עבירה פלילית.

לא מלא שהכתב יושב בלונדון ומקוה שתעמדת החזרת המסמכים יחסכו ממנו כתב אשמה חמור.

ויסי הנפש שמנסים להסדר את ענת קם ללוחמת צדק- חפשו לכם אילן אחר. זהי עבירה פלילית נמו, בכל מדינה בעולם. והמעניה שהיא "גילתה" פעילות בלתי חוקרות של הרינה פלשתינאים בניגוד להוראת בג"ץ- נבדקה על ידי היועץ המשפטי מזו ונשללה על ידו. אבל שישאר בינינו.

Govt. re-introduces act to aid victims of terror

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Legislation re-introduced in the House of Commons by the federal government last week is a response to calls from victims of terrorism who seek justice, Public Safety Minister Vic Toews said after presenting the bill.

The government is "demonstrating leadership in the global fight against terrorism," Toews said in a statement. "Perpetrators and supporters of terrorism must be held accountable for their actions."

The Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, if passed, would "amend the State Immunity Act to lift immunity [from Canadian prosecution] for states listed by Canada as supporters of terrorism," the government says. It would also allow victims to claim and recover damages from those who perpetrate or support terror, retroactive to 1985.

This date was chosen to reflect the bombing of Air India Flight 182 on June 23, 1985, which killed 329 people.

This is the second time the Conservative government has brought the legislation forward. Last June, Bill C-35 was tabled in the House by Conservative MP Peter Van Loan, and underwent first reading. The bill died when Parliament was prorogued early this year. Its content remains unmodified.

Eric Vernon, Canadian Jewish Congress director of government relations and international affairs, said his organization is pleased with Bill C-35's re-introduction.

"We're supportive of the government taking this position and bringing this bill back. We believe that victims of terrorism should have the right to sue the sponsors of terrorism," he said.

He noted that Bill C-35 was not the only bill put forward on this subject and said Congress would also look closely at others.

Vernon was referring to private member's Bill C-408, also introduced last June, by Liberal MPs Irwin Cotler and Bob Rae.

As a private member's bill, it was unaffected by prorogation of Parliament and thus remained alive in the House.

Last year, Cotler announced his bill as a contrast to the Justice for Victims of Terrorism Act, saying the government's bill did "not adequately protect the rights of victims."

The Liberal legislation features most of the same legal amendments as Bill C-35, but "does not shield itself behind an escape clause that renders it completely ineffective until foreign states are named on a case-by-case basis. Such an approach politicizes justice," Cotler told the House in introducing the bill last year.

When asked at the time to clarify the major difference between the bills, Cotler's office told *The CJN* the Liberal initiative would not require the government to actively name a foreign state to have its immunity from Canadian prosecution lifted. Rather, it would be "automatically" lifted during a plaintiff's court proceedings, freeing the government from the possibility of having to label other states as terrorist sponsors.

Last week, Cotler said he was "pleased" by the re-introduction of the government's bill and acknowledged that both his bill and C-35 share the same goals and spirit.

"This is not a partisan issue… Our bills share two objectives: one, that victims of terror deserve to have a right of civil redress in Canadian courts. Two, we need to amend the State Immunity Act that precludes this right of civil remedy and shields the state-sponsors of terror," he said.

Cotler said he hopes that should C-35 go to committee review after second reading in the House, a pre-ordained Canadian list of terrorist states could be dropped from its requirements.

Reached by phone last week, Peter Kent, minister of state for foreign affairs, said he believed Bill C-35 would have all-party support. The government hopes to fast-track the legislation, he added.

"We believe there needs to be [a list of terrorist states]. Otherwise, some of Canada's allies could be harassed by inappropriate… specious lawsuits against [states] that by most measures, Canadians wouldn't consider supporters of terrorism."

Cotler said he understood the impetus for the government to want to protect its allies – such as the United States and Israel – from such lawsuits, but said in his bill, this issue is accounted for with states that have extradition treaties with Canada in place.

"You won't have frivolous lawsuits against those countries, because victims of terrorism will already be able to seek redress in those democratic countries," he said.

Kent acknowledged that if the government's bill goes to committee after second reading there is the "potential for changes to be made."

When the bill was first introduced, the government cautioned plaintiffs that if the defendant has assets in jurisdictions other than Canada, they would have to "follow the process of the foreign state for recognition of the judgment and subsequently take necessary measures to execute the judgment in that country."

In related news, last Friday Justice Minister and Attorney General Rob Nicholson introduced the Combating Terrorism Act.

The government says the legislation – which was originally created by the Anti-terrorism Act in 2001 and expired after five years – would "seek to amend the Criminal Code to reinstate an investigative hearings power. This would give a judge the power… to compel someone with information about a terrorism offence… to appear before him or her."

The announcement concluded a series of bills re-tabled by the government during the National Victims of Crime Awareness Week.

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Winnipeg book tells stories of Holocaust survivors

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — A hero is generally defined as someone who shows courage under fire or risks his life to save another

But, notes Shelley Faintuch, the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg's community relations director, a hero can also be someone who exhibits courage and self-sacrifice in hopeless situations, someone who struggles on despite the odds and endures

"Our parents who survived the Holocaust came to this country with nothing," said Faintuch, a child of survivors. "They had no money, little or no family, little education and no knowledge of English. Yet, they persisted. They made sacrifices for their children – we who couldn't understand why our homes were different from our friends' homes or why our parents didn't share their stories or their nightmares with us.

"They took care of us and protected us. They were true heroes and this evening is dedicated to them."

Faintuch was speaking at the April 15 launch of the book Voice of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors, the culmination of years of effort to record the stories and experiences of Holocaust survivors who came to Winnipeg after the war. And attendance was such that a second room at the Asper Jewish Community Campus had to be opened and the program relayed to the overflow crowd via live feed.

The evening consisted of a reading by Voices of Winnipeg Holocaust Survivors editor Belle Millo (who is also a child of Holocaust survivors), as well as greetings and remarks from representatives of three levels of government (and Winnipeg South Centre Liberal MP Anita Neville), representation from the (largely Jewish) General Monash Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and a medley of Yiddish songs from the ghettos sung by Jane Enkin, with musical support by Eli Herscovitch, Ariel Posen and Jeff Pressaff.

The origins of the book – which records the stories of 73 Holocaust survivors living in Winnipeg (although some have passed away in recent years) – goes back to the early 1990s, when representatives of Winnipeg's Holocaust education committee and the federation's Holocaust awareness committee began collecting memoirs of Holocaust survivors.

"Phyllis Laveman, a member of our committee, suggested that we invite Belle Millo to join," recalled Lil Zentner, a past chair of the committee. (Zentner's late husband, Hersh, was an early leader in Holocaust education in the city's public school system.)

"Belle took over the project of collecting survivors' stories with the intention of producing a book. She worked tirelessly with unbelievable passion and without seeking any compensation. We are forever grateful for her selfless dedication and strong determination to bring this book to life."

In her remarks, Millo briefly described her own parents' – Samuel and Sylvia Jarniewski's – stories of survival.

"My parents met in Canada after the war and rebuilt their lives together," Millo said. "But they remained haunted by their losses and their experiences. My mother suffered from depression. Even as a small child, I knew that I had to protect her."

She remembered her father having a lust for life, but frequently crying out at night.

"My own life has been defined by my parents' suffering," she said. "At the same time, I was inspired by their will to survive."

Millo read one excerpt from the book – an account by the late Jeannette Perlov about trying to save her two-year-old son from the Nazis.

Perlov recounted that the Nazis discovered where she and her son were hiding and demanded that she give up the little boy. She refused to let him go or plead for mercy. She was eventually rendered unconscious by several rifle butts to her head. When she awoke, she was in the arms of her husband (who had been at work in a bakery) and their son, David, was gone. The Gestapo had come for the children.

Millo noted that the book was completed with the support of the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba, the Freeman Family Holocaust Education Centre, the Claims Conference and donations from the community at large.

She also recognized Gustavo Rymberg, a former Winnipegger now living in Toronto, who designed the book and the cover.

Millo also noted that Manitoba's department of education is distributing copies of the book in 450 high schools throughout the province.

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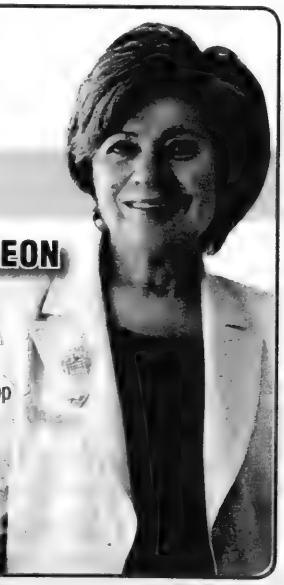

Coast to Coast

AMBASSADORIAL CELEBRATION

Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv's Yom Ha'atzmaut reception was held April 19 at Ottawa's Fairmont Chateau Laurier Hotel. Members of the diplomatic corps, various political parties and community leaders attended. Pictured with Ziv is Liberal MP Justin Trudeau.

[Peter Waiser photo]

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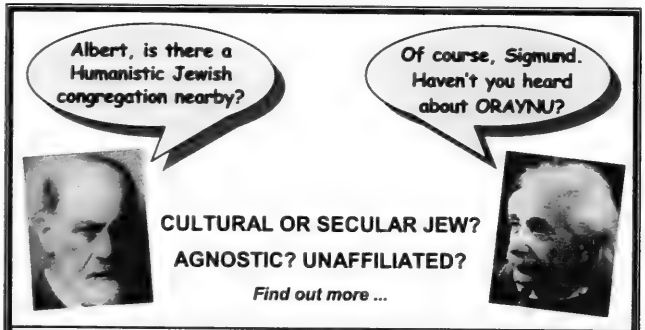
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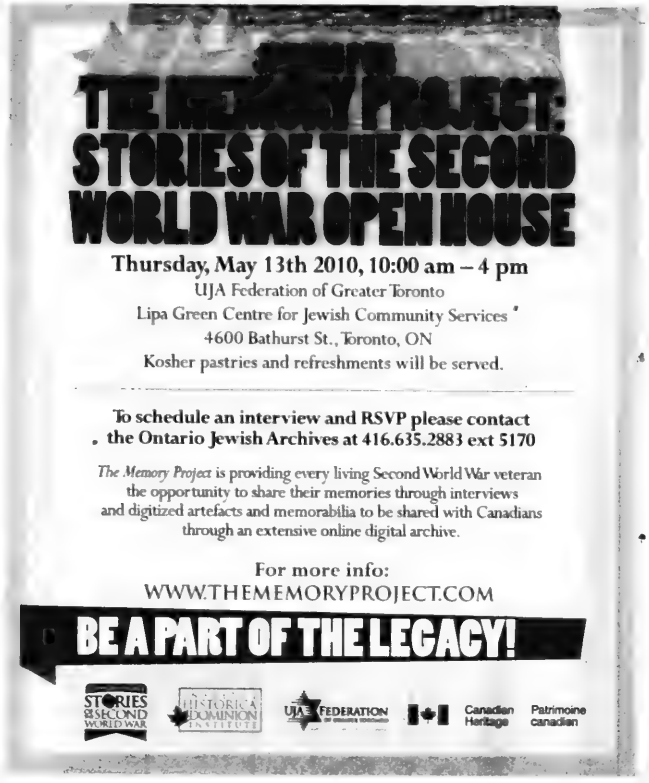
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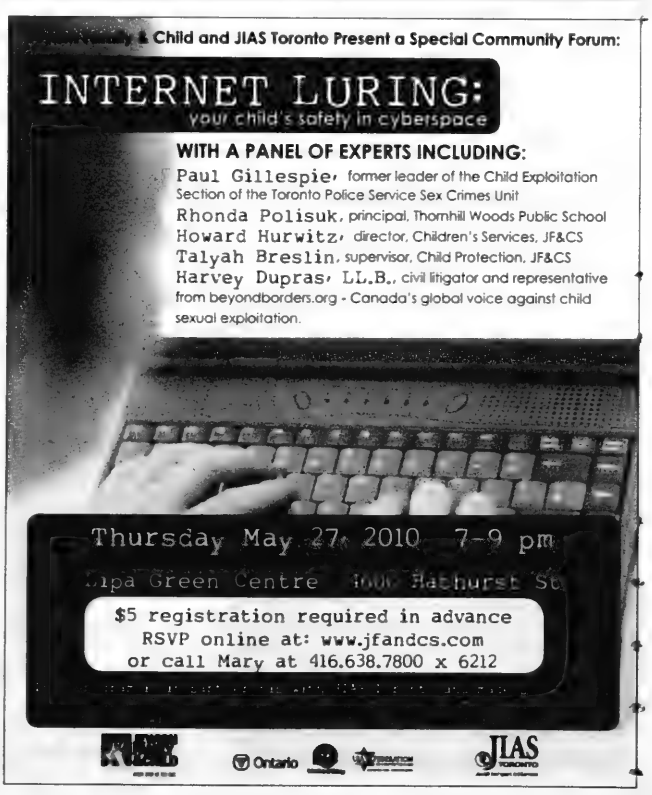
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Coast to Coast

Jewish archives seeks WWII veterans to interview

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

The Ontario Jewish Archives is looking for Jewish war veterans in the Toronto area who served in the Canadian services and other Allied forces during World War II so it can record their stories as part of the Historica-Dominion Institute's federally-funded Memory Project: Stories of the Second World War.

The archives – a department of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto – is partnering with the Institute, the Royal Canadian Legion's General Wingate branch 256, as well as the Jewish Canadian Military Museum and the Canadian Jewish War Veterans for an event being held May 13 from 10 to 4 p.m. at the Lipa Green Centre. The interview day is part of a Dominion Institute project funded by the Canadian government.

The Historica-Dominion Institute will provide the interviewers, and organizers hope to conduct up to 40 interviews that day. The institute will keep the audio interviews, and copies will be provided both to the archives and the veterans.

Ellen Scheinberg

As well, the archives and the institute are seeking artifacts from the veterans. The OJA is interested in acquiring items, while the institute will scan and keep them in digital form for its online archives.

Items of interest "run the gamut from medals to photographs and documents," said OJA director Ellen Scheinberg. "It could be Swiss army knives, shoes, clothing, implements, or weapons, diaries – if they kept a diary, certificates, dog tags.

"We do have some artifacts," Scheinberg said. "We're hoping to expand our holdings, because UJA Federation is planning a Canadian Jewish museum, and ultimately we'd like to acquire more material."

The archives does not have any interviews with Canadian Jewish War veterans, and the Canadian War Museum only has one, according to Scheinberg. The Jewish Canadian Military Museum in Toronto conducted "about a handful," she added.

Of almost 17,000 Canadian Jewish men and women who served in World War II, only about 50 to 100 have been interviewed, Scheinberg told *The CJN*. Some of those interviews are in museums in Manitoba and Alberta, she said.

"Due to the paucity of interviews and the fact that the youngest veterans would likely in their early '80s, we felt that we couldn't afford to wait any longer to record their important stories," Scheinberg said. "I think it's an important partnership for us. We've been wanting to do this for a long time. There were so few interviews with veterans. It's so crucial to get their stories as soon as possible."

Proportionally, the Jewish community had one of the higher rates of enlistment during World War II – one-fifth of the adult population at the time, compared to one-eleventh of Canadian adults overall, said Davida Aronovitch of the Historica-Dominion Institute and communications co-ordinator for the Memory Project.

The institute – which already has at least five Jewish veterans among approximately 400 veterans represented in its digital archives – has also reached out to ethnic groups including Chinese Canadians, who, "like Jews, faced certain forms of discrimination, and chose to serve for Canada," Aronovitch said.

Alex Levin, of the Jewish War Veterans of Canada, told *The CJN* that it is "very important to keep a legacy of Jews who were participating."

There are currently between 100 and 150 paid members of the organization, Levin said. Others have passed away, he added.

As well, he noted, there is a separate organization called the Canadian Association of World War II Veterans from the Soviet Union, with a membership of almost 300, most of whom are Jewish.

Murray Jacobs, president of the Legion's 135-member Wingate branch, plans to be interviewed as part of the event. A veteran of the Canadian army, he ran an instrument shop and spent four years overseas.

"It's important for history to know that the Jews participated," said Jacobs, who is turning 90 in May. As well, he noted, those who went overseas went because they had volunteered to do so. "If these stories are not told, nobody will know."

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Improv comic celebrates the underdog

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Isaac Kessler is an underdog. And he's OK with that.

Kessler, 26, was rejected from 16 sports teams in high school, put on academic warning at York University and wasn't accepted to York's theatre program.

But he never gave up.

"I'm pretty driven. People say 'No.' I say 'I'm gonna keep trying,'" Kessler said.

That's how he ended up in Second City's conservatory program, an intense improv training ground.

It's also how he started performing at Impatient Theatre Company and Bad Dog Theatre, two Toronto improv companies, and how he created a two-man show that he'll be taking to the world's largest arts festival this summer in Edinburgh.

Isaac Kessler

Kessler wasn't supposed to be an improv comedian. In fact, he wasn't supposed to be any kind of comedian at all. Originally, he went to York to study information technology, but he was put on academic warning during his first year.

"I'm not a school person," he said, adding that he tried switching into York's theatre program several years later, but was rejected.

In his second year at York, he started taking fine arts courses such as music, where he learned West African drumming.

Isaac Kessler, right, performs with Ken Hall in their sketch comedy *2 Man No Show*. *[Kate Millet photo]*

"It was the first time my creative side came out," he said.

Eventually, Kessler took a drama course, where he got his first taste of improv.

"That was the best," he said. "At the surface level, [improv] is just being able to make people laugh. That's something that's really important for me – bringing joy to other people."

It didn't take long for Kessler to become addicted. In 2006, he moved downtown and started taking classes at Second City.

"I went to my first class, and I fell in love. It was three hours of heaven," he said. "Those three hours, that's how life should be lived. There's total support, no judgment. There's no negativity."

One of the first things he learned about improv was to never say no.

"The idea is to say yes to everyone... All mistakes are gifts, because you can do no wrong in improv. Everything you do is right," he said. "On stage, you make a move, I make a move. It's so freeing. It's what we try to be in life."

After finishing all the course levels at Second City, he decided to audition for its conservatory program.

"Anyone can take the A to E [levels at Second City], but the conservatory program is special," he said. "You're with the same people for a year and a half. They're training you to create a Second City show."

Around the same time, Kessler also started taking improv classes at Impatient Theatre and Bad Dog Theatre.

"The Impatient Theatre Company blew me away. That was a huge moment for me. [I thought] I don't know what this is yet, but this is what I need.'"

He soon realized that his love of improv was based partly on the connections he's made with his fellow performers.

"My teammates I perform with, you create friendships and connections. I have 10-year friendships and I have friends from improv who I've known for two years. I'm closer to them," he said. "You have to have total trust with [other performers]."

Kessler continued taking classes and eventually started teaching and performing at Impatient Theatre and performing at Bad Dog Theatre and Vanguard Comedy Theatre.

"[Improv] is extremely terrifying. That's why I love it. It's the ultimate risk-taking... You have to follow the fear," he said. "You've got to be vulnerable in comedy... being able to be vulnerable on stage is what connects us to being human."

According to Kessler, the art of improv is unique, because of the constant state of change that defines each performance.

"[People] say improv is recyclable. It's not recyclable. Improv is like coal. You crush it and it becomes a diamond," he said, smiling proudly at his analogy. "I like that."

In 2008, Kessler's love of improv took him to the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, where he performed with the sketch troupe Toronto on Top.

"It was incredible. It was one of those big moments. I had to write a sketch show in three months," he said. "It was a big money-loser, but what an incredible confidence-builder."

After travelling to Australia, Kessler was talked into applying to perform at the Toronto Fringe Festival in 2009. In January of that year, he was chosen to participate.

Improv comedian Isaac Kessler, right, performs with fellow comedian Ken Hall in *2 Man No Show*.

"It was this moment of fear and excitement. Now it's like, 'You have to do something,'" he said.

Kessler enlisted the help of Ken Hall, a fellow improv comedian who he met at Second City.

"[Hall's] 4-foot-9, Scottish and one of the best in the city," Kessler said. "He's one of my best friends. We have a lot in common. We're the underdogs."

This realization was the basis for the show they ended up writing together called *2 Man No Show*, which is a mixture of sketch comedy and improv.

In the show, Hall falls in love with a chair, Kessler re-enacts the film *Jurassic Park* in five minutes, and the two performers do an African drum version of Beyoncé's *All the Single Ladies*.

"We sold out the last five shows. It was this crazy buzz non-stop last summer," Kessler said, adding that the show was chosen as a Fringe favourite by audiences.

Kessler and Hall took the show to the FRIGID New York Festival and the San Francisco SketchFest, and they'll be performing it at the New York City SketchFest in June and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the biggest arts festival in the world, this summer.

"It's a pretty crazy show... I wear spandex," Kessler said of *2 Man No Show*. "It feels great to have something you're proud of."

Kessler and Hall will be performing *2 Man No Show* at Second City in Toronto on May 16. For tickets, call the Second City box office at 416-343-0011, or go to www.secondcity.com. For more information about Kessler and the show, visit www.2mannoshow.com.

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Fundraiser for Fanconi research planned

Compiled by CJN Staff

The 10th annual fundraiser for Fanconi Canada is being held May 2 at the Terrace Banquet Centre in Vaughan.

The organization raises funds to support medical research into Fanconi anemia (FA) Type C, a potentially fatal genetic disease that's more prevalent among Ashkenazi Jews than other ethnic groups.

The event was founded by Richmond Hill lawyer Karen Granofsky when she learned that the son of a co-worker had FA.

She enlisted the help of co-workers at Lawyers Professional Indemnity Company (Lawpro) and organized a buffet dinner and silent auction at a comedy club that raised $18,000.

Organized now by Granofsky, event co-chair Jack Daiter and a group of co-workers, the fundraiser attracts 400 guests from Toronto's legal and business community and has raised more than $500,000.

Most research projects undertaken by Fanconi Canada have been in partnership with the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, which matches Fanconi Canada's contributions dollar for dollar.

FA occurs equally in males and females, and although it is found in all ethnic groups, approximately one out of 89 Ashkenazi Jews is a carrier for the specific subtype "C." Though considered primarily a blood disease, it can affect all systems of the body. Many patients eventually develop acute myeloid leukemia.

Lorne Shelson, president of Fanconi Canada, whose son has FA, said that the organization's goal is to find effective treatment, and eventually a cure, for FA. "With the support of our sponsors, donors, board members and volunteers, the Ontario fundraiser has catapulted this 'kitchen table' charity into one that funds hundreds of thousands of dollars for research, without any paid staff," he said.

The event includes live jazz by musician and lawyer Ron Davis, backed by bassist/vocalist Brandi Disterheft, guitarist James Robertson and drummer Morgan Childs.

For more information, or to buy tickets, visit www.curefanconi.org.

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Need for kidney donations highlighted

Compiled by CJN Staff

Friends of a 22-year-old man in need of a kidney transplant are organizing a second event to raise awareness of his plight.

Almost four months after Lori Palatnik, an author and Jewish educator formerly of the Village Shul, spoke at Aish HaTorah in December about donating her kidney to a woman she had never met, Rabbi Ephraim Simon, a Chabad rabbi from New Jersey is coming to talk about his own kidney donation to a stranger.

As a result of Rabbi Simon's donation, 15 others in his community have donated a kidney.

The young man in Toronto still hasn't found a kidney and continues to experience medical complications while on dialysis five times a week.

This latest event, organized by Chabad communities of the Greater Toronto Area to raise awareness of kidney disease and donation, is being held April 29 at Chabad Lubavitch in Thornhill. Cocktails begin at 7:30, followed by Rabbi Simon's talk. For information, call Renewal Toronto, 416-628-7633, or visit www.renewal.org.

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Jewish adventures in Asia

By MASADA SIEGEL
Special to cjnews.com

Life has a funny way of working out, at least that is what I keep telling myself, over and over again. But none-the-less I was scared, as I was leaving for a working holiday in Asia and flying to China, solo.

You might think someone who has by choice stepped out of perfectly good airplanes at 12,000 feet in New Zealand, raced in the Olympic Bob run with the Swiss Olympic silver medalist at breakneck speeds (1612 meters in 49 seconds) in St Moritz, Switzerland and dared to be seen in a bikini having a swim lesson with the all time great Olympic gold medalist Jason Lezak that nothing would faze me.

Wrong! Not only was I flying to China, I was spending Passover in Hong Kong and I did not know a soul.

To read story, please go to cjnews.com

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Health & Lifestyles

Thousands walk for MS cure

Compiled by CJN Staff

More than 22,000 people across Ontario supported finding a cure to multiple sclerosis by participating in the April 18 MS Walk.

Taking part with friends, family or co-workers, participants walked and wheeled routes from two to 10 kilometres, united by community spirit and the common goal to end MS.

Over $5.1 million raised

More than $5.1 million in pledges was raised, with proceeds funding research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis and providing services for locals with MS and their families.

"The MS Walk is truly a community event and its success is due to the commitment of communities across Ontario," said Yves Savoie, president and CEO of the MS Society of Canada and president of the MS Society's Ontario Division.

"We are extremely grateful for the support of each of our participants, donors, sponsors and volunteers, whose involvement today has helped us move closer to ending MS."

Aurora resident Leah Tallon-Sinclair took part in the MS Walk in Newmarket, heading up a team of 25 friends and family members that raised almost $20,000 in pledges. For Tallon-Sinclair, who was diagnosed with MS seven years ago, the walk is a reminder of both the impact of the disease and the support of the community.

"Until I was diagnosed myself, I didn't realize how common MS was," she said. "Many of the symptoms of MS aren't obvious.

"One of the special things about the MS Walk is that so many people seem to have been touched by multiple sclerosis in some way. Every walker is supporting someone even if they don't know them personally. It makes me feel thankful for people's generosity — and extremely hopeful that a cure will be found soon."

The MS Society of Canada's next fundraising event is the MS Carnation Campaign, which takes place from May 6 to 8 and helps kick off MS Awareness Month across Canada. For more information visit www.mssociety.ca or call 1-800-268-7582.

Preparing for charity ride season

Compiled by CJN Staff

The time has come for riders to begin training for ride season – and motivating yourself is easier than you think. Charity ride season, which runs from May until October, provides the perfect motivator for cyclists to get moving in 2010. With the right preparation and training, participants can pedal their way to the finish line for their cause of choice.

Among the over 30 charity events surrounding the GTA this year is the Zareinu Moveathon Ride for Kids with Special Needs along the Niagara escarpment on June 27.

Zareinu Moveathon set for June 27

"Cycling is easy to start and even easier to get hooked on," said Lou Orzech, who first started riding by joining the Moveathon in 2007. "I worked my way up from the 50 kilometre to 100 kilometre, and then the 162.5 kilometre over three years. Now I'm riding at least four times a week."

Here are some tips for riders, new and returning, looking to tackle the charity ride season:

Preparation:

A good rider starts with a good bike. Starter bikes can cost as little as $200, but comfort is key. Be sure to try more than one bike before settling and remember to purchase the necessary riding gear, like a helmet, pads and a lock, to go with it. The investment will pay off in spades.

Create a training program that works for you. Creating a program and schedule is the best way to keep track of progress as well as keep you on target for the ride of your choice.

Join group rides to get you going. Ask friends, colleagues or avid riders for groups with which to train. If that comes up short, spinning classes are excellent ways to meet fellow riders and stay on target.

Training:

Pace yourself. If you are new to the sport or returning after the winter break, remember that pacing is the key to finding longevity and avoiding injury. Pushing yourself well beyond your limits can put an extra strain on your body.

Remember best practices. If you are training for a one-day ride, your longest practice ride should be 10 to 14 days before the event.

Keep your goal in mind. Be sure to not exceed 75 per cent of the length of the planned ride the week before your event. This will keep your muscles relaxed for the big day.

Allow for recovery time. Plan a short ride, or a rest day, following the high mileage training rides. These rides should be at least a quarter of the length of the long ride and done at a leisurely pace.

The Zareinu Moveathon Ride for Kids with Special Needs takes place on June 27 starting at Bishop Reding Secondary School, complete with breakfast, showers, rest stops, Louis Garneau cycling jersey, celebratory barbeque and post-ride massages.

Training rides are available through the Moveathon, and complimentary spinning is available for all registered riders through Embody Fitness Clubs and Sensible Fitness. The ride raises critical funds for state-of-the art treatment for kids with special needs at the Zareinu Educational Centre www.zareinu.org/ in Toronto. For more event information on training rides, maps and registration visit www.moveathon.com or call 416-661-1800 ext. 228.

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Spice of Life

Are memories made of chickpeas and sesame seeds?

By SYBIL KAPLAN
Special to The CJN

Over the past 40 years, there have been fervent discussions about whether there is an Israeli cuisine, and I sit on the side of those who say yes. It has been a developing idea over years. One thing about which there has been little debate, however, is whether there are Israeli street foods.

On any day, you can walk down the Ben Yehuda Mall or King George Street or through the Machane Yehuda shuk (market), and it's easy to see Israelis still love their "typical" snack foods – schwarma (rotisserie-grilled turkey with lamb fat, slivered and stuffed into pita), falafel (deep fried chickpea balls), hummus (chickpea dip), techinah (sesame seed paste) and pita (pocket bread).

Chickpeas, which are among the oldest cultivated plants, are native to northern Persia. A staple of peasant cooking and a source of cheap protein, they have been in the diets of Jews of the Mediterranean and North Africa for centuries.

They form the basis of two of Israel's street foods—hummus which also has tahini – also called techinah – garlic and lemon; and falafel, for which the chickpeas are ground and combined with other ingredients before being formed into balls and deep fried.

Falafel

Once when I was doing research, I read that falafel originated among the Christian Coptic priests of Egypt, who created the dish to be eaten during Lent when meat could not be eaten. In Claudia Roden's *A Book of Middle Eastern Food*, she confirms this, calling falafel "one of Egypt's national dishes." In Egypt, it is known as *ta'amia*, which Roden describes as "patties or rissoles made from a dried, white broad bean, splendidly spiced and flavoured, and deep fried in oil."

Being Egyptian born, she offers the recipe with white broad beans, Spanish onions or spring onions, garlic, parsley, cumin, coriander, baking powder, salt and pepper.

In *The Book of Jewish Food*, Roden says that Yemenites who came to the Holy Land before 1948 were the first to sell falafel. They made them with chickpeas, sold them in the streets and brought them to the settlements. Then the Romanians started making them, only less spicy. All vendors offer the charif spicy sauces as optional.

Sherry Ansky also writes of this origin in her book *The Food of Israel*, adding that "the major difference between Egyptian and Israeli falafel is the bean," referring to the flat white beans that Egyptians use.

She says Arabs introduced falafel to Israel, and the Israelis were the first people to substitute chickpeas for the white beans.

Ansky's recipe calls for overnight soaking and next-day grinding with onion, garlic, hot red peppers, parsley or cilantro. Then cumin, salt, pepper and baking powder are added. Before the falafel balls are fried, baking soda is added to help the falafel expand.

In *The Book of New Israeli Food*, Janna Gur writes that "falafel is synonymous with Israeli cuisine and Israel in general," and is made from fava beans or chickpeas. Her recipe uses ground chickpeas, onion, garlic, parsley, coriander and small hot green pickled peppers. This mixture is seasoned with cumin, cardamom, salt and pepper. She dissolves baking soda in water and adds it to the batter as well before moistening the falafel tool or ice cream scoop to make balls to fry in hot oil.

Joan Nathan, in *The Foods of Israel Today*, calls falafel "the ultimate Israeli street food" and says its name could have come from the word, *pilpel*, for pepper. Egyptians made it with crushed fava beans or fava beans combined with chickpeas and bulgur, Nathan says.

Marlena Spieler calls falafel the "classic Israeli snack food" in her book, *Jewish Cooking*. She maintains that "the secret to good falafel is using well-soaked but not cooked chickpeas, and not canned chickpeas. Her recipe includes chickpeas, bulgur wheat, onion, garlic, parsley, fresh and ground coriander, baking powder, salt, pepper, cayenne pepper, curry powder and whole wheat flour.

Avi Ganor and Ron Maiberg call falafel "the king [of street food] by popular consent" in *Taste of Israel*. They say when Israel was a newly created state, Israelis took it as their national food and it was "judged by its texture and taste, by the way the crushed chickpeas yielded to the teeth, by whether it was mild and restrained – the tamed Ashkenazi variety, or hot and spicy – the genuine Sephardi kind."

They claim today it is about quantity not quality and should be served by the vendor himself not taken by the customers like a salad bar.

> *Falafel, schwarma and hummus are Israel's perfect street foods*

Their version also starts with overnight soaked chickpeas. The next day includes baking soda, salt, cumin, coriander, onion, parsley, garlic, black pepper, lemon juice and chili pepper.

Ruth Sirkis, the "Julia Child" of Israel, calls falafel "a Middle Eastern specialty the Israelis have adopted wholeheartedly" in her book *A Taste of Tradition*. Her recipes calls for garbanzo beans, bulgur, dry wheat bread, garlic, parsley, lemon juice, cumin, coriander, salt, pepper, optional hot red pepper, eggs and bread crumbs.

In *The Classic Mediterranean Cookbook* by Sarah Woodward, Israel scores again. She calls falafel or chickpea fritters "the favourite street food of Israel" and makes them with the overnight soaked chickpeas that the next day are drained and ground with red onion, garlic, coriander, cumin, cayenne, salt, baking powder, with parsley or cilantro added before forming into patties and frying in oil.

In a very old classic cookbook of Israel, *Israeli Cookery* by Lilian Cornfeld, published in 1962, Cornfeld writes that falafel is high in calories because of the fat, but chickpeas are high in minerals, and rich in vegetable protein and vitamin B.

Schwarma

In *The Book of New Israeli Food*, Gur writes that schwarma comes from the Turkish word *cevirme*, meaning "rotating," and is also known as doner kebab. Traditionally, schwarma is made from lamb, but in Israel, it is made from turkey with lamb fat.

Schwarma is generally slivered off the rotisserie and placed in pita with hummus, techinah, french fries, salad and pickles.

Roden in *A Book of Middle Eastern Food* also describes doner kebab as a favourite in Turkey, where marinated lamb is threaded and packed with fat squeezed between on a rotating vertical spit that turns automatically over a hot charcoal fire.

In *The Foods of Israel Today*, Nathan says schwarma, the fast food meat of Israel, is a dish brought by the Turks to Israel. She says the word schwarma means "grilled" in Turkish. Originally the lamb or turkey was marinated overnight, then wrapped in layers around a rotisserie or large spit, covered with mutton fat and roasted on the spit. The cooked slices were then shaved off and served in pita with salads.

Hummus

"Israelis hold hummus in such high regard that it is rarely made at home. Instead it is savoured – or rather worshipped – at a favourite hummusia," Gur writes in *The Book of New Israeli Food*.

In the book, the basics are overnight soaked chickpeas with baking soda added; next day the tahini, lemon juice, crushed garlic and salt are added.

One can also add cumin, chopped hot red pepper, garlic and small hot green pickled peppers. Hummus is spooned onto a plate, tahini is placed in the centre with sauce on top of that, and olive oil and chopped parsley are added as a garnish.

Nathan shares her recipe in *The Foods of Israel Today*, suggesting overnight soaking of chickpeas followed by next-day cooking, draining and processing with techinah, lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper, cumin and reserved cooking liquid. She garnishes the hummus with olive oil, some chickpeas, browned pine nuts, paprika or sumac, parsley or cilantro.

Spieler writes in *Jewish Cooking* that hummus is a classic Middle Eastern dish, and she offers a recipe with chickpeas, tahini, garlic, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, cumin, salt and pepper.

In *Taste of Israel*, Ganor and Maiberg agree that hummus is one of Israel's national foods because it is "filling, nutritious and cheap" and requires no forks and knives, just "pita bread and an expert wrist." Their version includes the overnight soaked chickpeas with baking soda, followed by a next-day cooking, then a mashing with some of the cooking liquid and garlic, salt, cumin, tahini and lemon juice.

"A skilled hummus artist can make a perfect crater with a thin film of paste in the middle in one swift, circular movement," they write. Then olive oil and some chickpeas are placed in the well.

Ansky writes in *The Food of Israel* that "everybody makes hummus in Israel." She says it should be made by hand using a mortar or grinder to mash the cooked chickpeas. She cooks hers with onions and garlic, then removes them before adding techinah, garlic, lemon juice and cooking liquid. She tops her version with warm chickpeas, chopped garlic, chopped green pepper and parsley, then pours olive oil on top.

In her book *A Taste of Tradition*, Sirkis calls hummus "a piquant appetizer, introduced to the nation by Middle Easterners." She uses soaked overnight garbanzo beans that are cooked the next-day and then ground with lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper, tahini and olive oil added. She garnishes with olive oil, parsley, sweet paprika, olives and pickles.

In *The Book of Jewish Food*, Roden says that like falafel, hummus is "ubiquitous in Israel, and indeed all over the western world." She soaks the chickpeas overnight; the next day, she boils them with salt, then drains and blends them with cooking water, lemon juice, garlic, tahini and oil. She says some people add cumin to the tahini, and for a Yemenite version, garnish with hot red pepper or *zhoug* (Yemenite chili relish).

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Iran, Zimbabwe make uranium deal, report says

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JERUSALEM — Iran's foreign minister met the head of the United Nations' nuclear agency on Sunday to discuss a nuclear fuel swap proposal that could help ease Tehran's dispute with the West, Iranian officials and media said.

Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told Iranian state television before his meeting with Yukiya Amano of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that their talks would be "decisive and detailed."

Iranian officials in the Vienna delegation confirmed to Reuters that the two men had met, but they gave no more information.

"The IAEA… can play a more constructive role," Mottaki said in his earlier comments. "We believe the fuel swap can create multilateral trust."

The meeting came just hours after the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that Iran had signed a secret deal with Zimbabwe to mine its untapped uranium reserves.

The agreement was secured last month, when a close aide to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe visited Tehran.

According to the deal, Iran will supply Zimbabwe oil in exchange for access to potentially huge deposits of uranium ore – which can be converted into basic fuel for nuclear power, or could also be enriched to make nuclear arms.

A Zimbabwean government source has told the *Daily Telegraph* that "Iran secured the exclusive uranium rights last month when minister of state for presidential affairs, Didymus Mutasa, visited Tehran. This is when the formal signing of the deal was made, away from the glare of the media."

The *Daily Telegraph* also reported that Iran's stockpiles of uranium, which mostly came from South Africa during the 1970s, has been running low, therefore the apparent deal with Zimbabwe has come at a critical time.

The Zimbabwean government source added that "the uranium deal is the culmination of a lot of work dating back to 2007, when Mugabe visited Tehran in search of fuel. Now Iran is beginning to reap the benefits.

"Iranian geologists have been conducting feasibility studies of the mineral for over a year now, and we expect them to go ahead with mining once they are ready."

Iran's nuclear ambitions continue to draw concerns from the United States and European allies who fear Iran is seeking the capability to build nuclear weapons. Iran has rebuffed diplomatic overtures to resolve the issue and is in defiance of UN Security Council demands that it suspend uranium enrichment.

In related developments, Iran's Revolutionary Guards test-fired five missiles on Sunday during war games in a waterway crucial for global oil supplies, the semi-official Iranian Fars News Agency reported.

The Islamic state, locked in a dispute with the West over its nuclear work, often announces advances in its military capabilities and tests weaponry in an apparent bid to show its readiness for any attack by Israel or the United States.

The Guards' exercises in the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz coincided with rising tension between Iran and the West, which says Tehran's nuclear program is aimed at developing bombs.

Iran denies the charge.

Last week, the Pentagon said U.S. military action against Iran remained an option even as Washington pursues diplomacy and sanctions to halt the country's atomic activities.

Fars said naval units of the Guards fired five missiles at a target, without making clear if they were new.

"Despite the different places from which the missiles were fired, they all hit the target simultaneously and completely destroyed it," Fars reported.

The missiles were surface-to-surface and surface-to-sea.

Last Thursday, Iranian media said the Guards successfully tested a new speedboat capable of destroying enemy ships.

The United States is pushing for a fourth round of United Nations sanctions on Tehran over its refusal to halt sensitive nuclear activities as demanded by the UN Security Council, including proposed moves against members of the Guards.

Israel, widely believed to have the Middle East's only atomic arsenal, has described Iran's nuclear program as a threat to its existence and has not ruled out military action.

Iran, a predominantly Shiite Muslim state, has said it would respond to any attack by targeting U.S. interests in the region and Israel, as well as closing the Strait of Hormuz. About 40 per cent of the world's traded oil leaves the Gulf region through the strategic narrows.

Hamas derides Schalit in animated video

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JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hit out at Hamas on Sunday after the terror group released an animated short film depicting abducted Israel Defence Forces soldier Gilad Schalit, who has been held captive by Hamas in Gaza for nearly four years, returning to Israel in a coffin.

The video, said Netanyahu, is a reflection of "the true character of Hamas."

"It is yet another despicable action aimed to help the Hamas leadership avoid making a decision regarding our offer for a prisoner swap deal, which it has not responded to for many months," Netanyahu added.

"This offer, which was formulated between Israel and the Hamas with the German mediator, will enable a healthy and whole Gilad Schalit to return home to his family," Netanyahu said.

The three-minute video, shown on the website of Hamas' military wing, warns that Schalit could face the same fate as Israeli Air Force navigator Ron Arad, whose whereabouts have been unknown since he bailed out of his plane over Lebanon in 1986.

The voice-over in the clip is that of Schalit, as heard in a video released by his captors last September.

In the cartoon, the soldier's father, Noam Schalit, is seen walking aimlessly before picking up a newspaper with a front-page advertisement offering a reward of $50 million for information on his son.

The advertisement is a reference to Israel's offer of a $10-million reward for information about Arad.

Schalit was abducted on June 25, 2006, in a cross-border raid launched from the Gaza Strip by Palestinian militants. Hamas is demanding that Israel free 1,000 prisoners in exchange for him, but negotiations, held via a German mediator, have so far brought no result.

Hamas said it wanted to reach "the wide Israeli public" and end the months-long stalemate in German- and Egyptian-mediated talks on a prisoner swap.

"Our message is clear, and that is that Schalit's case must end with the release of our prisoners. Otherwise, he may end up like the missing Ron Arad," a Hamas source said, referring to an Israeli airman widely presumed to have died in captivity after he bailed out over Lebanon in 1986 and was seized by guerrillas.

"If the Israelis want Schalit to get released safe and sound, their government should pay the price by releasing Palestinian prisoners," Hamas declared.

"If the Israeli government rejects the Palestinian resistance demands, Israel will be obliged to release the Palestinian prisoners sooner or later with heavier prices… the prisoners will be released anyway," Hamas said.

Noam Schalit responded to the video shortly after it was issued, saying, "It is unfortunate that Hamas leaders choose, time and again, to use tactics of psychological warfare against the Schalit family and the Israeli public instead of referring to and approving a deal for the exchange of Palestinian prisoners that was handed to them by the German mediator and has been lying on their desk, unanswered, for four months."

He also referred to the letter he recently sent to Hamas politburo chief Khaled Meshal.

"As we stressed in the letter… the Hamas leaders express their political and personal interests over the interests of the Palestinian people by postponing the release of over 1,000 Palestinian prisoners, and the release of the entire population in the Gaza Strip from the continuous political and economic suffocation which they have been held in for years as a direct result of holding our son, Gilad, captive for over four years.

"The Hamas leaders would do well if they stopped producing films and… and took care of the real interests of the Palestinian prisoners and the simple Gaza residents, who have been held hostage by their own leaders for a long time," he added.

The cartoon displayed Sunday also warned that Hamas would kidnap more Israeli soldiers in order to bargain for the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

THE SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE
mourns the loss of one of its dearest friends and founding fathers
Mickey Smolkin z"l
A beautiful human being with a great Jewish soul.
We pray that his children Lynn and Aubrey Kauffman, and Saralee Smolkin find comfort in the great purposefulness with which he lived his life.

Berkeley divestment effort fails

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Seeking to stage a conference that would bring some balance to discussions of the Arab-Israeli conflict, Prof. Hanan Alexander was a little taken aback by a remark from an academic colleague at the University of California at Berkeley.

The professor, Malcolm Feeley, "said it was the first time since 1983 that an event took place that looked at Israel in a balanced light," said Alexander. "One would have hoped you'd get a balanced perspective."

Hanan Alexander

Alexander, a visiting professor from the University of Haifa, titled the conference "Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State: Challenges and Perspectives." The event was co-sponsored by Feeley and Prof. Calvin Morrill.

It took place April 13, around the time the campus' student senate (ASUC) was meeting to consider overturning a veto by student president Will Smelko that had nullified a senate vote calling on the university to divest from General Electric and United Technologies, two U.S. companies that supply Israel's military.

The ASUC had approved the divestment bill, even though the university has no stake in the two companies

Alexander, a specialist in Jewish education, said the student bill had no practical significance "This is a struggle for the symbolism at the U of C at Berkeley," he said. "The leaders of this have a particular agenda, that they hold Israel as the problem in the Middle East conflict, and if that changes, it would end the conflict."

Alexander, who teaches courses on Israeli civics and Jewish identity, said proponents of divestment are engaged in "magical thinking" that includes "anti-Semitic rhetoric."

Berkeley is a centre of Marxist, neo-Marxist and post-colonial studies, and those theories "offer a simplistic view of the Palestinians as powerless and the Israelis with all the power," he said.

Instead, "this is an intractable political conflict" – not one of victims and victors – and the Palestinians are actors who have made decisions and reaped the results.

By believing "only Jews can solve the problem" and "holding Israel to blame and the Palestinians blameless" the theories reprise the view that Jews are all-powerful, similar to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, he said.

Meanwhile, debate over the divestment resolution has made many Jewish students feel marginalized and uncomfortable. Students at the campus Hillel "felt personally attacked," Alexander said.

Last week, in the latest development on the divestment bill, the ASUC met to discuss ways of overriding the president's veto. The Daily Californian Online reported that the senators failed to come to a consensus on overriding the veto, leaving it in place. However, reports indicate pro-bill senators are considering various parliamentary procedures to revisit it.

Earlier, an attempt to overturn the veto failed after a 12-7-1 vote fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to negate it. The bill, titled "A Bill in Support of UC Divestment from War Crimes" attracted international attention and was supported by Nobel laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Toronto author Naomi Klein, according to YNet News. Other supporters included activist Daniel Boyarin, a Jewish history researcher, and Ofra Ben-Artzi, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's sister-in-law.

Among the bill's opponents are Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz and Israeli authors Amos Oz and A.B. Yehoshua.

Jweekly.com reported that in advance of the override meeting, Berkeley Hillel briefed student senators about the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Lobbying to maintain the veto, Hillel presented a letter to senators signed by 40 rabbis from the San Francisco area, local philanthropist Richard Goldman and Jewish organizations such as AIPAC, the Anti-Defamation League and the local Jewish Community Relations Council.

Netanyahu: Israel and U.S. want peace process to begin

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JERUSALEM — It will soon become clear whether Middle East peace talks, suspended since December 2008, will resume, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said when he briefed his cabinet on his recent talks with U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell.

Addressing the weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu said Israel and the United States want to "begin a peace process immediately," adding that he hopes the Palestinians share the same goal.

"We will know in the coming days whether the process will get under way. I hope that it will indeed get under way," he said in public remarks at the cabinet session.

In a statement summing up his visit, Mitchell said he held "positive and productive talks" with Israeli and Palestinian leaders in an effort "to improve the atmosphere for peace and for proceeding with proximity talks," a reference to indirect U.S.-mediated negotiations.

Mitchell is expected back in the region next week.

Netanyahu has given no ground publicly over U.S. and Palestinian calls to halt the construction of settlements in eastern Jerusalem, an issue that has driven a wedge between Israel and the United States.

The Palestinians, who want east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, have demanded a settlement freeze as a condition for peace talks.

Mitchell said in the statement that his deputy, David Hale, would remain behind to work with the parties this week to prepare for his return to the region next week.

On Saturday, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas urged U.S. President Barack Obama to impose a solution to the Middle East conflict that would give the Palestinians an independent state.

Abbas' appeal to Obama came amid widespread media reports that the U.S. president was considering floating a proposal that would set the contours of a final peace deal.

Any such move would likely be opposed by Israel, which says a final settlement to the conflict can only be secured through negotiation.

Aides to Abbas raised the possibility that he would meet Obama in Washington next month, but said no invitation has been issued yet.

On Saturday, officials involved in efforts to renew peace talks said that indirect talks between Israel and the Palestinians will start no later than mid-May.

European officials who have met in recent days with senior officials at the White House and the State Department got the impression that the Obama administration did not expect the indirect talks to produce any agreement.

Efforts to push the peace process forward are meant to allow the United States to claim some success in its Mideast policy as the region marks one year since Obama's historic address in Cairo.

Officials in Washington say the talks with the Palestinians will force Netanyahu to reveal his positions beyond those outlined in his speech at Bar-Ilan University last June.

The Americans say that if Netanyahu takes an uncompromising stance in the negotiations like the one he displays in public, the Labor party might quit the coalition and pave the way for a new government.

PM rejects building freeze

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected an Obama administration call for a total construction freeze in eastern Jerusalem, the *Wall Street Journal* reported. The Prime Minister's Office confirmed the *Journal* report. Netanyahu did agree, however, to undertake confidence-building measures toward the Palestinians, according to the newspaper. They include allowing the opening of Palestinian Authority institutions in eastern Jerusalem, turning over more West Bank land to Palestinian security control and discussing core issues such as permanent borders and the status of Jerusalem during indirect peace talks instead of waiting for direct negotiations. The newspaper reported that U.S. officials said the refusal to freeze construction in all of eastern Jerusalem could be a barrier to starting new talks with the Palestinians, and that some of the concessions offered by Israel are "nearly identical" to a list that Israel has offered to the White House twice before in recent months but has not implemented.

Ben Gurion signs missing in Paris

Israeli media reported that signs marking the newly inaugurated Ben Gurion esplanade in Paris have disappeared. The city filed a complaint with police after the signs were noticed missing. Pro-Palestinian protesters and representatives of France's Communist Party led an active campaign to prevent Paris Mayor Bertrand Delanoe from honouring Israel's founding prime minister. Despite street protests, Delanoe went through with the renaming of the central Paris square on April 15, in the presence of Israeli President Shimon Peres. On the margins of the event, protests called Delanoe an "accomplice" to "Israeli assassins." No one has claimed responsibility for the apparent theft, according to French reports. The French Jewish umbrella group CRIF said April 22 that it was "shocked" by news of the missing plaques. The absent plaques "come in a context of anti-Israeli hysteria," CRIF said, in reference to the campaign to stop the renaming of the Paris square.

Rockets fired at Eilat strike Jordan

Two Katyusha rockets reportedly fired at Eilat from Egypt's Sinai Peninsula landed in Jordan. One of the rockets scored a direct hit on an air-conditioning storage building in the Red Sea port of Aqaba. Some reports said the rockets were fired from Jordan. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Egyptian defence sources have denied that the rockets were fired from Sinai toward Eilat, according to Egyptian media reports. Eilat was last struck by a terrorist attack in January 2007, when a suicide bomber killed three people. Earlier this month, Israelis were ordered to leave the Sinai over intelligence information that terrorists planned to abduct an Israeli tourist into Gaza.

PA denies Abbas health woes

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is in good health, his spokesperson said after reports that he is seriously ill. The London-based Arabic daily *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* reported that Abbas has been admitted to a hospital in Amman, Jordan, six times over the past three months and that the hospital wing was closed each time. Palestinian officials have denied the report. Abbas, 75, reportedly has a heart condition. He was hospitalized last month in Amman after reportedly falling in either his home or his hotel room. Abbas has been PA president since 2005. His term has officially expired, but it was extended by the Palestine Liberation Organization as Abbas' Fatah party and Hamas try to reconcile. Abbas has no clear successor.

JNF helping '21st Century Zionism' effort

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

The Israeli desert is abloom.

In what's being hailed as an act of "21st century Zionism" by JNF (Jewish National Fund) Canada, three new farming communities are sprouting up in Israel's Negev thanks to an influx of pioneering families, many of whom include people previously relocated from the Gush Katif settlements in Gaza in 2006.

Since then, JNF and Keren Kayemet L'Israel (KKL) offices around the world have been providing monetary and infrastructure assistance for the new communities, temporarily titled Haluziot I, Haluziot IV and Shlomit.

Haluziot I and IV are located half a kilometre from each other in the Haluza Sands of the western Negev, about one kilometre from the Egyptian border, while Shlomit is situated just northwest of Haluziot IV.

Josh Cooper, executive director of JNF Toronto, and Joe Rabinovitch, executive vice-president of JNF Canada, spoke to *The CJN* last week about the project.

Housing units being built in the Haluziot communities

"The work KKL-JNF is doing [in these communities] includes land reclamation for agricultural purposes, residential plots and security roads," Cooper said. "People think that JNF is all about planting trees, but we helped build Israel, and to this day, 62 years later, we're still doing it from nothing – from a sand dune."

Rabinovitch said JNF hopes the communities will be fully completed and inhabited by 2017 and that close to 2,000 people will live in these areas by then.

He added that one of JNF's main priorities over the next decade is to bring in 200,000 people to the Negev to reclaim the land and populate the region.

For now, Haluziot I and IV are slated to have 450 residential plots, while Shlomit will have 500.

Currently, families working on the new communities live in nearby towns while awaiting completion of their new homes.

Rabinovitch said the bulk of the people clamouring to settle on and farm this land are "Orthodox Zionists" with an average family size of eight children.

According to JNF, Haluziot I currently has 105 residential plots completed, 400 acres of agricultural land set aside, four kilometres of security roads built and 12 acres of infrastructure for temporary housing set up.

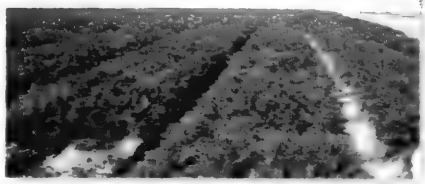
Haluziot IV is similarly prepared, while the Shlomit community housing project will start soon.

Cooper said the families are aware of the risks they'll face living just four kilometres from the Gaza border, well within range of Katyusha rockets.

During a visit to the region in February, Cooper and Rabinovitch said, they were "amazed" at the agricultural accomplishments already in evidence.

"There's sand everywhere, and then all of a sudden, organic green fields growing carrots, and greenhouses growing potatoes and tomatoes. I literally was able to pull carrots out of the sand and eat them in land that had [been barren] since the beginning of time," Cooper said.

But families aren't the only thing being relocated to these new settlements. In keeping with its longstanding tradition, JNF is also re-settling trees.



Reclaimed land on the Haluziot settlements

"When the settlers were removed from Gush Katif [by the Israeli government], one of the things the JNF undertook immediately was to go in with tractors and remove almost all the trees that were planted near the moshavs or homes," Rabinovitch said.

"These trees were stored [away] and they are now being replanted" in the new communities.

For its part, JNF Canada is contributing to a "general fund" for these communities and hopes to have a Canadian sponsor on board soon who will be able to provide funding "in the six-figure range," Rabinovitch said.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this project is encouraged to speak with their local JNF office.

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Warsaw ghetto documentary will make you weep

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The Canadian International Documentary Festival, popularly known as Hot Docs, gets underway in Toronto on April 29 and runs until May 9.

A sampler:

Yael Hersonski's *A Film Unfinished* tears at one's heart and soul. This haunting documentary deconstructs the making of *The Ghetto*, a vile Nazi propaganda film that was never finished. Hersonski found it in a concrete vault, hidden in a forest in eastern Germany.

This historically significant film was made in the doomed Warsaw ghetto in May 1942, two months before most of its hungry, sick and bedraggled residents were deported to Treblinka. Hersonski describes it as a "rough first draft." It isn't clear why work on *The Ghetto* was cut short. The images, some of which flicker and melt, are searing. They were recorded by Willy Wist, who was forced by the SS to stage many of the scenes.

Adam Czerniakow, the head of the Judenrat, sits behind a desk in his office holding court. Diners in a restaurant enjoy a sumptuous meal while their fellow Jews outside starve to death. Talmud Torah students pore over texts. An infant is circumcised. An elaborate funeral procession wends its way down a road. Men and women at a fancy ball sip champagne and dance to music. A shopper enters a well-stocked grocery. And in a scene designed to humiliate and demean Jews, nude women step into a ritual bath full of naked men.

This chilling film brims with crowd scenes, underscoring beggars with sunken cheeks in rags and "prosperous" city dwellers in fine clothes on a stroll. There are also shots of horse-drawn carts and trams. As well, Wist's camera pans on corpses splayed on streets.

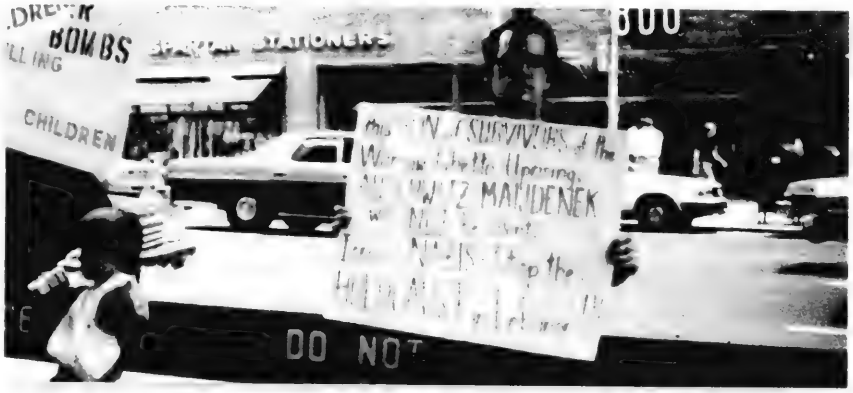
When he is interviewed, Wist claims he did not know a thing about the Holocaust. He complains that lighting conditions in the mikvah were poor. Former residents of the ghetto recall its misery and recognize some faces. We hear anguished excerpts from Czerniakow's diary and clinical voiceovers from a German commander in the ghetto.

Watch and weep.

May 2 at 1 p.m. at the Cumberland 3 Cinema and May 5 at 7 p.m. at the Cumberland 2 Cinema.

***

American academic/ lecturer Norman Finkelstein is a fierce critic of Israel who claims that the Holocaust has been exploited for partisan political ends. He is the subject of *American Radical: The Trials of Norman Finkelstein*, a balanced film by David Ridgen and Nicolas Rossier.



Norman Finkelstein is the subject of *American Radical.*

The son of Polish Jews who survived the rigours of the Warsaw ghetto, he has been fixated on Israel since the 1982 war in Lebanon. It was then that he held aloft a sign in front of the Israeli consulate in Manhattan comparing Israel to Nazi Germany. Since then, Finkelstein has claimed that Israel uses the Holocaust to deflect attention away from its "crimes" against the Palestinians. He also thinks that "Holocaust hucksters" foment anti-Semitism in Europe.

In this intriguing documentary, Finkelstein comes off as a possessed, cocksure, lonely figure whose animus for Israel is boundless and whose acidic views cost him jobs at two universities. The filmmakers interview him in New York City, his hometown, and trail after him in a speaking tour of U.S. and Canadian campuses.

In addition, Finkelstein is seen debating celebrity lawyer Alan Dershowitz, who has scathing opinions about him. Says Dershowitz, "If he was not Jewish, no one would have any doubt that he's an anti-Semite."

These are strong words, but Finkelstein is to blame for his isolation. Friends describe him as a self-destructive and needlessly provocative person who has singled out Israel. Even his mother, a pacifist, laments that her son has managed to destroy himself.

Finkelstein says that Jews have a right to self-determination in Israel. "I have no interest in bashing Israel," he claims disingenuously. But on a tour of Lebanon, he cozies up to Hezbollah, an Islamic organization that rejects Israel's existence, and calls its bombardment of Israel in 2006 "a very good thing."

May 6 at 9 p.m. at the Bloor Cinema and May 9 at 11:30 a.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

***

Budrus, by Julia Bacha, is about a Palestinian Arab village near the Israeli border whose olive groves and farmlands are expropriated by the construction of Israel's security barrier. The residents of this scenic village in the West Bank rise up in nonviolent protest, joined by Israeli and foreign sympathizers.

They argue that the fence should be built along Israel's border rather than in Palestinian territory. In the interests of balance, Bacha interviews an Israeli army officer. He explains that suicide bombings made it necessary to build the fence. A female member of the Border Police who confronts demonstrators in the village is given air time, too.

If nothing else, this quietly powerful film exposes the tragedy of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians.

May 2 at 4 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre and May 3 at 7:15 at the Royal Ontario Museum.

***

The aftermath of Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip in January 2009 is the subject of Nicolas Wadimoff's *Aisheen (Still Alive in Gaza)*.

Always underdeveloped and impoverished, Gaza is presented as a desolate and bleak place of broken buildings and mounds of rubble. Life goes on, yet nothing is normal. Palestinians queue for basic provisions. A boy who was wounded during the war vows to become a "martyr." Animals in a zoo go hungry. Israeli jets roar high in the sky. Clowns readying themselves for a children's party dress up as an explosion rocks the area. *Aisheen* depicts a people under siege and in distress.

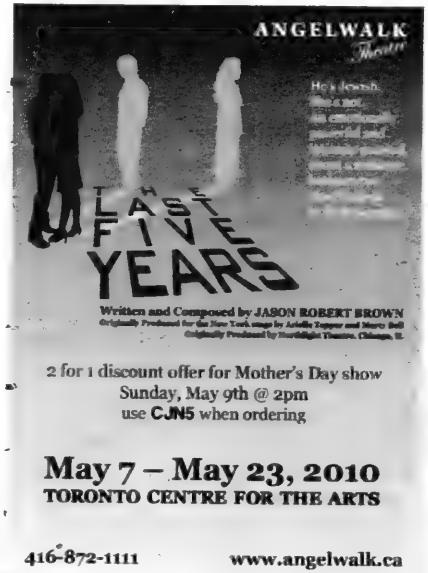
May 3 at 9:30 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre and May 6 at 1:30 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum.

***

Tahani Rached's *Beirut! Not Enough Death To Go Around* is a cri de coeur, a vivid portrait of Muslims in western Beirut who have endured hardships since the 1975 Lebanese civil war and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. These working-class people express anger and disdain toward sectarian-minded Lebanese politicians, fear of Israel and sympathy for the Palestinians who live in their midst.

May 8 at 7:15 p.m. at Innis Town Hall.

Continued on page 49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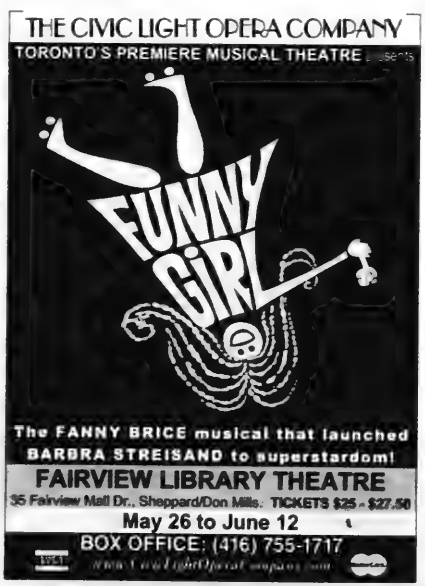
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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

NEW HAROLD GREEN JEWISH THEATRE COMPANY SEASON

David Eisner and **Avery Saltzman**, co-artistic directors of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, have announced the company's new season will feature the co-production of a new Canadian play, a celebrated off-Broadway comedy, a new Canadian musical review and the return of the popular series "Conversations On The Green."

The season opener is the "spunky dark comedy" *Lenin's Embalmers*, by **Vern Thiessen**. The season continues with *Zero Hour*, **Jim Brochu's** one-man show about iconic Jewish actor **Zero Mostel**. Then comes the musical review *To Life*, conceived by Saltzman with **Tim French**, which celebrates legendary performers **Fanny Brice**, **Eddie Cantor** and **Al Jolson**, as well as music from various Jewish-themed musicals.

Confirmed personalities for the Conversations On The Green include **Amy Sky**, **Edward Greenspan**, **David Mirvish** and **Jeanne Beker**. Tickets for the company's full 2010/11 season range from $118 to $180 but go up $18 after May 1. www. hgjewishtheatre.com

• • •

Songs From the Jewish Soul: Pride of Israel presents *Songs from the Jewish Soul*, a concert with vocalist **Aviva Chernick** and musicians **Aaron Lightstone**, **Ernie Tollar** and **Adam Campbell**. The evening features songs with Judeo-Spanish, Hebrew and English lyrics, and traditional, contemporary and original melodies and rhythms from around the Jewish world, from Morocco to Sarajevo, Baghdad to Toronto.

Pride of Israel, 59 Lissom Cr. at Bathurst Street. Sunday, May 16, silent auction 6:45 p.m., concert 7:30 p.m. $25, $30; $35 at the door; dessert follows the concert. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

• • •

Silenced Voices: The Amici Chamber Ensemble and baritone **Russell Braun** perform *Silenced Voices*, a concert featuring works by victims of genocide. The program includes songs by Jewish-Czech composer **Viktor Ullmann**, Ukrainian composer **Kyrylo Stetsenko** and Armenian composer **Father Gomidas**, as well as chamber works by **Gideon Klein** and **Erwin Schulhoff**. $45; seniors $40, students $10. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Sunday May 2, 3 p.m. 416-872-4255. www. amiciensemble.com

• • •

Playwriting Competition: The cultural arts Department of the Miles Nadal JCC invites submissions to its 2010 Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition, which features a newly-announced prize of $1,000. The winning playwright also enjoys a professional-quality public workshop of the winning play. Deadline is June 30. For details, please contact Esther Arbeid, esthera@mnjcc.org

Three previous contest winners have been published and produced on commercial stages: *Einstein's Gift* by **Vern Thiessen**, *Sara's Cave* by **Don Molnar**, and *Yahrzeit* by **Alex Poch Goldin**. A reading of the 2009 winning play, *Martyrs Street* by **Misha Shulman**, is scheduled for the fall. The Jerusalem-born Shulman served in the Israeli army and is currently writer in residence at Toronto's Crow Theatre.

• • •

Arts in Brief

• **Varsity Jews**, the University of Toronto's Jewish a cappella choir, perform *In Technicolour*, a fundraising concert in support of Ve'ahavta. $8 to $20; sponsor tickets $72. Beth Torah Congregation, 47 Glenbrook Ave. Sunday May 2, 7:30 p.m. 416-913-2424, www.varsityjews.com

• The Toronto Comic Arts Festival presents "**James Sturm** in Conversation." Sturm, author of *The Golem's Mighty Swing* and the newly-published *Market Day*, chats with **Miriam Libicki**. Free admission. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday May 6, 7 p.m.

• Active Seniors presents "The Rise of the Early Toronto Jewish Community," an illustrated talk by publisher and *The CJN* columnist **Bill Gladstone**, about a new book based on an old manuscript by the late Yiddish newspaper editor **S. M. Shapiro**. Miles Nadal JCC, Thursday May 13, 1:30 p.m.

• • •

At the Galleries

• Recent photography by **Erica Pratt** is on view at the David Kaye Gallery in a show titled "Laissez La Porte Ouverte." Meet the artist, Thursday April 29, 6 to 9p.m. New clay works by **Bruce Cochrane** are also on display. 1092 Queen St. W. at Dovercourt. 416-532-9075, www. davidkayegallery.com. "Hey Babe, You've Got Paint On Your Elbow," abstract paintings by **Julie Gladstone** and **K. Hinto**, are featured across the street at the Cream Tangerine Gallery, 1087 Queen St. W.

•AWOL Gallery presents "What You Wish For," an exhibition of new paintings by **Lauren Goldman**. Goldman's small-scale oil canvases combine different modes of painting and explore ways in which close interactions affect meaning and the dynamic relationship between individual parts and the whole. 76 Ossington Ave. Until May 2.

•The fourth annual Best Israel Art & Craft Exhibition and Sale features first-class artists from Jerusalem and the Negev. The Designers Walk, 168 Bedford Rd., 2nd floor. May 2 to May 5, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Reception, Monday May 3, 5 to 8 p.m. 416-961-1211.

•The Loop Gallery presents "In Between," works by **Lanny Shereck**, and "Gone Missing," works by **Yvonne Singer**. Both exhibitions are on display thru May 16. Q&A session facilitated by **William Huffman** and **Ronnie Rosenberg**, May 8, 3 p.m. 1273 Dundas St. W. 416-516-2581.

Humour has evolved, cartoonist says

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Cartoonist and editor Bob Mankoff loves to make people laugh. In the last 30 years, he's created more than 900 cartoons for the *New Yorker* magazine.

"Cartoonists take things that are mildly annoying, incongruous, but not so bad, and make fun of them in a good-natured way," Mankoff said in an interview at the Royal Ontario Museum.

"In cartooning humour, it's everything that's wrong but not tragic."

During his first trip to Toronto earlier this month, Mankoff gave a light-hearted talk for The Institute for Contemporary Culture at at the ROM on the "Ethos and Ethics of the *New Yorker* Cartoons." The event complemented the exhibit "Dan Perjovschi: Late News," an installation of cartoons, drawn directly onto the ROM's Roloff Beny Gallery walls, that runs until Aug. 15.

"And remember, if you need anything I'm available 24/6."

Illustration courtesy of Robert Mankoff
The New Yorker Magazine

Mankoff often looks at ordinary, everyday occurrences for inspiration.

"Let's say while coming into Toronto, I'm waiting forever for a grilled cheese sandwich. I'm thinking, in New York I'd be getting it already. It's an empty restaurant, why is it taking so long? Are they interrogating the sandwich? What's going on here? And so it's fun to look at that," said the artist, who's been drawing since he was eight years old. "Tensions and frictions of life won't get you down, if you step back."

Perhaps the *New Yorker* cartoon editor might be inspired by the ROM's architectural structure. "They let someone build this? It looks like a spaceship dropped on these other buildings and ate them," he said jokingly.

"I actually think the building is sort of interesting – I think it's both weird and interesting. It's both good and bad, and in that space of ambiguities is where you get jokes from both sides. If you really cared too much, if you really hated the building, you couldn't make jokes about it – you'd be incensed and be out there picketing!"

People's taste in humour differs, he said. "The easiest things to get laughs are aggressive, shocking or sexual things. That's probably what humour was originally for – dealing with these taboo things like trickster figures and myths. Like everything else, humour has evolved, so it's the evolved forms that interest me," Mankoff said.

For some, bloopers are humorous, and they tune into television shows like *America's Funniest Videos* or search YouTube for a laugh.

Continued on page 44

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Glengarry Glen Ross still relevant today

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Actor and director Jordan Pettle, 38, is reprising the role of John Williamson in a remount of Soulpepper Theatre Company's production of David Mamet's Pulitzer Prize winning play *Glengarry Glen Ross*.

The critically acclaimed and sold-out production from last season is currently on at the Young Centre for the Performing Arts in the Distillery Historic District until June 5.

"The play is set in Chicago in 1983, in a real estate office," explains Pettle. "There is a sales contest going on as the play starts. Certain salesmen are worried about being axed from the company. It revolves around the manipulations and games that these guys do to make sales and screw each other around. It's a vicious, volatile, macho world."

Pettle says the play is also very funny—a dark comedy. He says *Glengarry Glen Ross* translates well in today's world because unfortunately people are as vicious and manipulative as ever in certain worlds, especially when it comes to men competing against each other in certain aspects of society, especially the business world.

"John Williamson is the office manager – the authority figure in the office. He is loathed by the salesman because he doesn't really have any practical experience in the field," Pettle says.

Pettle says *Glengarry Glen Ross* is a great story, very entertaining with a mystery involved. He wants audiences to have a good time and to recognize themselves on some level, because he feels that is always the purpose of theatre.

"I am thrilled it is being remounted, it is one of the best experiences I have had working on a play," Pettle says. "I love David Mamet, I always wanted to do his stuff. I did some of it in theatre school and to get a chance to do it for Soulpepper, which is a fantastic theatre company and with this company of actors…I feel, very, very lucky."

Jordan Pettle, left, with Eric Peterson.
[Cylla von Tiedemann photo]

The show, directed by David Storch, returns with its original cast which includes veteran thespian, Eric Peterson, Shelley Levene, Soulpepper's artistic director Albert Schultz, Kevin Bundy, Peter Donaldson, Stephen Guy-McGrath and William Webster as George Aaranow.

Pettle says it has been heaven working with this cast. "I get to do a lot with Eric Peterson. I worked with Eric before in *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* for CanStage in 2001. I am a huge fan, it is a joy to work with him."

Pettle is no stranger to the Soulpepper stage. His list of credits include *Travesties*, *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *Waiting for Godot*. He's also appeared in TV and films.

Married to actress Shannon Perreault, who is currently in *If We Were Birds* at the Tarragon Theatre until May 23, the two are the parents of 8-month-old son Samuel. They will soon be heading to New York, where they will be performing in *Ritter, Dene, Voss* – an Austrian play by Thomas Bernhard.

Perreault originated her role for that play in the Toronto production for One Little Goat, and both performed the show in Chicago.

When Pettle isn't onstage or looking after Sammy, he enjoys playing softball and poker and loves going to restaurants.

Tickets are available by calling the Young Centre box office at 416-866-8666 or by visiting www.soulpepper.ca.

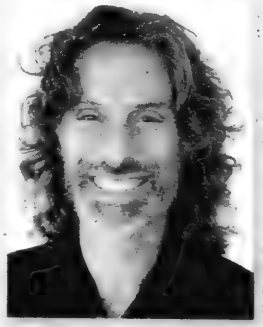
A special brand of humour

Continued from page 43

But *New Yorker* cartoons have a special brand of humour – they make you think, he said.

"Whatever people like is fine. I really don't make any apologies. I'm sort of an elitist, because that's what I think the *New Yorker* is, [although] it's not elitist, it's not intentionally trying to carve out something for itself to be better. It actually has its own standards," he explained.

When Mankoff's not producing cartoons for the *New Yorker* and *Moment* magazine – an American Jewish publication – he also runs their cartoon caption contests. And he teaches a course in Humour: History, Theory and Practice at the University of Michigan, which examines humour through the ages.



Robert Mankoff

Mankoff often speaks to groups about Jewish humour and its influence on culture. "Just look at vaudeville, the immigrant experience and comedy writers – lots of Jews – including me. And Jewish jokes are distinct. They tend not to be sexual or scatological or aggressive, and there's usually a logical flip in them that makes them funny."

He illustrates: "When the matchmaker makes a match and the groom sees his prospective bride, he whispers to the matchmaker: 'She's got a limp, she's 100 pounds, she's bald and she's blind in one eye.' And the matchmaker replies, 'You don't have to whisper, she's also deaf!' "

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Arts & Travel

Group show features Israeli artists of Toronto

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

When Moshe Mikanovsky, an Israeli visual artist and software developer, picked up a flyer advertising the art show of the Israeli Artists Group of Toronto last year, he says he was very surprised to discover that such an art group existed.

"I'd been living in Toronto for seven years, and I had never heard of this organization." The painter and printmaker, who is known for his ketubah and Judaic art as well as portraiture, says he attended the art show hoping to make a connection with other Israeli artists. "I didn't know what to expect," he recalls. "The artists were very welcoming when I came to that first show."

Indeed, not only did he forge new friendships but Mikanovsky, 38, has also become a spokesperson for the Israeli art group and a key promoter of the upcoming 2010 show.

The Israeli Artists Group of Toronto Second Annual Art Show coincides with Jerusalem Day, which is on May 12 this year. The show runs from May 13 to 16 at JEH Thoreau MacDonald House, located at 121 Centre St. in Thornhill. The opening takes place May 13 from 6 to 9 p.m.

The exhibition showcases the work of 23 artists. "The art is at a very high level," says Mikanovsky. "Many of the artists have had their work in juried shows and in other galleries. Myriam Levy and Bianka Guna show in galleries across the city. Irit Lepkin is known for her clay sculptures."

The multi-disciplinary exhibit offers a range of styles from representational to abstract, in a variety of media, he notes. "We have mixed media, oil, acrylic and water painting, sculpture, ceramics, some jewellery and one photographer."

He adds that the subjects portrayed include both Judaic and non-Judaic themes.

Mikanovsky notes that the artists, whom he describes as a diverse group of people, provide a support network to one another throughout the year. Monthly meetings offer social and educational opportunities for the group. "We go to art galleries together. We bring in speakers. We help each other find new marketing opportunities."

Mikanovsky says he received his training in software developing when he was in the army, but he has had a long-standing interest in art. "I always dreamt of being an artist."

The Bnei Brak native studied at the Avni Institute of Art and Design in Tel Aviv, and he's taken many art courses over the years. Last year, he was commissioned by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto to create two tribute cards for Rosh Hashanah, and this year he designed a Pesach card for the organization.

Mikanovsky runs a blog for his art colleagues at Israeliartistsgroup.com/blog. "My main goal has been to give more exposure to the group."

Shaked Kaplan, 34, president of the Israeli Artists Group of Toronto, says the first group art exhibit last year — it showcased the work of 16 artists – inspired more people to participate this year. "It was a big success. It attracted a lot people and a lot of new members with good energy."

She says many of the original members – they started the group in 1992 – are still involved. Today, there are 35. Kaplan, who is originally from Kibbutz Magal, is the youngest.

She studied ceramics at Tel Hai Academic College in the north of Israel. Her training also included a component in education. She says she has had significant experience coaching children with a variety of learning and psycho-social challenges.

She came to Canada 3-1/2 years ago to work with a child who has ADD (attention deficit disorder). She calls the Israeli family who sponsored her "my adopted family."

Kaplan says she specializes in hand-building and creates functional objects such as lamps, tables and teapots. She also teaches ceramics at her studio in Richmond Hill, Ont. "I'm trying to build an art centre to bring in more artists."

She stresses that holding the Israeli Artists Group exhibition as close as possible to Jerusalem Day is a way of marking this national day. "We're an Israeli group."

"It was very important to us that the show would have a connection to Israel."

For more information about the upcoming show, call 416-525-1350 or visit the website at Israeliartistsgroup.com.

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Yann Martel and a Post-Holocaust Tradition

By NORMAN RAVVIN
Special to The CJN

For a book that has already gained a great deal of attention for its weighty themes, Yann Martel's new novel, *Beatrice & Virgil*, is a quick read, easily finished in two or three sittings. It is built of discrete sections, a number of which include the scenes of a play. These, written by one of the novel's two main characters, make use of the epigrammatic language of children's stories. But Martel's intentions in this, his third novel, are undoubtedly grand.

Norman Ravvin

Beatrice & Virgil (Knopf Canada) aims to offer a philosophical response to the mistreatment of animals and to the meaning of the Holocaust, while examining the demands of making art about such difficult subjects. Autobiographical links inform key narrative threads, as Martel can be recognized as a model for Henry, the novel's successful writer who has gone incommunicado to evade his new-found fame.

If not for the Man Booker Prize, which was awarded to Martel's 2001 novel *Life of Pi*, *Beatrice & Virgil* would not attract great scrutiny. But the Booker catapulted Martel into the literary stratosphere, where follow-up efforts attract multi-million dollar advances and intense critical and popular attention. This latter phenomenon is exaggerated in Canada's small literary market, where our literary stars are sometimes lavished with a celebrity that swamps their actual effect on the page.

Beatrice & Virgil is foremost a book about animals, as was *Life of Pi*. Its two central human characters are less sensitively portrayed than the animal creatures on whom Martel's descriptive power alights. Here, one thinks of another beloved Canadian author, Timothy Findley, whose rural home was a menagerie of sorts, and whose provocative novel, *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, also linked the abuse of animals and the environment with the Holocaust. This aspect of Findley's novel gained little attention; rather, it was his burlesquing of traditional religion (Lucifer as a cheeky cross-dresser, God as a desiccated aristocrat) that gained him some surly readerly response.

The Holocaust themes in *Beatrice & Virgil* are more overt than they are in Findley's book. Martel's largely actionless plot ends with a splash of violence – graphic Gestapoesque torture and a cinematic pogrom visited on two mothers and their infants. But for much of the narrative, Martel's Henry pursues an enigmatic relationship with the proprietor of a taxidermy shop.

This taxidermist is writing a play about a howler monkey and a donkey – the Beatrice and Virgil of the novel's title – which employs a range of Holocaust motifs. We are meant to uncover them gradually, as does Henry, but the press about all this has preceded the novel, so we know we are reading a book "about the Holocaust" before Martel's goals become clear.

Gradually, the excerpts from the taxidermist's play build toward an allegorical response to the Holocaust, which culminates, late in the novel, when Henry acknowledges that he "knew for certain what the taxidermist was doing. . . . he was using the Holocaust to speak of the extermination of animal life. . . . He was seeing the tragic fate of animals through the tragic fate of Jews. The Holocaust as allegory."

Through much of *Beatrice & Virgil* it would seem that this is Martel's goal (certainly it is the main effect of much of the narrative). Yet, by the novel's end, readers may not be entirely clear on what Martel's goals have been. The taxidermist turns out to be someone other than Henry took him to be, so the status of his play is up for grabs.

Certainly, the challenge of making a tricky, writerly book about the events of the war, and forcing its readers to look for clues and encounter surprising associations, are among the novel's motivations. But only readers with a great deal of knowledge about Holocaust history and art will catch the ins and outs of Martel's coded approach to his subject (the street address where part of Emmanuel Ringelblum's Warsaw Ghetto archive was unearthed is raised, but the uninitiated will have to do further research to engage with this remarkable historical site).

In fact, it is children's books about the war that often make use of a similar strategy, in an effort to both reveal and hide aspects of the wartime disaster beneath a palatable surface of word and image. This strategy, in books like *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*, is also found in films such as Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*. Book designers at Knopf seem to have picked up on a cover detail employed for *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*: for Beatrice & Virgil, the iconic stripes of a camp inmate's uniform are transformed on the hardback's cloth cover into the curved stripes of an animal's hide.

It is not clear how readers of *Beatrice & Virgil* should take the notion that one might better understand the experience of animals, doomed "creatures that could not speak for themselves," once they are "given the voice of a most articulate people who had been similarly doomed." Certainly, one of Martel's accomplishments – not necessarily one he consciously strove for – is a Holocaust-themed book with almost nothing Jewish in it. One strives for an analogy: a baseball game without the ball; or an architectural drawing sketched in plain air.

There is a skilled suppleness, almost a naiveté, in Martel's tone as he works at making this material weighty and wise. It may be that *Beatrice & Virgil* arrives at a time when Holocaust-related writing and art is shifting once more, based on a new generational and cultural context. Readers, the press and critics will make use of this literary season to grapple with such issues.

Norman Ravvin's essays on Jewish literature are collected in A House of Words: Jewish Writing, Identity and Memory. *His forthcoming novel, from Gaspereau Press, is* The Joyful Child. *He is Chair of the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies.*

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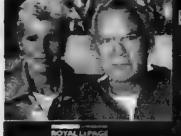

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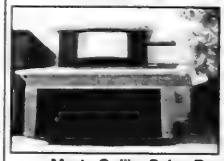

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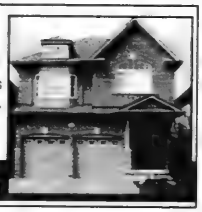

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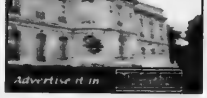

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Arts & Travel

Thieves is a chilling picture of Russian Mafia

Continued from page 42

***

Alexander Gentelev's *Thieves by Law* is about the Russian Mafia, some of whose members have found a refuge in Israel. By his reckoning, these ruthless gangsters live by their own rules, go to any lengths to protect their honour and crave material goods, ranging from expensive oil paintings and top-of-the-line luggage to Mediterranean mansions.

According to Gentelev, they made their fortunes in the early 1990s when Russia, in its rush to a capitalist system, sold off state enterprises for bargain basement prices. Several of these high-living criminals, notably Grisha Lerner and Leonid Bilunov, have acquired Israeli citizenship and passports, which enable them to move around freely. Since Israel has no law to counter money laundering, they flock to the Jewish state like moths to light.

Thieves by Law is a chilling picture of an alternative universe.

May 5 at 9 p.m. at the Cumberland 3 Cinema and May 8 at 10 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre.

***

Daddy's Girl, by Lily Sheffy, is an unusual Israeli film about a serial philanderer, as seen through the eyes of the filmmaker's caring daughter. Yaron Ivry, a physically fit consultant in his mid-50s, commutes regularly between Israel and Europe. But his trips are not solely for business. He keeps a mistress in Germany and has a pregnant second wife in Israel, all the while pursuing yet another German woman. "I do what most men want but dare not do," he says openly.

Although Sheffy, his daughter, disapproves of his behavior and morals, she has accompanied him on many dates and regards him as a confidant.

***A Film Unfinished* tears at one's heart and soul.**

Daddy's Girl is a morally complex film about desire, lust, companionship and, believe it or not, love.

May 2 at 9:30 p.m. at the Cumberland 2 Cinema and May 4 at 4 p.m. at the Royal Ontario Museum.

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Goalie gets partial hockey scholarship to U.S. school

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

With their gold medal performances at the Olympics and in world competitions, you'd think Canada's women's hockey team would have created widespread interest in the sport among young women.

Not so at Ali Ponte's school.

Though Ali is a diehard fan and accomplished player, virtually none of her friends at Richmond Hill High School is interested in the sport. They're "girly" girls who don't much participate in any sport, said the 18-year-old junior goalie.

While she has trouble rustling up conversations about the playoffs among her friends – only one girlfriend is as interested in the NHL as she is – Ponte will continue to be immersed in hockey for years to come.

Ponte, a goalie with Markham-Stouffville Junior Stars of the Provincial Women's Hockey League (PWHL), earned a partial scholarship to tend the twine tent for the Plymouth State Panthers of the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC), an NCAA division III affiliate. She'll head out to central New Hampshire in the fall, where she expects to earn a degree in environmental studies and play hockey for the next four years.

Ponte has been told by the Panthers' coach that she'll be the team's starter.

Ponte can expect to face a lot of pucks in Plymouth. The Panthers were 0-24 this year. Yikes!

Whether the calibre of player she'll face versus ECAC opponents will be better or worse than in Ontario remains to be seen. The Stars faced national-level players in the PWHL, the premier women's circuit in Ontario. Some of those players are moving on to NCAA Division I teams.

Prior to joining the Junior Stars, Ponte enjoyed some success at the midget level. She played last year with Scarborough Sharks Midget AA, which won the provincial AA championship and earning a silver medal at the Esso Cup, the national AAA midget tournament. They lost in the title game to the Westman Wildcats, a team from Winnipeg.

"We just played well as a team after losing the first couple of games badly," she said. "It was the last hurrah for the team, and we felt we should make the most of it."

As for her own performance, Ponte said "I made some nice saves. I bounced back after the first game when we lost badly."

Prior to that, she was on four consecutive GTHL boys championship teams.

This season was another story, however. The Stars were badly outmatched in the PWHL. They managed a rather woeful 5-24-5 record, which Ponte said is attributable to the fact the Stars were a brand new team and most of the players moved up from midget AA, "so we didn't have much experience."

"The teams in junior are a lot better," she added.

Nevertheless, Ponte was scouted for a college career and impressed with her butterfly style and perhaps her devilish attitude: "I like playing goal. I like stopping the other players and making them look bad. That kind of thing."

Perhaps the Plymouth coaches saw a video of her performance against the Chinese national team. Prior to the Vancouver Olympics, the Stars played Team China in a pre-tournament warm up and lost 6-4. Other women's teams with better league records didn't do nearly as well, she said.

Nevertheless, Ponte has no illusions about an international career. For her, hockey is a nice way to pay part of her tuition at Plymouth and help her attain her ultimate goal – to become a geologist.

Hockey and geology. I wonder what the girly girls at Richmond Hill will make of that.

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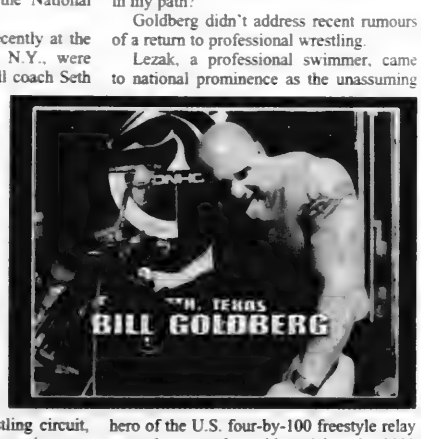
Lezak, Goldberg among inductees to Jewish Hall of Fame

JTA

NEW YORK — Pro wrestler Bill Goldberg and Olympic swimmer Jason Lezak were among seven inductees into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

The five others inducted recently at the Hall of Fame in Commack, N.Y., were Virginia Tech men's basketball coach Seth Greenberg; female judo champion Rusty Kanokogi; Penn State women's volleyball coach Russ Rose; Achilles Track Club founder Dick Traum; and former NFL offensive lineman Alan Veingrad.



Goldberg, an all-American defensive end at the University of Georgia, was taken in the 11th round of the 1990 NFL draft by the Los Angeles Rams, but he turned to wrestling and martial arts three years after an injury ended his football career in 1994. During his seven-year career on the World Champion Wrestling circuit, World Wrestling Entertainment twice recognized Goldberg as the world heavyweight champion.

In an often humorous and casually self-effacing speech at the Hall of Fame ceremony, Goldberg sought to tie his unconventional career choice in professional wrestling to Judaism.

"I wanted to try my best to give the Jewish youth something to look up to, someone who's persevered and somehow made a difference," Goldberg said.

"What better way to help Jewish youth in dealing with adversity than to parade around the ring on national television in my underwear, demolishing every single person in my path?"

Goldberg didn't address recent rumours of a return to professional wrestling.

Lezak, a professional swimmer, came to national prominence as the unassuming hero of the U.S. four-by-100 freestyle relay team that won the gold medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and set a world record. His dramatic final lap of the race made international headlines and helped teammate Michael Phelps notch a crucial victory on his way to a record eight gold medals at the Games.

Lezak has won numerous Olympic medals, including an individual bronze at the '08 Games, and he earned four gold medals at the Maccabiah Games in Israel last summer.

Jewish teens take part in basketball tourney

More than 100 students from various GTA high schools took part in Chabad Youth Network's Teens for the Community annual charity basketball tournaments earlier this month, at TanenbaumCHAT in Vaughan and Bialik Hebrew Day School. For more information about Chabad Youth Network (CYN), please visit www.JewishYouth.ca or call the office at 905-889-7582. Pictured, from left, are north winners Ben Halberstadt, Lidor Cohen, Hayden Cantor and Josh Foreman.

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HEAT oven to 350°F. **COMBINE** crushed cookies, finely chopped nuts and butter; press onto bottom of 9" springform pan. **BEAT** cream cheese and 1/2 c syrup in large bowl with mixer until well blended. Add eggs, 1 at a time, mixing after each just until blended. Pour over crust. **BAKE** 45-50 min. or until centre is almost set. Cool completely. Refrigerate 4 hrs. Drizzle with remaining syrup just before serving. Sprinkle with remaining nuts.

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REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE

THE NORTH Y, 50 YEARS AGO: The Bathurst Jewish Community Centre is shown 50 years ago in 1960, soon after it first opened. The site subsequently underwent immense growth with the addition of the Lipa Green Centre, Leah Posluns Theatre and Koffler Centre of the Arts. Today known as the Prosserman JCC, it is again in the midst of a massive redevelopment, with old buildings being demolished as new ones are raised. Meanwhile, the Miles Nadal JCC at Bloor and Spadina continues to thrive and a new JCC, the Schwartz/Reisman Centre, is being developed up north. [*City of Toronto Archives photo*]

Stooped over until when?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

URBAN WRITER

One day on the way to work, I saw an old man stooped over. He was walking by a homeless man who sat on the ground.

The old man's back was hunched. He stared at the ground, seeing just enough in front of him so as not to crash into somebody, trip over the homeless man.

How strange it must be to watch the ground while others see the horizon. How familiar with the pavement cracks he must be. How many times did he save his mother's back from being broken? He is hunched. He is bent.

That is what we're like sometimes – our community and our people. We're crooked and we're bent. Why must that be so?

Over the centuries, the weight of the pyramid stones, the 13th of Adar (the Fast of Esther), Haman, and the rocks and rubble we were forced to carry on our shoulders pushed us down and down, over and over again.

We couldn't stand erect?

But don't you know that the pyramids are already built and the Nazis lie dormant for now? And if you know that, and if you are aware of these facts, you can stand upright for now. Then why don't you?

Theodor Herzl died in 1904 at age 44, but only after he heard the people of France yelling, "Death to the Jews," and only after this secular journalist scoffed at the peasants and the pogroms and the Inquisitors. He listened and heard the pulsing vibrations of anti-Semitism and lifted his eyes and straightened his spine until he was as tall as he could be.

Somewhere in his Jewish soul and mind, he knew, like the biblical Jacob, how to defend his nation, his family. Jacob divided up the camp and sent his flocks ahead, his strategy while Esau headed toward him. He acted.

Herzl did, too. He did not sit quietly in make believe, or pretend that all was well. He planted the seeds that grew the State of Israel. He was not bent.

You are walking with eyes down, but nobody will save our people if we do not first save ourselves.

There is only one answer to all of this. Israel is mighty, but it was also so before the rise of the Assyrians, Romans, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans. A spine can only bend so much. Doesn't it seem as if the pressure on Israel is growing?

Diaspora Jewry is strong but small and defenceless, really, without Israel and friends. We act though as if it has always been this way, as if our people have always been in Congress, the Senate, Parliament and the Supreme Court; and heads of banks and schools.

But we forget there was a time a few short decades ago when we hid away on our knees – a Jew, a secret.

There is only one answer. We must fight to make friends. We must battle with our enemies. Each of us must create allies on our street, in our cities, in our countries – everywhere. This is a plan, like Jacob's, like Herzl's.

This is a plan. It must come from all of us. We are all leaders.

We must send flocks ahead and set tables for our friends to eat with us. We must be stocky, able to defend ourselves. This is a plan. Without one, we are stooping. How blind will we allow ourselves to get. How bent will our backs become?

How familiar will we be with the cracks?

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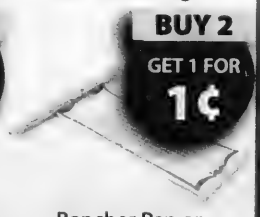
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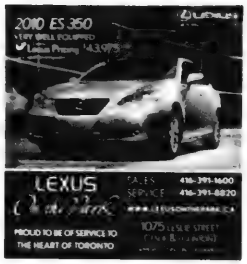

This Week

National

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Gala evening honours Cantor Benjamin Maissner *Page 12*

Heebonics

Queen's students win cars for ad ideas. *Page 36*

Arts & Travel

Israeli musician's career started with a simple twist of fate. *Page 38*

On CJ Shmooze

Mackenzie Collegiate celebrates 50 years.
[canadianjewishnews.blogspot.com]

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Knesset conversion bill draws warning

JTA

NEW YORK — The Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist movements in North America are warning that a proposed Israeli conversion bill is "disastrous to the unity of the Jewish people."

Knesset members from the Yisrael Beiteinu party were in the United States last week trying to marshal support for a bill that would change the conversion process in Israel.

While the bill's proponents say it would make it easier for the estimated 350,000 to 400,000 non-Jewish Israelis from the Russian-speaking immigrant community to convert to Judaism and marry in Israel, critics say the bill threatens to alter the Law of Return and consolidate conversion power in the hands of the Chief Rabbinate.

That "could have devastating effects on the relationship between Israeli and Diaspora Jewry," the three main non-Orthodox Jewish movements in the United States said in a joint statement. "Such concentration of powers in favour of ultra-Orthodox Jewry effectively negates the roles of the non-Orthodox movements both within Israel and abroad, sending the message that only the Orthodox have a place within our homeland."

Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist movements call it 'disastrous'

The statement said the legislation, which is being promoted by Knesset member David Rotem, would revive the destructive debate over who is a Jew and turn the clock back on 20 years of accomplishments in the Israeli Supreme Court asserting the legitimacy of non-Orthodox movements.

"The bill mentions no alternative method of conversion via non-Orthodox streams," the statement said. "We – and more importantly, our Israeli colleagues and their lawyers – believe that this language, if adopted as written, would further marginalize and hamper the Masorti and Reform movements in Israel. This would be a tragic consequence as we offer vibrant religious alternatives to a nation of Jews religiously alienated by the increasingly extreme positions of a minority religious establishment."

In an interview last week with *JTA*, Rotem said the non-Orthodox religious streams in the United States shouldn't be anxious about the bill.

"I want them not to worry it's going to harm them," Rotem said. "This law doesn't deal with conversions done abroad. We have to solve an internal Israeli problem."

Still uppermost in our minds

A group of Israelis last week attended a Kabbalat Shabbat service in honour of Gilad Schalit near the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem. Schalit was kidnapped by Hamas and has been held in Gaza since June 2006. Israelis and other concerned individuals are determined not to let the world forget about Schalit's captivity.

[Flash90 photo]

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Israel, PA launch indirect peace talks – please see page 33

The News in Brief

Canada

Pro-Israel MP Quits

OTTAWA — NDP MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis, a prominent Israel advocate who has frequently criticized her own party's stands on the Jewish state, quit last week, saying she is "seriously contemplating" a run to unseat Sam Katz, Winnipeg's first Jewish mayor. The 58-year-old Winnipeg North MP, whose resignation was effective May 1, had held her riding since 1997 and previously served as a provincial cabinet minister under Howard Pawley from 1986 to 1988.

Book Wins Award

WINNIPEG — Allan Levine's book *Coming of Age: A History of the Jews of Manitoba* won the $5,000 McNally Robinson Manitoba Book of the Year Award April 25 at the 22nd annual Manitoba Book Awards in Winnipeg. In addition to winning the top prize, the book was nominated for three other awards in the competition.

Tourism Record Set

TORONTO — Travel to Israel from Canada reached an all-time high in March, with 5,906 Canadians arriving, the highest ever for that month and a 24 per cent increase over the same period last year, the Israel Government Tourist Office said. Also, 313,000 tourists from around the world arrived in March, a 56 per cent increase over the same period last year, and nine per cent more than the previous record set in March 2000. Travel to Israel saw a 54 per cent increase in the first quarter of 2010 overall, compared to the same period last year.

World

Goldstone To Be Feted

SAN FRANCISCO — *Tikkun* magazine will give its 25th annual ethics award next year to Richard Goldstone, author of the UN report on the Gaza war. The announcement came amid controversy over Goldstone's attendance at his grandson's bar mitzvah in South Africa. Goldstone initially said he would skip the simchah to avoid planned protests by Zionist groups in South Africa, but an agreement was reached to allow him to attend the bar mitzvah without protest. Goldstone, a respected jurist in South Africa, has been persona non grata in pro-Israel circles since the publication last year of his UN-sponsored report on the 2009 war that said both Israel and Hamas committed war crimes and possibly crimes against humanity. Israel denounced the report as biased and inaccurate. *Tikkun*'s founder and editor, Rabbi Michael Lerner, said the decision was made prior to the bar mitzvah issue and that the timing of the announcement was the result of his "outrageous" treatment by fellow South African Jews.

Orthodox Groups Opposes Female Rabbis

NEW YORK — The leading modern Orthodox rabbinic association has adopted an official position against the ordination of women while also encouraging the creation of "halachically and communally appropriate professional opportunities" for female scholars.

Members of the Rabbinical Council of America adopted the resolution during their three-day conference last week in Scarsdale, N.Y. The resolution came just months after the near ordination of a female rabbi by one of the RCA's highest-profile members drew a sharp rebuke from the haredi Orthodox leadership of Agudath Israel of America.

The resolution cites "commitment to sacred continuity" in saying that the group "cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title." But it stops short of sanctioning or expelling members who violate the policy, a move urged by some rabbis upset over the recent actions of RCA member Rabbi Avi Weiss.

Rabbi Weiss sparked outrage in January when he conferred the title of "rabba" – a feminized version of rabbi – on Sara Hurwitz, staff member at his New York synagogue, the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale. After the Agudah condemnation and talks with RCA officials, Rabbi Weiss said he didn't intend to confer the title on anyone else, saying Orthodox unity was of more pressing importance.

Google Buys Start-up

JERUSALEM — Google bought its first Israeli firm. Google said April 27 that it's buying privately backed start-up Labpixies, which develops personalized web gadgets for Google's personalized search page iGoogle and mobile devices. The $25-million deal is the first for Google in Israel since launching a research and development centre there in 2005. Labpixies' 10 staffers will be integrated into Google Israel's Tel Aviv office.

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NAOMI CHAZAN
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF ISRAEL'S DEMOCRACY

Israel's democracy, a source of pride and strength, has recently been tested, with attacks on basic human rights and the role of the Supreme Court. The New Israel Fund (NIF), deeply involved in these issues for over 30 years, leads Israel in an ongoing struggle to empower the underprivileged.

NIF's president and former Knesset Deputy Speaker Professor Naomi Chazan has been personally attacked in recent controversial assaults on NIF and the NGOs it supports. She will update us on developments in Israel and share her vision of Israeli democracy.

SUNDAY, MAY 9, 2010, 7:30 PM
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Koffler exhibit captures life in pre-Nazi Germany

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

Time is at a halt, if only for the next month, in the Kiever Synagogue.

The shul in Kensington Market is playing host to artist E.C. Woodley's "Auguststrasse 25."

Run in conjunction with the Koffler Centre for the Arts, the exhibit is the latest in the gallery's projected four-year run of travelling exhibits, as the Koffler Centre waits for renovations to be completed.

Woodley, a Toronto-based sound artist and composer, has built a makeshift shrine to pre-Nazi secular Jewish German life: a typical Berlin living room of the late 1920s, located at Auguststrasse 25.

The décor is unremarkable, yet it captures the normality of the everyday lives of prewar European Jews, who didn't realize what was to come. We can't help but shudder.

A round mahogany table is placed across from a lived-in-looking sofa. Contemporary German novels are scattered on a coffee table. Sourced from a variety of antique dealers and galleries in the city, all the furniture is authentically prewar.

From Auguststrasse 25 *[Isaac Applebaum photo]*

According to several copies of the popular dailies *Berliner Tageblatt* and *Neue Berliner-Zeitung*, which are piled atop the writing desk, the year is 1928. The viewer knows that the Nazis are slowly but surely working their way into power – yet everything seems like life as usual in this modest but well-furnished middle-class living room.

A young woman in her mid-20s fiddles around in the room aimlessly – flipping through a 1920s-era German translation of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* for a few pages, and then shuffles off to the writing desk, where she writes a few lines to a far-off friend, or so we are allowed to guess. Played by actress Charlotte Corbeil-Coleman, the young woman, named Lottie by the artist, is a permanent fixture of the installation – meant at once to pull you in and draw you out.

"The idea is not to do theatre as if there were an end," says Woodley. "The performance continues for six hours per day, whether anyone is there to bear witness to it or not. The experience of viewing the piece changes with the shifting of the light during the hours of the day, and some of the most beautiful changes in light and in Lottie's specific presence may go unseen.

Continued on page 19

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Greater Toronto Area

Remember Jerusalem

From the editor's desk...

It probably ranked as one of the most stunningly ignorant, deplorably disingenuous or pointedly provocative statements of modern time. Or, perhaps even all of them.

At the Camp David summit in the year 2000, Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat is reported to have said to U.S. President Bill Clinton, "I am a religious man, and I will not allow it to be written of me [in history] that I have... confirmed the existence of the so-called temple underneath the mountain." The statement was reported in the London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Aug. 12, 2000. Some two years later, in an interview published in the same paper on Oct. 5, 2002, Arafat expanded upon his views of the existence of the Temple in Jerusalem.

"For 34 years, they [the Jews] have dug tunnels, the most dangerous of which is the great tunnel. They found not a single stone proving that the Temple of Solomon was there, because historically the Temple was not in Palestine [at all]. They found only remnants of a shrine of the Roman Herod." (The translations from Arabic are by the Middle East media research institute, MEMRI.)

Arafat's declaration, however, was not simply the result of a momentary intellectual infirmity or the temporary wiping clean of his historical chalkboard. It was, rather, one of a series of statements by Palestinian political, religious and academic leaders reflecting deeply held historical and theological beliefs.

For example, on Aug. 25, 2000, Arafat's eventual successor, Mahmoud Abbas, was quoted saying much the same thing.

Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the former mufti of Jerusalem was even more strident in the expression of his views. On Jan. 17, 2001, he told the German publication *Die Welt*, "There is not [even] the smallest indication of the existence of a Jewish Temple on this place in the past. In the whole city, there is not even a single stone indicating Jewish history... The Jews cannot legitimately claim [the Western] Wall, neither religiously nor historically. The Committee of the League of Nations recommended in 1930, to allow the Jews to pray there, in order to keep them quiet. But by no means did it acknowledge that the wall belongs to them."

Tayseer Tamimi, chief religious justice of the PA, told a television audience on June 9, 2009, "I know of Muslim and Christian holy sites in [Jerusalem]. I don't know of any Jewish holy sites in it... Israel has been excavating since 1967 in search of remains of their Temple or their fictitious Jewish history."

And so on.

An excellent account of this Palestinian revisionism has been written by Ricki Hollander for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA). Dated July 6, 2009, it is titled *The Battle Over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount*.

The Arabs in Mandatory Palestine did not always deny a Jewish connection to Jerusalem. They recognized and understood the interconnection between Jewish, Christian and Muslim history. And they made no attempt to erase the Jewish part or indeed Judaism from the sequence of the establishment of the three monotheisms.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center has recently released a facsimile of the original 1924 English-language publication, *A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Al-Sharif*, prepared for and published by the Supreme Moslem Council in Jerusalem. It must be pointed out, too, that the head of the council at that time was the notorious Haj Amin al-Husseini, who later became Adolf Hitler's active and zealous ally in the campaign to annihilate Jews.

Al-Haram Al-Sharif translates from the Arabic as the August (or Noble) Sanctuary. It is the Arabic name for the Temple Mount. The document was intended as a guide for visitors unfamiliar with the religious and other sensibilities of the place.

The author(s) of the booklet very honestly states on page one, "[F]or the purposes of this guide, which confines itself to Muslim period, the starting point is the year 637 AD. In that year, the Caliph Omar occupied Jerusalem, and one of his first acts was to repair to this site, which had already become sacred in the eyes of Muslims."

But the immediately preceding sentence is quite instructive and definitive of the then-widely held view even by the Arabs there of the history of the August Sanctuary.

"The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. *Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute.* [My emphasis] This, too, is the spot, according to universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. (2 Samuel XXIV, 25)'"

Since the reunion – on the 28th day of Iyar during the Six Day War in 1967 – of east and west Jerusalem, of the Old City and the New City, the identity of the site has been in dispute. Since then, there has been a concerted and calculated campaign by Palestinian leaders to deny any Jewish link to the city of Jerusalem. Since then, too, we celebrate the 28th day of Iyar as Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day. It falls this year on May 12.

Palestinian leaders and even the British Advertising Standards Authority, we have learned in recent days, are striving to disconnect Jews from Jerusalem. We must oppose them. In some way, either with children, friends, colleagues or even in sole company, we must remember Jerusalem next week.

To do so is not an act of politics. It is a personal and national affirmation. It is even an affirmation of the history and the values of western civilization. There are very few higher causes right now.

– MBD

See JN

STAMPING 60 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

The governments of Canada and Israel held a ceremony last week in Ottawa to celebrate the joint issue of a postage stamp commemorating 60 years of diplomatic relations and friendship. Pictured from from left are MP James Lunney, Canada Post president and CEO Moya Greene, Transport Minister John Baird, Minister of State for Transport Rob Merrifield, Israeli Ambassador Miriam Ziv and Israel Post president and CEO Avi Hochman.

[Photo courtesy of the Israeli Embassy]

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CHILDREN SING AT QUEEN'S PARK

Grade 5, 6, and 7 members of Bialik Hebrew Day School's choir (seen below) were invited to sing at the Ontario legislature on April 26. The performance was part of an annual Canadian Society for Yad Vashem ceremony honouring Holocaust survivors.

SURVIVORS HONOURED

Premier Dalton McGuinty, second from right, joined the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem on April 26 in honouring 18 Holocaust survivors who have made contributions to their communities and Ontario. The premier, the consul general of Israel, Amir Gissin, second from left, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Eric Hoskins (rear middle), and York Centre MPP Monte Kwinter, fourth from right, presented each honoree with a scroll. "Today we honour 18 Holocaust survivors whose journey out of that nightmare brought them to Ontario, to pursue the dream of a new life," McGuinty said. "Through hard work, through sacrifice, they have made that dream a reality. Ontario is much stronger for it." The survivors honoured were Luba Drewnowsky, Herschel Perl, Max T. Eisen, Itzhak Pilc, Syma and David Forberg, Rachel Piuti, Gertie (Gitla) Gotlieb, David and Zenia Rybowski, Alexander Levin, Maia Toivis, Ora Markstein, Manya and Herschel Wise, Leslie Meisels, Seymour Zweig and Joseph Peretz.

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Keynote Speaker

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President, Yeshiva University

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SAVE THE DATE
06.13.10

Greater Toronto Area

JIAS aims to help parents, teens

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

JIAS Toronto and Jewish Family & Child are planning a series of workshops on helping teens and parents deal with the common issues that young people face in today's world.

Joanna Sasson Morrison, co-ordinator of community development services at JIAS, said the workshops have come about as the result of an annual grant from the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services aimed at potentially at-risk families.

Workshops planned for common issues facing young people

They are planning separate workshops for parents and teens, she said, in order to give teens a safe space away from their parents, where the teens can talk openly.

Shauna Sidney, co-ordinator of family life education at JF&CS, said the first workshop planned for adults, on May 27 and teens, on June 9, is on youth and the Internet.

"Being that computers are such a predominant factor in teens lives today, [we want] teens and their parents to become educated on the safe use of computers and the Internet, and be aware of some the dangers lurking," she said.

The May 27 panel includes Paul Gillespie, a former leader of the child exploitation section of the Toronto Police Services sex crime unit; Rhonda Polisuk, an elementary school principal; Harvey Dupras, a civil litigator and representative from beyondborders.org – Canada's global voice against child sexual exploitation – Howard Hurwitz, director of children's services at JF&CS, and Talyah Breslin, supervisor of child protection at JF&CS.

"We want to empower parents to have the right to monitor teens. When there are dangers involved, they should know that they have the right to keep [their children] safe," Sidney said.

Hurwitz said that many parents are unaware of the dangers that can exist online. "Kids as young as three years old are using the Internet, and young children have been lured by adult predators. We want to highlight this issue. We are presenting a great panel of experts, and it is vital for parents to attend."

Miri Ben-Dat, a social worker at JIAS, said that the grant is also being used to form a group aimed at teens ages 14 to 19 who are potentially at risk. "Many immigrant teens are trying to navigate our culture, and we want to help them adapt. By running this program, we hope to give them the necessary information to help them make smart choices."

A number of workshops will teach parents and teens about Internet safety. [*Jeff Rosen photo*]

At a special session on May 16, she said, a family life educator will talk about personal relationships and healthy sexual behaviour.

Sidney said that on Sept. 28 in York Region, a forum for parents about teens and drug use is in the planning stages.

"Family life educators in schools have reported that kids are nervous about [the prevalence] of drugs in high schools, and parents need to know about their concerns.

"The forum will include an educator who will talk about what is going on in York Region, a youth who will talk from a student's perspective and a parent."

She said that the two agencies are stretching their grant to the fullest. "We want to address sensitive topics, in order to keep youth safe and secure."

For information or to register for events, call Mary, 416-638-7800, ext. 212, or www.jfandcs.com.

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Getting to a place they had already passed

Diplomatic pronouncements emanated from the Middle East last weekend as if carried by continuous bursts of exploding hot air. A veritable flurry of press releases swirled across the wire services announcing the now settled expectation that Israelis and Palestinians would imminently resume talking about the possibility of a peace agreement. Though the talks will not be with each other, there will, however, be talks. Indeed they are rumoured to be scheduled to begin this month.

The list of communiqués was indeed impressive:

• The Arab League met on Saturday and gave its approval for the Palestinians to hold U.S.-mediated indirect negotiations with Israel.

• The Palestine Liberation Organization, (PLO) the largest constituent body of the Palestinian Authority (PA), announced it would meet this week to vote on proceeding with the indirect talks. PA President Mahmoud Abbas also announced that he will visit Washington later this month for talks with U.S. officials "to push the peace process forward."

The PLO and PA will of course approve entering indirect talks. The Arab League's blessing ensures the Arab-man-on-the-street will not be upset with the decision. Moreover, it's very likely that the Obama administration has made a commitment of some sort to the PA that the Palestinians are keeping in their back diplomatic pocket. They don't want to risk its fulfilment.

• After the Arab League's pronouncement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the Arab League's decision. This was the springboard for the additional news that Netanyahu would visit Egypt this week to confer with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the soon-to-be-restarted-albeit-indirect peace talks.

• And of course, fastening all of the statements in a tightly bound red, white and blue ribbon was the announcement that U.S. special envoy George Mitchell was expected to return to Israel this week to lay the ground rules for the indirect talks.

In the misery-focused theatre of Middle East diplomacy, the mere appearance of movement is celebrated as actual motion.

But let us not forget that it was the PA that stopped direct talks with Israel in December 2008. To that point, Palestinian leaders and Israeli leaders had been speaking directly, face to face, sitting across the table since 1993. After Netanyahu took office in March 2009, the PA hardened its refusal to negotiate by demanding that Israel first halt all construction in the West Bank and east Jerusalem.

And now, the spate of press releases celebrates the likelihood that the PA has finally agreed to indirect peace talks with Israel (i.e., with the United States). Israel and the PA appear to have arrived at a place that they had already passed as recently as 18 months ago.

Only in the Middle East can this be called progress.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Defying worldwide protests – including hundreds of Jewish demonstrators lining a road to and from the site – U.S. President Ronald Reagan laid a wreath at a German military cemetery in Bitburg, Germany, where SS troops are buried. Earlier the same day, Reagan and West German chancellor Helmut Kohl visited the site of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where Reagan read from the *Diary of Anne Frank*.

Editorials & Letters

Dry Bones IT'S SIMPLE
OBAMA IS NOT SELLING ISRAEL OUT!!
NO?
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IF HE WERE SELLING ISRAEL OUT . . .
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Britain's rejection of Israel's ad

Your editorial on the regulatory agency of the British government nixing an Israel Government Tourist Office ad showing the Western Wall got the remedy right but missed the point ("Where dishonesty trumps fair play," April 22). You suggest that the controversy is a commercial speech issue, and a question of fact. They argue that it is a political issue, and the ad an international legal fraud on the people of Britain. They've got the issue – though not the part about the ad's legal accuracy – right. You don't.

This is a political issue for the simple reason that the British government has chosen to make it into one. That's why they are wrong to regulate it. The state has a business being in the business of the nation. It has no business protecting the public from political or legal controversy. Even the U.S. Supreme Court has held that commercial speech, as distinct from political speech, can be closely regulated to protect consumers against fraud and deceptive ads. Your citing of international law to prove the facts is irrelevant to this distinction. Law is not fact. It is about regulation of fact. And that is the point. The British government is misusing universally recognized state powers to regulate commercial speech to regulate the political views of the nation. That's the point.

The British government does not understand fundamental principles of freedom of speech, and its place in a democratic society. Neither it seems, I am sad to say, does your paper.

Stefan Braun
Thornhill, Ont.

Editor's note: Our April 22 editorial incorrectly stated that the decision to ban an Israel Government Tourist Office ad depicting the Western Wall came from a regulatory agency of the British government. In fact, the Advertising Standards Authority is an independent, voluntary complaints body set up in 1962 by the advertising industry.

* * *

IAW is alienating people

Letter writer Gary Gerofsky is putting a damper on what is actually a real reason for Jewish university students to celebrate ("IAW is an intifadah against truth," letters, April 15). Israeli Apartheid Week was "milder" this year, pretty well across the board, i.e. all Canadian campuses. How can Gerofsky say that the IAW campaign is growing more professional when observation showed that at some places, such as York University, it was practically non-existent? They did not even have a table set up, while pro-Israel groups had three tables in Vari Hall. IAW is not, and never has been, "very slick." According to Barry Rubin, a writer on international affairs, the very stridency of the IAW movement is alienating all but the already committed. However, I agree with Gerofsky that we must never stop fighting campaigns like IAW.

Rudy Solomonovici
Toronto

* * *

Party's platform like National Socialism

Letter writer Ishay Friedman is dead wrong about the ultra-right-wing Jobbik party in Hungary ("The left is the right in Hungary, April 22). Please don't be misled, no matter how much one is an opponent of the political left. I have been listening, in Hungarian, to the various speeches of Jobbik's leader, Gábor Vona, and Krisztina Morvai, who is one of Jobbik's three European Parliament members, and their platform sounds very much like National Socialism, with a good deal of "Christian" and "pure" Hungarian values mixed in. We all know from a sorrowful history what that stood for in the past. Not to mention their hook-up with the banned Magyar Gárda, a semi-military group that is parading openly, intimidating the Roma population and Jews, and is reminiscent of the late, but not dead, Arrow Cross hooligans of yesteryear.

Judy Weissenberg Cohen
Toronto

* * *

More on pharmacy frat

Just to add a bit of human interest to your article on the rebirth of Nu chapter of Rho Pi Phi on campus at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy ("Undergraduate fraternity reborn," April 22), I'd like to mention that one of our inductees, Jared Garshowitz, is the grandson of David Garshowitz, a pharmacist who is still in practice and was one of the early members of Nu chapter about 60 years ago. Both he and Neil Katzman, a former chancellor of Nu chapter, were instrumental in making the initial contact with Josh Lieblein and the current inductees that led to the rebirth of Nu chapter.

Fred Stoll
Chancellor
Rokeah Chapter Toronto
Rho Pi Phi International Pharmaceutical Fraternity

LET THEM GO...
Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

'Evil is real. So is good. There is a choice.'

By GARY GOLDBERG

The 2010 March of the Living is a two-week odyssey that is truly a trip of a lifetime. It included a week of remembrance and learning in Poland, followed by a week of renewal and celebration in Israel.

Six hundred participants from across Canada, representing three generations, journeyed together. Most significant was the group of octogenarian Holocaust survivors who are so committed to this program that several have accompanied as many as 10 trips to date.

The chaperone leaders who supervise the student participants and support the survivor docents are omnipresent and indefatigable.

Grade 11 students constituted the vast majority and core of our delegation. "This is the last generation to hear the stories of the Holocaust directly from the survivors themselves," Eli Rubenstein, national director of the March of the Living program, said. "Thus it is both a privilege and an obligation for these young people to listen to, and learn from, the stories of the survivors. In the time, when the survivors can no longer tell their stories, they will be the 'witnesses for the witnesses.'"

This year, an adult group of 36 people – many of whom like my wife, Linda, and me, are children of Holocaust survivors – was included. We travelled on a concurrent itinerary, joining the students at many sites and for all major events.

The principal activities in Poland included visits to various sites that are vestiges of a once-vibrant Jewish community that existed for 1,000 years. Three-and-a-half million Jews lived in Poland before 1939, when one in three people in Warsaw was Jewish.

We were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the current voids and the significance of what once was, but is now absent.

To enrich our learning, each participant received a personal diary that contained information about the sites that we would visit; Poland and its history; the Jewish community of Poland before World War II; the Holocaust; Canada's role in World War II, and the history of Zionism and Israel. The diary's opening page includes the "10 goals of the March of the Living," as well as a "pledge" of commitment to increase one's knowledge of our history and heritage and to actively participate in the fight against every form of discrimination manifested against any religion, nationality or ethnic group.

A cataclysmic political event occurred the day after our arrival in Poland. A plane carrying Polish President Lech Kaczynski and a large delegation of Poland's leaders crashed. They were en route to Russia to attend a memorial service for 22,000 Poles massacred in Katyn, Russia, by Soviet secret police during World War II.

A week-long national state of mourning for those killed in the crash left a palpable pall of grief over the country. This profoundly influenced our perceptions and interactions. There was silence in the streets, and numerous memorial services and public vigils took place. The Polish people manifested a will to survive as a stable democratic nation.

The obligation to remember burdened each of us who walked the hallowed ground of the concentration camps and witnessed the symbols of despair and destruction – the barbed wire; the barracks; the warehouses of shoes and personal items; the community marker stones at Treblinka; and perhaps most powerfully, the crematorium and the monument of ashes in Majdanek. Amid the silence, we recited *Kaddish*.

On Yom Hashoah, the actual March of the Living brought 10,000 people together from around the world, including this year, 2,000 Polish participants who joined in silent solidarity. We gathered inside Auschwitz, each with an identification tag listing the individual for whom we marched.

Upon hearing the shrill blast of the shofar, we began to pass under the infamous sign, "Arbeit Macht Frei" – knowing it had recently been stolen, and fortunately recovered – on the way out of the Auschwitz camp for the melancholy three-kilometre march. An extended column of blue and white traversed the rail lines to the collapsed crematoria at Birkenau, where the formal memorial ceremony was held.

We heard names read and realized that that each person who was killed had a family and a story. As Liberal MP Irwin Cotler said to the March of the Living gathering in 2009, the Nazi genocide was "too terrible to imagine, but not too terrible to have happened."

The survivors shared their stories. The entire group of Holocaust survivors demonstrated an edifying ability to see the positive. Despite their formative first-hand exposure to human depravity, they remain motivated by the need to create not destroy, to love not to hate. We were, and continue to be, inspired by them.

The sun shines through an Israeli flag held by two participants on the March of the Living last month in Poland. *[Photo courtesy of the March of the Living]*

Activist and writer Elie Wiesel wrote: "I do not live in the past, but the past lives in me."

I remain haunted by the experience of visiting the concentration camps and the admonishment of philosopher George Santayana: "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Recall, recount, remember. We struggle with this onerous challenge.

The trip is designed not just to expose the young people to the evil and extent of the Holocaust, but also to teach them about the diversity of Jewish life that existed before the Shoah, the courage of those who resisted Nazi tyranny, the heroic actions of the righteous, the strength of the survivors to rebuild their lives after the Holocaust and an appreciation of what Israel is.

A massive volcanic eruption in Iceland filled the air over Poland with a different type of smoke and ash when we were there, bringing air traffic to a halt in Europe. Our groups were fortunate to be able to leave on the last flights before the lengthy closure of the Warsaw airport. We left Poland for Israel with a new understanding of what it means to remember, to witness, to live.

We arrived in Israel at 4:30 a.m. and headed to Jaffa to observe the dawn over Tel Aviv's magnificent modern skyline, which sparkled in the sunshine. These downtown towers are the monuments of the Jewish rebirth – alive and flourishing. They stand in vivid contrast to the gravestones and the monuments to the past that we visited in Poland.

We understand that though we cannot change the past, we can create the future. One hums the words of the Israeli national anthem, *Hatikvah*: "We haven't lost our hope, of 2,000 years, to be a free people in our own land".

The most powerful and moving event for me in Israel was the Yom Hazikaron ceremony at Ammunition Hill memorial park in Jerusalem. The following morning, we visited Yad Vashem and its Valley of the (Lost) Communities. We were adjacent to Mount Herzl cemetery when a mournful siren marked the solemn minutes of public silence in recognition of the fallen.

The March of the Living is aptly named, for it's more about life than about death.

We began by being exposed to the blackness of what transpired during the Holocaust, but concluded the trip with flags flying and the joy and excitement of Yom Ha'aztmaut. The ubiquitous fireworks displays reminded us of the sights and sounds of the many battles that have been fought in the last 62 years to establish, protect and preserve the Jewish state.

We learn from history by observing and considering it. But knowledge without understanding is insufficient. Understanding without action is wasted. We must continue to ask this question, "Why?" Why is there discrimination, hatred, tyranny, and mass murder of innocent people? We do not require a definitive answer in order to act in response to these threats.

There is in society a long inventory and continuum of hate – teasing, bullying, demonizing, dehumanizing, violence and murder. How do we respond? Hatred deserves overt opposition: not indifference, politesse, avoidance or complicity. "Reactivity," not passivity. In the words of Auschwitz survivor Hugo Gryn, "Evil is real. So is good. There is a choice."

We returned from the March and reverted to our daily lives and concerns. The participants are now more informed about the history of the Holocaust, have a renewed sense of Jewish identity and an intensified connection to Israel, and an awareness of the importance of fighting injustice, prejudice and hatred.

The key lesson that I learned from the March of the Living experience, at which we studied the past to prepare ourselves for the future, is that we must act to challenge, to confront and to oppose the elements in our society that threaten humane and democratic values wherever they are endangered.

I believe that our future community leadership will be a group of young people whose dedication was ignited by their experience on the March of the Living, who engender a sense of responsibility for one another. *"Kol Yisrael aravim ze le ze."* We are the guarantors of one another's destiny.

The participants on the March of the Living have learned important lessons from that experience about how to live. *Am Yisrael Chai.* The people of Israel live.

For more information on the March of the Living, visit www.marchoftheliving.org/.

Gary Goldberg is chair of the Ontario-Israel Research and Development Monitoring Committee and national president of the Canadian Technion Society.

Opinions

Lighting a candle in the dark

Why do you believe in God?

Most of the year, the answer is obvious: the world is a shining example of divine creativity. Philosophers call this the "teleological argument" for God, and indeed, during the summer twilight, you cannot fail but to be moved by the living poetry of the natural order, the divine harmony of birds, crickets and rustling leaves.

Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz in Montreal

But on Yom Hashoah, this argument collapses. It's not only the deaths of six million people that overwhelm us; it's the barbarity with which they were murdered. The Polish resistance leader Jan Karski reported on how a group of 120 Jews were forced into a small train car. On the floor was quicklime, which generates enormous heat when mixed with water. The sweat dripping down caused the quicklime to bubble, and slowly, the people began to burn. These poor victims cried in agony for a day until they met their inevitable deaths.

How can one believe in God when such evil stalks the earth?

In the dark shadows of the Holocaust, faith becomes a painful question rather than an easy answer.

However, we still teach, talk and think about the Holocaust. We even send teenagers to visit concentration camps on the March of the Living.

Presumably, exposing gentle students to the Holocaust should leave them cynical and bitter. But strangely enough, the students return inspired. They confront darkness and horror, yet they walk away with a spiritual experience. Why does this happen?

Because man instinctively resists evil. The darkness of evil pushes our souls to respond. The Bible says that "man's soul is God's candle," and deep inside, our souls hunt for righteousness. (Yes, this is still true despite the fact that the Nazis corrupted the image of God, burying their souls under a miasma of evil.)

Even in the desperation of the death camps, there were heroes of kindness, like the man who saved Mayer Schondorf's life. During a death march, Mayer's cap blew off. Frozen and broken, Mayer wanted to step out of line and get shot by the guards. The man behind him encouraged Mayer to hold on, and when they passed a corpse at the side of the road, this man risked his life to grab the corpse's cap and give it to Mayer. Enveloped by cruelty, this anonymous hero lit a candle of kindness.

When surrounded by evil, belief comes from within. Repulsed, our spirits demand that we transform the world. And that impulse to do good is powerful evidence of the divine spirit within.

Our souls, God's candles on earth, can still light the path of faith in the darkest of places.

Balance the tears with triumph

Remarks delivered to Canadian March of the Living delegates at the April 19 ceremony marking the transition from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha'atzmaut.

I'm confused. I must admit that after this moving ceremony, I don't know whether to laugh or cry. I'm sure many of you have shed your share of tears both over the unfathomable losses during the Shoah in Europe and the painful losses experienced right here in Israel. But in the wake of the Holocaust, never give up an opportunity to laugh. Laughter is one of the many things the Nazis tried stealing from us. In the classic Christmas movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, we learn that some Christians believe that every time a bell rings another angel earns his wings. I say: every time a Jew laughs, the Nazis lose once again, and Hell burns just a little hotter for Hitler and his henchmen.

Gil Troy in Montreal

But think about it: how do you explain a trip that includes a visit to Auschwitz, the ultimate death camp, and celebrates Israeli Independence Day at Mini-Israel, which is basically a theme park? And which better reflects the human condition and Jewish history, the horror show or the funhouse? The answer of course, is "yes," both. And that is our challenge, as we turn on a dime to go from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha'atzmaut, and as you return home to redefine your Jewish identity and your Jewish commitments following this extraordinary Jewish journey you just took.

Whenever I meet students at the gates just outside Jerusalem's Old City, I invite them to enter the Old City with someone on their shoulder. It could be a grandparent who dreamed of making it to Jerusalem and never did. It could be a historic figure like King David or King Solomon, who built the place. It could be a Holocaust victim whose plans to visit were cut short.

And I know on this trip you have been introduced to "individual" stories to help personalize and internalize this greatest crime in human history – otherwise the enormity is overwhelming.

As you go home – and you will get home despite the volcanic ash – remember you have two shoulders. On one, place a victim. On the other, place a victor. On one place a symbol of the traumas of Jewish history. On another place a symbol of the triumphs. Don't just remember Auschwitz, remember Mini-Israel. Don't just remember the crimes of history, remember how far you have journeyed from Auschwitz to Jerusalem, how far we have journeyed in 62 years. Remember the heroes of Latrun and the everyday heroism it sometimes takes to be Israeli surrounded by so many enemies.

Remember, history hurts, but also history heals. History healed those who survived the ashes to build the Jewish state. History healed those who survived the Arab onslaught in 1948 to make this state thrive. History healed our people, who, by tapping into the power of Zionism, the power of Jewish statehood, balanced the vale of tears with the tales of triumph.

I end – as a good professor should – by giving you homework. Don't let this experience end when you arrive home. And if I bump into you on the streets of Montreal or Toronto or Jerusalem in the next few weeks, don't tell me how meaningful this experience was. What I want you to do is go home and become change agents in your Jewish communities back home. I want you to become Jewishly ambitious, setting Jewish goals for yourself just as you – and your parents – set academic goals and career goals. I want you to become good Jewish citizens and write a glorious new chapter in Jewish history.

I want to bump into you a year, two years, 10 years from now. Then, I will want to hear what a meaningful experience this was. But that will only happen if you learn from the heroes who made this state: seize the moment, make history happen, make history heal, make your community better, make your Jewish experience valuable. Chag Samayach.

Toward a renewed Zionism

I love talking to Israeli taxi drivers. They know everything about everyone and everything. They're psychologists, political analysts, archeologists, historians and philosophers. Just open up with *"Nu, mah yihyeh?"* ("Nu, what will be?") and you're in for a real ride.

The other day, I had quite a long ride, so there was a lot of time to reflect with the driver on the upcoming holidays of Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Rabbi Elyse Goldstein in Jerusalem

Like most Israelis, he was engaged in a general national stock-taking. Newspapers and radios asked hard existential questions about Israeli self-identity, Zionism, patriotism, war, peace, compromise, achievement, and missed opportunities.

When I asked him "what will be," he shared with me a long, sad list of the woes of Israeli society: the rudeness of Israeli kids; the tedious and inane bureaucracies; the tensions between Jew and Arab, religious and secular, Ashkenazi and Sephardi; and the scandal of government officials who take bribes and sexually harass and exploit their own workers and openly practice the *"protectzia"* of giving jobs to family and friends.

He got angry about the mess that would be left over after all the Independence Day picnics and felt depressed about the chances for peace. He lamented the loss of the neighbourhoods of his youth, where everyone knew each other and shared in joys and sorrows. He remembered the days when Zionist ideology was the binding cord of Israeli life.

He asked, "Maybe that was the Israel that was? Like the kibbutz which has privatized and is now a five-star hotel with a spa, there is nothing wrong with change," he said, "except when we get stuck and can't handle the Israel that is." And then, with a long sigh, he added, "But I love Eretz Yisrael. It's like a marriage – I'm in it for the long run, and even when it's far from perfect, I am still committed to it."

One sees that commitment in a different way in Israel than in the Diaspora on Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut. I will never forget the 11 a.m. siren and the freeze-frame of activity on the streets and roads, as Israelis stopped to remember the nation's fallen soldiers on Yom Hazikaron, and the unbelievable emotion of going to Har Herzl to place flowers on the graves of young people I've never met, along with tens of thousands of other Israelis.

And then came Yom Ha'atzmaut – when the streets were alive with dancing and singing until the wee hours of the morning, with fireworks every hour, and street fairs and festivals, and everyone wearing blue and white.

The festive feeling runs deep, and there's a gushing, rushing sense of exhilaration and pride that makes you want to hug perfect strangers and cry with joy. But all of this comes with an underlying seriousness about the national "project" of Zionism. Even during the barbecues, we asked each other: How are we doing? Why isn't it working the way it should? What does it mean to be a democratic Jewish state? Why is it so hard so much of the time? And why do we still love it so much?

Israel isn't a "young state" anymore, a baby nation made up of survivors and chalutzim with nowhere else to go, but a nation with 62 years of experience. We love it still, but we need to have a deeper reason than "because we have nowhere else to go" or "because it's my home" or "because I love being able to eat out on Passover."

It's become clear that what's needed for the future is a renewed Zionist ideology that stems from strength of purpose, clear vision, collaborative dream-building, and leadership that galvanizes – a renewed Zionism that engages people in the "project" of nationhood and the goal of mature statehood, and a renewed Zionism that inspires even thoughtful, yet cynical, Israeli taxi drivers.

Read Rabbi Goldstein's blog from Israel at www.jerusalemofgoldstein.blogspot.com.

The Kirshner File

The making of *Nuremberg*

Sandra Schulberg's five-year quest to restore a historically important documentary about the Nuremberg Nazi war crimes trial, one of the greatest courtroom dramas in modern history, was a labour of love.

The film, *Nuremberg: Its Lessons For Today*, which was screened recently at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, captivated her in no small part due to the fact that it was made by her late father, Stuart, who went on to forge a successful career as a television producer in the United States.

Sheldon Kirshner in Toronto

Commissioned by the U.S. War Department and the American military government in occupied Germany, the movie was completed in 1948 and widely shown in western Germany.

For a variety of reasons, the U.S. government blocked its distribution to American theatres, thereby consigning it to obscurity until Sandra Schulberg and her colleague, Josh Waletzky, came along to rescue it from gathering further dust.

Premiered in Holland last November in conjunction with a ceremony in The Hague in which Nuremberg prosecutor Benjamin Ferencz was awarded the Dutch equivalent of the Nobel Prize, *Nuremberg* was subsequently shown to 450 high school students in Germany. Schulberg, who is based in New York City, recalls that particular screening with poignancy.

As she put it, "Although Germany does a good job of educating its youth about World War II and the Holocaust, I think the film was a revelation to the 16- and 17-year-old kids who saw it. I told them that they were completely innocent of any of the crimes portrayed in the film, and that they and their fellow teenagers outside Germany were the hope of the world and that it was up to them to wear the mantle of the Nuremberg legacy and fight for peace and justice."

After being presented at the Berlin Film Festival last winter and receiving its North American premiere in Toronto this past April, *Nuremberg* is scheduled to appear at the Jerusalem Film Festival in mid-July, followed by its general release in the United States in September.

As Schulberg suggests, the story of how this film came to be made is the stuff of post-war politics and intrigue. While preparing for the Nuremberg tribunal – which convened on Nov. 20, 1945 and ended on Oct. 1, 1946 – the lead U.S. prosecutor, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson, decided to use film and photographic evidence to convict the Nazi war criminals on trial. Among a group of 23 defendants, they included Hermann Goring, Adolf Hitler's second-in-command, and Albert Speer, the minister of armaments and production.

Jackson believed that a cinematic account of the trial and of the rise and fall of Nazi Germany would achieve two related objectives: to show the German public that the Nazi leadership had been treated fairly, and to leave a permanent record of Nazi aggression and crimes against humanity.

A special U.S. film team run by the Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the Central Intelligence Agency, was formed for this purpose under the direction of the Hollywood director, John Ford, whose critically acclaimed movies ran the gamut from *Stagecoach* to *How Green Was My Valley*.

Assigned to Ford's team were, among others, Stuart Schulberg and his older brother, Budd, whose iconic novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, had been published in 1941. They were the sons of former Paramount studio chief B.P. Schulberg.

Sandra Schulberg

The brothers were not unknown quantities to Ford. During the war, Stuart served with the OSS' photographic branch, which was headed by Ford. Animated by Jackson's request, Ford dispatched Stuart to Europe in the summer of 1945 to acquire incriminating Nazi film footage that could be used at the forthcoming Nuremberg trial.

Budd joined the hunt, and during the next four months, the Schulbergs and their colleagues found what they needed, including the photo archives of Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's personal photographer.

Stuart wrote and directed *Nuremberg* – the official documentary about the trial – while his colleague, Joseph Zigman, edited it. Eric Pommer, the producer of the Weimar-era film, *The Blue Angel*, supervised the production. Excerpts from two American films, *The Nazi Plan* and *Nazi Concentration Camps*, were incorporated into *Nuremberg*.

Stuart Schulberg during World War II

Seventy-eight minutes in length, *Nuremberg* would be an integral component of the U.S. de-Nazification campaign, such as it was, in postwar Germany. Shown to a German audience for the first time in Stuttgart in November 1948, it was then exhibited around Germany over the next year and a half, eliciting a wide range of reactions.

In a reflection of its looming rivalry with the United States during the Cold War period, the Soviet Union produced its own documentary on the trial, *Judgment of the People*.

Much to Stuart's probable disappointment, *Nuremberg* was shelved after its screening in Germany. John Norris, an American reporter on the staff of the *Washington Post*, investigated the U.S. government's decision, but he never really got to the bottom of it. Nor could he establish why the United States refused to sell the film to Pare Lorentz, an American producer. Later, Norris concluded that *Nuremberg* had been filed away because the Truman administration feared that it might cause a backlash in Germany and interfere with the U.S. goal of rebuilding Germany's economy through the Marshall Plan.

With *Nuremberg* suppressed, Stuart continued to produce de-Nazification films for the U.S. military government's documentary film unit in Berlin. During the early 1950s, he and a partner produced feature films in western Germany. Subsequently, he was recruited to administer the Marshall Plan's motion picture section in Paris, where Sandra Schulberg was born.

In 1956, having returned to the United States, he and Budd made *Wind Across the Everglades*, a feature film, for Warner Brothers. Returning to the documentary form in 1961, he joined *David Brinkley's Journal*, the first TV news magazine program. In 1969, he was hired as the producer of NBC's *Today* show. He died in 1979 at the age of 56 while producing an NBC special.

To Sandra Schulberg's regret, she never discussed her father's early projects, including *Nuremberg*, with him. But after being asked by an American film scholar how his de-Nazification films had influenced his career at NBC, Schulberg – a seasoned producer and film financier – took a new-found interest in his work.

Six years ago, the director of the Berlin Film Festival asked Schulberg to curate a series on the Marshall Plan films that her dad had supervised. He proposed launching it with *Nuremberg*, which she had never seen.

As a result of these deliberations, Schulberg became interested in her father's film, the original picture negative and sound elements of which were lost or destroyed.

She and Waletzky – a documentary film director, editor and writer – created a new 35mm negative and reconstructed the soundtrack.

The restoration, which cost just under $200,000, allows audiences to hear Jackson's opening and closing statements as well as the testimony of the Nazi defendants and their defence lawyers.

She is pleased with the film, saying it stands as a dire warning to politicians and nations planning and waging what Jackson described as "aggressive war."

But she is sorry that her uncle Budd did not live to see *Nuremberg*. "I'm sad he died eight weeks before I could show him the first print," she said. "But he knew I was very close, and I think he was proud."

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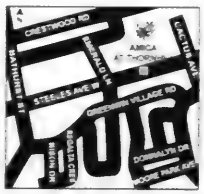

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Holy Blossom cantor to be feted May 11

30 years of service at Holy Blossom

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Cantor Benjamin Z. Maissner – known familiarly as Beny – will be honoured at a gala evening May 11 at the Royal Conservatory TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning's Koerner Hall.

Along with Maissner's choirs, and cantors he has mentored, the 11 other performers at the event – most of whom have a personal connection with him – will include Colm Wilkinson, Michael Burgess, Joshua Nelson, Amy Sky, Theresa Tova, Daniel Domb and Ofra Harnoy.

Maissner, 65, has been cantor and musical director of Holy Blossom Temple for 30 years. A native of Israel, he was a child cantor who grew up in a family he describes as modern Orthodox.

His uncle, Israel Alter, the former chief cantor of Hanover and later a faculty member at Hebrew Union College (HUC) in New York, was Maissner's role model, he told *The CJN* in his spacious second-floor office at the temple.

When Maissner decided he wanted to study chazzanut, HUC was thus "the more natural place to go," he said.

Maissner – a classically trained lyric tenor – got his start at an egalitarian synagogue in Philadelphia, but says he found his home at Holy Blossom after he became cantor there in July 1979. The synagogue, he added is "much more traditional" than a typical Reform congregation.

With his Orthodox background and two daughters who are Orthodox (he also has a son), Maissner says he lives in two worlds. "I live a traditional life," he said, adding that he studies once a week at an Orthodox yeshiva.

"I'm very proud of being [at Holy Blossom], but I'm very comfortable in the Orthodox [milieu]."

At Holy Blossom, Maissner said that – with the support of the congregation's rabbis, who "saw the virtue of maintaining the high level of music and striving to create participating congregations" – he has been able to "galvanize the congregation into a very unique way of worship," and teach them to daven and participate.

He works with both a professional and a volunteer choir at the synagogue, where "music is very important." As well, he noted, "worship in the sense of community participation is very important to me.

"People do not know what Reform can be, and what Reform is."

Outside of the synagogue, his musical tastes run from "Renaissance all the way to acid rock," and he leads the Lachan Toronto Jewish Chamber Choir, named for his uncle's 1950s-era musical organization. The choir has sung in North America, Shanghai and Nuremberg, Germany.

Cantor Benjamin Maissner

"It's my own dream of promoting high-class Jewish music, not necessarily liturgical," he said. The group's music dates as far back as the 12th century.

Maissner's office – where he has trained at least half a dozen of the city's cantors and others occupying major pulpits elsewhere – is lined with books, CDs, artwork and documents acquired over the course of his career, among them two honorary doctorates of music, from the Jewish Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College, his master's of music degree from Temple University, and a 2004 Choir Olympics poster from Bremen.

In addition to the gala, Holy Blossom will establish a music archive and library in Maissner's name, which will include recordings of ancient Sephardi and Ashkenazi music, compositions and scores by Maissner, by the temple's former musical director and composer Ben Steinberg and by other Jewish musicians.

Greater Toronto Area

Rothschilds to be honoured by Eitz Chaim

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Toronto philanthropist Kurt Rothschild and his wife, Edith, will be the guests of honour at Eitz Chaim Schools' annual dinner May 16.

The event, at Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation, will feature speaker Rabbi Yissocher Frand of Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore.

Rothschild, a board member at the school for almost 50 years, is chair of the World Mizrachi Organization and has served on the boards of a wide range of communal organizations including the Jewish Agency, Israel Bonds, the Jewish National Fund, Canadian Jewish Congress, and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. His interest in education extends to post-secondary institutions such as Yeshiva University, Bar-Ilan University and a large hesder yeshiva in Israel.

"Everyone knows that Kurt will never turn down someone with genuine needs," said UJA Federation's Howard English. "Either he will provide personal financial support, or ask his vast network of friends and contacts to do so – usually both."

When reached in his Toronto office last week, Rothschild apologized for not being available sooner. "I'm going meshuge here. There are so many calls."

Edith and Kurt Rothschild

Rothschild's involvement with Eitz Chaim – the second-oldest Jewish day school in Toronto, with 850 students on three campuses – stems from "its approach to Torah education and general education," which reflects his own philosophy emphasizing both Torah and worldly knowledge.

A native of Cologne, Germany, where he was raised in a modern Orthodox home, Rothschild completed high school in London, England, before going to work in an electrical shop there.

He was interned in England with several thousand other young German Jews and sent to Canada, where he spent two years in an internment camp near Fredericton. Later, he studied electrical engineering at Queen's University.

In the past five decades, the retired businessman – who until 1987 owned a national electrical mechanical consulting company – has seen growth at the school, particularly in its attention to the needs of students requiring special education.

He has also seen much growth in Jewish education in Toronto. "It encompasses a much wider range of the community, and is more focused in the different streams of Judaism, like Reform, Conservative, modern Orthodox, and haredi," he said.

Rothschild believes this has been a positive development "because it [allowed] each segment to educate their children along the lines which they would like."

As well, he added, he would not want to "blur the ideology" that separates those parts of the Jewish community, but at the same time, he would like to see "cordial understanding within the framework of their own worldview.

"I believe in mutual courtesy, understanding and all the things that bind us as being good Jews and good citizens, and loyal to the State of Israel."

Rothschild sees his community involvement as "a very good second career in my life... It gives me satisfaction to be of use to the community and to many private individuals who need help, particularly to help facilitate education of youngsters in Canada and Israel.

"I'm very interested in the welfare of the world Jewish community, and specifically in the physical and communal welfare of Israel."

A senior citizen "by a long shot," Rothschild said that, based on his age alone – which he declined to divulge – "I should take it a lot easier."

With files from Jonathan Rosenblum

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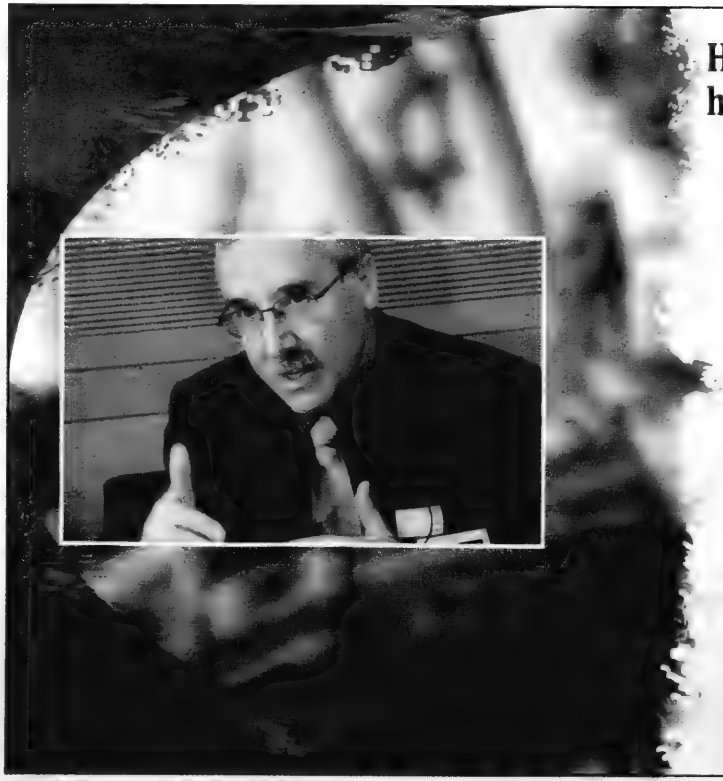

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Community 'heroes' receive inclusion awards

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

Community heroes too often go unthanked. Recently, a few were singled out at the recent awards reception for Itanu Toronto, the inclusion initiative of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

The Community Inclusion Awards of Excellence honour individuals, organizations and programs that have made a difference in the GTA. Recipients for 2010 are Bnei Akiva of Toronto, Beth Torah Congregation, and Dara Kahane, director of Bayview Glen Day Camp.

Survey aims to help those with disabilities

please see page 32

Beth Torah's Rabbi Yossi Sapirman, speaking at the April 22 awards reception, accepted his award with humility, reiterating his congregation's commitment to inclusiveness, regardless of physical, mental or intellectual disability, race, culture, sexual orientation or any other difference.

Sapirman spoke of the distinction between accessibility and inclusion. "If we are accessible but not inclusive, or inclusive but not accessible, can we really call ourselves a community?"

He thanked participants who attend from a Reena group home and who, he says, have inspired others with their "enthusiasm for being Jewish and their deep desire to participate fully. That aspiration has become our sacred commitment."

The dessert reception, held at the CNIB building on Bayview, was itself a model event: beyond Braille signage and wheelchair accessibility, speakers were captioned on a prominent display screen, and the program was printed in a large, clear, legible font.

The evening included introductory remarks from Ontario's lieutenant-governor, David Onley. Onley, who uses a wheelchair as a result of childhood polio, has championed accessibility throughout his career in the public eye, first as a broadcaster and later in his present role.

He pointed out that while individuals with disabilities now have "easy physical access to fast food and hardware stores," they still too often have little or difficult "access to places of spiritual worship."

Onley challenged the Jewish community to do more than simply provide services, but rather, change attitudes toward those who are different. He commended the UJA for its "vision of a more inclusive Jewish community" and its ongoing commitment to breaking down "unwitting but powerful barriers."

Barriers aren't always visible. A youth group may seem diverse, but neglect the social and spiritual needs of children with intellectual disabilities. Through its Shevet Yuval program, Bnei Akiva of Toronto, part of an international religious Zionist youth organization, aims to "take away the idea of 'doing chesed,'" according to leader James Williams, and replace it with one of sincere friendship.

Keynote speaker Ellen Schwartz, right, presents a copy of her book, Lessons from Jacob, to Bnei Akiva representative Margalit Bernstein.
[Mircea Popescu photo]

"People are excited to see [the Shevet Yuval kids]," he says. "People will go out of their way to contact them during the week."

The group holds Shabbatons and weekly learning programs at which every child – regardless of ability – is welcomed. Williams says there are also plans to incorporate further projects with other organizations such as Reena and Bloorview, which operates a children's rehabilitation hospital and provides in-school programs for children and youth with special needs.

Key to Bnei Akiva's success have been training programs providing youth leaders with skills in facilitating diverse groups. "When our staff run programs, it's at a level where everybody in the room, whatever disability you do or don't have, can gain something from the program."

A similar attitude can be seen at Bayview Glen Day Camp, under the leadership of director Dara Kahane. Through its Sunshine program, which integrates special-needs kids into the regular camp program, Kahane says camp becomes a "safe place," for children who often face extreme challenges in their day-to-day lives: it gives them "a chance to be like everybody else."

Continued on page15

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Synagogue, camp among honourees

Continued from page 14

Though children or even adults who see the treatment offered to special-needs kids may say, "that's not fair," for Kahane, fair is "not giving everybody the same thing; fair is giving everybody what they need."

One camper for whom Bayview Glen has made a difference is Jacob Schwartz. Jacob was diagnosed as a newborn with Canavan disease, and doctors told his parents he would never sit up, speak, see or eat. They also said he probably wouldn't live much beyond his third birthday.

His mother, Ellen Schwartz, author of the book *Lessons from Jacob*, was the keynote speaker at the awards event, and talked not only of her family's trials – such as Jacob's seven brain surgeries before his fourth birthday – but also of moments when she can sit back and enjoy Jacob's sunny, appreciative disposition, and the fact that, against all odds, family and friends will celebrate his bar mitzvah this month.

Herself an unsung community hero who has founded an organization, Jacob's Ladder, and raised $2 million toward research and awareness of neurodegenerative diseases, Schwartz called on the Jewish community to "celebrate our special society, open up our minds to a completely different world… a better world."

Attendees at the awards evening, including Beth David's Cheryl Katz, are bringing that message back to their own congregations. "We have to be able to accommodate people." In Ontario, inclusion will become the law in January 2012, requiring synagogues and other organizations to meet provincial accessibility standards. "It's more than just barrier-free – it's how we include other people."

Others, like elementary-school principal Debbie Donsky, are spreading the word beyond the Jewish community. "It's not just the idea of tolerance," says Donsky, who once worked at Bayview Glen, attended to support Kahane. "Both sides have assets… Everyone is welcome, everyone learns from each other."

Representatives of Bnei Akiva of Toronto accept their Community Inclusion Award of Excellence.

Past award recipients have included Reena's Sandy Keshen, Camp George, Chabad-Lubavitch and the late Rabbi Joseph Kelman, who received a lifetime achievement award for nearly 50 years of advocacy for children with developmental disabilities.

The awards evening was the culmination of Community Inclusion Week 2010, which began with the city-wide Shabbat Itanu on April 17 and included other events such as film screenings and lectures.

For more information about the awards, inclusion week, or for resources, including an event planning checklist, visit www.itanutoronto.ca.

Omission

The article "Out of the Cold program hosts art show" (April 15) about the "Into the Light" art show and fundraiser should have indicated that Out of the Cold is a joint program run by Beth Sholom and Beth Tzedec congregations. Each synagogue has contributed both financially and with volunteer staffing to run the program, a partnership that has been in effect for 10 years.

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Media personalities rock out for charities

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Michelle Dubé may be a CTV reporter, but she could have been a rock star. Sort of.

Dressed in a wedding veil and clutching a plastic guitar, Dubé and other members of the media helped launch the Sunnybrook Foundation and Canadian Hadassah WIZO's (CHW) newest fundraiser with the media Top Rock Stars challenge, a video game competition.

"First of all, it's for a good cause, but you get to rock out," said Dubé, who performed Billy Idol's *White Wedding* with her CTV team on the video game Rock Band. "I just thought it'd be the best way to do something for the community."

The video game competition, held at Toronto's Eaton Centre, was a way of promoting Funday Sunday, an all-day event to be held on Nov. 28 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The day will include a marketplace, games and Toronto's Top Rock Stars, a Rock Band competition for people of all ages. All proceeds will go toward Sunnybrook's women and babies program and CHW's initiatives in Israel, which include helping day cares, sheltering teens in distress and protecting women from domestic violence through shelters.

For Sarah Granatowicz, president of CHW Toronto, an organization that supports women and children in Israel and Canada, Rock Band was a good way to launch the fundraiser.

***Today's Parent* was one of four media organizations involved in the CHW and Sunnybrook Foundation's media Top Rock Stars challenge, which helped launch their new fundraiser, Funday Sunday. From left, Gillian Chassels, Sara Smith, Dave Curcio and Sandra Martin.**

"We thought we needed a new event... we're trying to do something big to engage all CHW families," Granatowicz said. "We need to attract young people. This [Rock Band] is the fashion right now."

Jeff O'Hagan, the CEO of the Sunnybrook Foundation, sees the fundraiser as a fun way to help two important organizations.

"I think it's something people can get involved with. It's a bit of a competition, but it's a fun competition," he said of the Rock Band element, adding that CHW and Sunnybrook's fundraising goal is a total of $300,000 by the end of Funday Sunday. Those participating in Toronto's Top Rock Stars will have until November to collect donations.

"It's a big job, but we want to make it fun. We want to get the message out to the community," he said; explaining that including the media in the competition was a way to get their message to the public.

Judges for last week's media Rock Band competition included Erica Ehm, founder of YummyMummyClub.ca, Eric Alper of E! Entertainment, and Cleopatra Williams and Jade Elliot, two cast members from *Jersey Boys*.

Staff from the *Toronto Star*, CTV, *Today's Parent* and Flow 93.5 FM participated, with Flow 93.5 taking top place.

For Dubé, performing onstage wasn't as easy as she thought.

"It was... nerve wracking. I practised all weekend. I didn't want to let my band down," she said. "We're all adults playing a kid's game... This is how you catch people's attention. Everyone's hearing the music, you can't help but stop and have a look."

The Canadian Jewish Shmooze

Welcome to *The CJS*

***The Canadian Jewish News* is proud to welcome *The Canadian Jewish Shmooze* to its publication rooster. We kick things off this week with a blog on Mackenzie Collegiate Institute's 50th anniversary reunion. It can be found at http://canadianjewishnews.blogspot.com/**

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Descendant of Chinese Jews to lecture in Toronto

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

As a descendant of Jews, Shi Lei always knew he was different.

"I was a little boy when I learned of this," Shi said in an interview from his home in Kaifeng, China. "But I didn't know what it meant. As I grew older and read, I began to know something about the Jewish people."

Shi, a 31-year-old tour guide, will deliver a lecture on Chinese Jews at Congregation Darchei Noam on May 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Shi's ancestors were Persian Jewish cotton merchants and traders who arrived in Kaifeng about 1,000 years ago, during the reign of the Northern Sung Dynasty.

The Jews of Kaifeng – a city on the banks of the Yellow River along the fabled Silk Road – established a community and built a synagogue in 1163. They lived close to the shul.

Kaifeng was a prosperous city when it was settled by Jews.

The explorer Marco Polo, in a diary entry in 1286, described a meeting he had with these exotic Jews.

In 1605, an Italian Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci, met Ai Tian, a representative of the Jewish community who had gone to Beijing to take a civil service examination.

After Ricci's encounter with Tian, a number of Jesuits visited Kaifeng, which is 600 kilometres southwest of Beijing.

They noted that the shul and the Jewish cemetery faced west toward Jerusalem, that the laws of kashrut were observed and that ritual circumcision was practised.

As time passed, this isolated community dwindled and was completely assimilated. The last rabbi died in 1810. The synagogue fell into ruin in 1854.

By 1860, the Jewish community had, for all intents and purposes, vanished.

Although Shi's ancestors virtually lost touch with Jewish customs and rituals, they remembered just enough to keep the flame flickering, passing on the knowledge from one generation to the next.

Shi's great-grandfather, Shi Qingchang, a businessman, observed rudiments of Passover, insisting on eating pancakes made without yeast.

Shi's grandfather, Shi Zhongyu, a white-collar worker, cooked unleavened cakes during Passover.

His father, an engineer, kept up what he describes as "traces of Jewish practices."

As Shi recalls, his father and grandfather told him he was "a Jewish descendant."

He has no doubt whatsoever that he is of Jewish origin. As he put it, "Over 25 years ago, the blood of Kaifeng's Jewish descendants was tested by doctors in a local population survey. They found that our blood type is similar to that of Jews living in Armenia and Arab countries."

Shi claims he is the only Jewish Chinese tour guide in China today, showing tourists sights in Kaifeng, Beijing, Shanghai, Harbin and other cities.

By his estimate, Kaifeng today is inhabited by 500 descendants of Chinese Jews.

Apart from a communal hall, known as Star of David, they have no facilities. "Due to our financial situation, we are unable to build them," he said.

Out of respect for their ancestors, every person of Jewish descent in Kaifeng refrains from eating pork. And sometimes, they meet on Friday evening for Shabbat. No kosher food is available in Kaifeng, he noted.

Shi says he always had a "strong desire" to study Judaism.

He got his chance a decade ago, when he met Marvin Tokayer, an American rabbi who led a congregation in Japan and who has taken a deep interest in Asian Jews.

"Rabbi Tokayer arranged for me to study at Bar-Ilan University's one-year Jewish studies program. I was the first Jewish descendant from Kaifeng to study Judaism in Israel. In Israel, I observed all the customs, rituals and holidays, attended shul and kept kosher."

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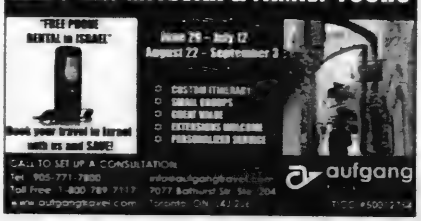

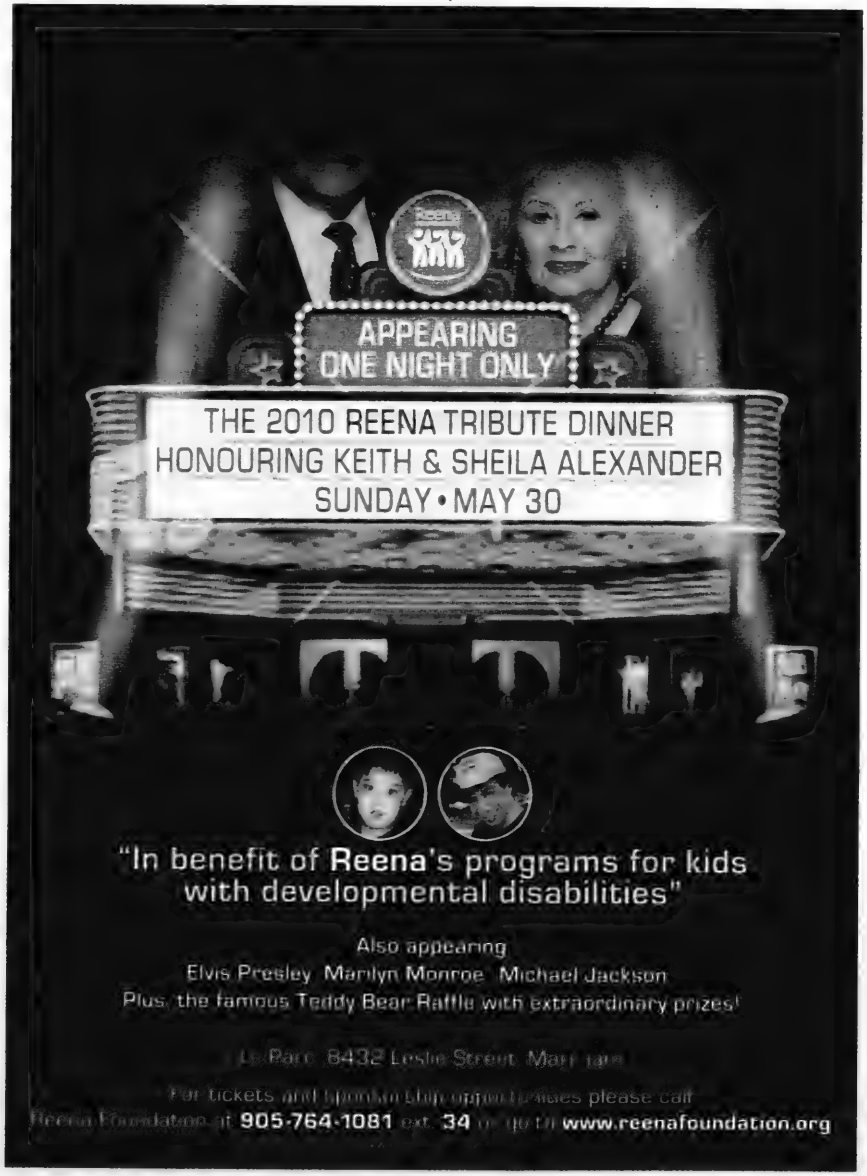
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'Linkage' argument stretches bounds of credulity

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

The "linkage" argument won't go away. If anything, it only seems to grow stronger.

The term refers to various efforts to link Israel to a range of Middle East and other problems by arguing that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the key to resolving the region's myriad troubles, including the growth of Islamic extremism.

On April 24, the *Montreal Gazette* carried a Reuters report by William Maclean to this effect, under the headline "Mideast solution would hurt Al Qaeda." Maclean wrote that according to "western counter-terrorism analysts" the persistence of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is fuelling "militant radicalization" and "transnational extremism" and that a solution to the dispute would deprive Al Qaeda of a "treasured pillar of its propaganda" (even though it has other anti-western grievances to draw upon).

Maclean cited Thomas Hegghammer, described as "a specialist on violent Islamism" at Princeton and Harvard universities, who remarked: "It doesn't matter what bin Laden thinks about Palestine, or whether Al Qaeda will stop fighting. What matters is the role the Palestinian issue plays in mobilizing new recruits and in creating a pool of sympathizers who look the other way when jihadis fundraise and plot. Virtually everyone who has studied jihadi recruitment up close will say that Palestine is important in this regard. It is obviously not the only factor or grievance, but it is the single most recurrent issue evoked by individual recruits."

This attitude is so widely held that it has become an article of faith among such experts. It's certainly superficially appealing to many to believe that resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict "would help drain the pool of potential militants" (as Maclean summed up the experts' judgment). But scratch beneath the surface a bit and you start to see how fallacious this reasoning is.

Contrary to what Hegghammer and others like him maintain, it matters a great deal what bin Laden and his followers "think about Palestine" for this reason: the last thing they want to see is a two-state solution with Israel living alongside a Palestinian state.

For them, nothing short of the destruction of the Jewish state and the emergence of a purely Islamic nation in the entire region would address their grievances. Moving to a two-state solution is the precise opposite of this, an affirmation of a western conspiracy against Islam, and thus a provocation for only more extremist violence. The same attitude prevails among the Iranian mullahs, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah and others.

What is astonishing is the naivete of western "experts" who project their own attitudes about what would constitute a just solution for Palestinian "grievances" onto those who capitalize on the Palestinian cause for their own propaganda aims instead of paying attention to what these extremist movements actually stand for.

* * *

There isn't just one linkage argument but several, although they all involve placing Israel at the centre of the region's ills or near the centre, where the interests of foreign powers such as the United States, with its deep involvement in the Mideast, are concerned.

It's instructive to read David Aaron Miller's essay, "The False Religion of Mideast Peace," in the May/June issue of *Foreign Policy* magazine for, among other reasons, his sobering reassessment of a version of the linkage argument. As a former senior adviser on the Middle East in the U.S. State Department, he wrote memos in support of linkage. Yet, as he now admits, "Today, I couldn't write those same memos or anything like them with a clear conscience or a straight face."

Miller explains: "The notion that there's a single or simple fix to protecting [U.S.] interests, let alone that Arab-Israeli peace would, like some magic potion, bullet, or elixir, make it all better, is just flat wrong. In a broken, angry region with so many problems – from stagnant, inequitable economies to extractive and authoritarian governments that abuse human rights and deny rule of law, to a popular culture mired in conspiracy and denial – it stretches the bounds of credulity to the breaking point to argue that settling the Arab-Israeli conflict is the most critical issue, or that its resolution would somehow guarantee Middle East stability."

Unfortunately, for far too many others, stretching the bounds of credulity to the breaking point is of no concern when it comes to pushing a dangerously impoverished idea.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Koffler exhibit focuses on items, sounds

Kiever Synagogue *[Koffler Centre of the Arts photo]*

Continued from page 3

"We also don't know much about [Corbeil-Coleman's] character, so there is a bit of existential verity to this in a way that offers space for the viewer to mentally inhabit the scene, or to reach back into their own memories or daydreams."

Sound is a large part of the exhibit, as Woodley has expertly spliced the sounds of Berlin radio broadcasts, including Alfred Doeblin's popular *The Story of Franz Biberkopf*, with the cacophony of a neighbour practising Schubert and Beethoven.

"There has been a real focus on items and sounds and what they convey," says Woodley of his orchestration, which involved working with set and light designers, a pianist and a sound engineer. "These elements sometimes disrupt the calm of the living room and act as a counterpoint to the space of the synagogue itself."

Commissioned by Koffler curator Mona Filip, the installation arose from Woodley's own experiences in Berlin and Vilnius, Lithuania. "I always saw my family as a continuation of European Jewry [in North America] but being there, I felt the absence of a connection," he says. He recalls that in Vilnius, where there were once more than 100 synagogues, only one remains as evidence of the entire once-flourishing community.

"This setting asks people to address their notion of history – what's past and what's present and what's sacred," says Koffler executive director Lori Starr.

Tucked into a corner of the synagogue's sanctuary, the installation at once addresses mortality, memory and the ephemeral. "There is a sense of memorial to the exhibit, but there is also a living actor who infuses the setting with a sense of living, and a sense of reappearance," says Woodley. "What's different with this piece is that memory is always there – this experience is only here for five weeks. It's the sense of fleeting here-and-then-gone that will stay with the viewer."

On the road since last summer, the Koffler Centre's exhibits have been quite fleeting themselves, popping up across the city for the past year. "By taking our exhibits city-wide, we aim to address the diversity of Toronto and of Canada, but through our Jewish lens," says Starr.

"I want the viewer to approach the piece on their own terms," says Woodley. "Shul is a theatre of remembrance, and we are doing something of the same thing here by invoking an individual and cultural past that has returned in physical proximity to the present.

"My ideal viewer is a solitary person who brings a book and stays awhile on the benches of the shul, paying great attention at times, and at other times letting attention drift."

"Auguststrasse 25" runs until May 30 at the Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave. The free exhibition is open Sunday to Thursday from noon to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. The exhibit is closed May 19 and 20 for Shavuot.

For more information, visit www.kofflerarts.org.

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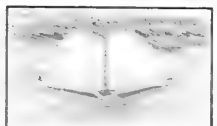
Jewish Life

The 'sliding scale' of religious observance

By RABBI MATTHEW KAUFMAN

Secularism versus religion. This is the story of modernity. This, the story goes, is our inheritance from the Enlightenment, the era that allegedly ushered in philosophical rationalism and rejected traditional faith. But is this what happened?


Rabbinic Reflections

One problem with this story is that it encourages people to draw lines in the sand, separating us into categorical camps that ignore the reality of the fluid discourse continually taking place between secularism and religion. Another problem is that we have a tendency to view the different movements in Judaism on a kind of "sliding scale" of religious observance, from less to more.

As Stephen Sharot of Ben-Gurion University writes in *Judaism and the Secularization Debate* (*Sociological Analysis*, 1991, "such an equation makes orthopraxy synonymous with sacredness and thereby religiously devalues forms of modern Judaism, such as Conservative and Reform Judaism." If this is how we continue to see things, then the possibility of real mutual respect is just about nil.

But this assumption – that our post-Enlightenment inheritance has hopelessly divided us – is flawed. In recent years, scholars have begun to question the thesis that the Enlightenment is the story of the secularization of the West. Jonathan Sheehan, in *Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization* (*American Historical Review*, 2003), writes that religion was always a cornerstone of the Enlightenment. Secularization and religion were never truly separate categories operating independently from one another, but are rather processes that inform one another.

"For religion has never been left behind, either personally or institutionally," Sheehan writes. "Instead, it has been continually remade and given new forms and meanings over time. Thinking more carefully about religion is a fundamental step in understanding both the Enlightenment and the enigmas of secularization."

The Enlightenment, he argues, was not a philosophical and anti-religious movement, but a set of cultural institutions and practices with a complex relationship to religion. Modernity, in other words, is not so much the birthplace of a thing called secularism that is the enemy of religion, but rather it is the birthplace of a process in which secular ideas and strategies have influenced religion, and vice versa; it's a discourse that continues to shape the distinctly modern Judaisms that we recognize today.

Jewish denominational practice should be understood as unique institutional responses to the post-Enlightenment discourse of secularism and religion. This view gives us the basis for true mutual respect, thereby opening us up to try to find common ground within the religious discourse.

This common ground is the realm of ethical behaviour. Jews live with a shared understanding of our mutual obligation to care for one another. The social, legal and religious frameworks of our lives all express this basic assumption.

This week's Torah reading, Behar-Bechukotai, contains one of the most important examples of this – the mitzvah of tzedakah. Behar's four-fold repetition of the words "*v'chi yamuch achicha…*" ("and if your fellow should be reduced to poverty…") inspired discussion among Jewish commentators to develop the principle of our obligation to care for the poor, which continues to be the most widely observed mitzvah, regardless of where one lies on the spectrum from secular to religious.

This ethical common ground thus corrects the "sliding scale" view of denominational Judaism. We should instead see the plurality of Jewish life as an invitation to better understand our own continually developing response to the post-Enlightenment secular-religious dialectic.

Rabbi Matthew Kaufman is studying toward a PhD in humanities at York University.

A celebration of numbers

By RACHAEL TURKIENICZ

With Rosh Chodesh Sivan just around the corner, the holiday of Shavuot can't be far behind. Shavuot, the holiday of weeks, is the culmination of counting seven weeks from near the beginning of Pesach and leading up to the harvest and the giving of the Torah to the Jewish people. It's a foundational holiday in Jewish history, one of the three pilgrimage festivals that united all of ancient Israel within the land – ritually, nationally and economically.

Midrashic Moments

Shavuot represents receiving the gift of Torah and the beginning of the Jewish transition toward text and discourse. It's a time for celebration, study, all-night text sharing and spiritual Torah insights that usually occur best around 3 a.m.

It's of no minor significance that the holiday itself is named for a number unit – seven. Shavuot means "weeks," a collection of seven days. In fact, since Pesach, Jews have counted the Omer by week and day, culminating in the holiday of Shavuot. Admitting that this is not even subtle, it's appropriate to turn our attention to numbers as the month of Sivan begins and we prepare for Shavuot.

Sivan itself connects to a world event that overwhelms us with numbers. Noah's Ark came to rest in the month of Sivan and the flood began to recede. The repetitive aspect of the story of Noah's Ark is how many numbers appear within the text: the cubit measures, Noah's three sons, the pairs of animals, the various different numbers of pairs of animals, the day the rain started, how many days it rained, how many days it didn't rain, how many days until birds flew, etc.

Clearly, Sivan invites us to embrace numbers. Yet moving from Pesach to Shavuot, from slavery to revelation, the narrative plays with the specific number 3 time and again. Moses is the third child born in his family. He's hidden at home for three months, at which point his mother and his sister place him in an ark (reminiscent of Noah, who had three sons), where Pharaoh's daughter saves him. Three women at the water save the third child who is three months old.

As Israel camps at Mount Sinai and prepares to receive the Torah, Moses instructs them to spend three days in preparation for Divine Revelation. Although the experience itself is so potentially overwhelming that, according to many midrashim, it's life threatening, all of Israel is kept safe, since according to the Talmud, after all, we all have three parents: mother, father and God.

Eventually we will learn that the angels serenade God by singing the word "Holy" three times. We will imitate them and sing "Kadosh" three times. The Rabbis will construct our daily prayers around regular communication with God – three times every day.

Within Jewish law, a person is ritually empowering themselves toward obligation by consistently performing a mitzvah three times. It's the number that represents spiritual strength and commitment.

The Torah has three sections (Torah, Prophets, Scrolls), which fits perfectly with a people of three categories (Kohen, Levi, Israel).

It's no wonder that an ancient sage noted with regard to Shavuot: "Blessed is He who is everywhere, who gave a three-part Torah to a three-part nation by the third [child], on the third day in the third month."

The holiday of weeks celebrates our receiving the Torah and reminds us that the wisdom of Torah fills our world. Our math teachers were correct: there does come a day when everything boils down to numbers.

Rachael Turkienicz is the director of Rachaelscentre.org.

Jewish Life

The Temple: part 1

By ALEX GROPPER

Past Forward

The Temple in Jerusalem, Solomon's Temple, Herod's Temple, the Ark of the Covenant – these are names that just about everyone is familiar with.

Why do they resonate so profoundly through the psyche of our culture and civilization? All of the world's three great monotheistic faiths incorporate the Temple into their history and ritual. For Judaism, Christianity and Islam, it plays a crucial role whether in their beginnings, their rituals or their aspirations.

It was Judaism that gave birth to the Temple, just as it gave birth to the other two monotheistic faiths. Yet the concept of the Temple stretches back in time before Judaism, before even the birth of civilization itself. There are sanctuaries in the earliest villages, from the time man was making the crucial transition from food gathering to food producing. In fact, we can take the concept of a sacred spot at least as far back as the caves that have been discovered in southern France and northern Spain, places such as Lascaux and Altamira that date to between 15,000 and 20,000 years ago.

What was there about these dark, mysterious and dangerous grottoes that drew people into their inner recesses? Some have said that the caves are connected to the fertility rites of the Mother Goddess cults that were prevalent in prehistoric societies. The cave has been likened to the primordial womb from which all life sprang. By visiting it periodically, early man assured himself and his endeavours a bountiful harvest.

It's no accident that when cities began to emerge in Mesopotamia, around the fourth millennium BCE, the temple and its sanctuary lay at the heart of the new urban enclaves. Cities had sprung up in answer to the immemorial quest for sustenance and security. Yet despite their new setting, humankind had not forgotten its origins.

The Mesopotamian urban model spread across the Fertile Crescent, arching its way up the Tigris-Euphrates basin westward through Syria and down along the lands that bordered the eastern end of the Mediterranean, Homer's wine-dark sea.

The temple was no stranger to one of those lands at the eastern end of the great inland sea, lands that were crisscrossed by innumerable hills and valleys, each with its small urban centre and petty ruler. We now know the land that was called Canaan by the ancients as Israel.

At the dawn of history, around 3000 BCE, one of the most important cities in Canaan lay astride the route, connecting the land to the great river civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. The city's name was Megiddo, and its location was so crucial that innumerable battles were fought to control it. In English, we call the city Armageddon. The book of Revelation in the Christian New Testament tells us that it will be the site of the final apocalyptical battle at the end of history itself.

Megiddo possessed one of the earliest temples in the land of the Bible. It's a temple that has been hailed as the prototype of Solomon's Temple. Despite Canaan's proximity to Egypt, with its imposing monumental places of worship, and its failed attempt at a form of monotheism under the heretic Pharaoh Akhenaten, the predecessor of Tutankhamun, in the 14th century BCE, it was the Mesopotamian and Syrian model of temple architecture that would dominate ancient Israel. This model would culminate in Solomon's Temple.

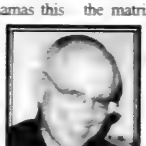
Why has this temple above all others dominated the psyche of the world? Obviously, it is the focal point of Judaism and through Judaism its importance was passed on to Christianity and Islam. It was David who conquered Jerusalem and the site of the Temple from the Jebusites and brought the visible manifestation of Israelite religion, the Ark of Covenant, into the city. But it would be David's son, Solomon, who would build the Temple that bears his name.

Yiddishe mamas: classic and contemporary

My Yiddishe mama – I miss her more than ever now
My Yiddishe mama – I long to kiss her wrinkled brow
I long to hold her hand once more as in days gone by
And ask her to forgive me for things I did that made her cry.

– *My Yiddishe Mama* (1925), Ben Pollack and Jack Yellen **[bit.ly/mama15]**

A lot of people will be thinking of and thanking their Yiddishe mamas this Sunday. Although Mother's Day and its greeting-card-and-flowers juggernaut are not a Jewish creation, now is as good a time as ever to remember and celebrate our Jewish mothers.



Jewish & Digital
By Mark Mietkiewicz

The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership points out "we've been honouring our mothers (and fathers) since Mount Sinai" and Jewish tradition is filled with reverence for mothers all the way from the story of the matriarchs to King Solomon's Proverbs: "My child… do not walk away from the wisdom of your mother, for it will be a sign of grace upon your head." (Proverbs 1:8-9) **[bit.ly/mama2]**

"Mother's Day is *not* a Jewish holiday; it's a brilliantly contrived marketing tool. But try telling that to my mother." Liba Pearson says a day for mothers really isn't such a bad idea "but *every* day should really be Mother's Day… I still think that Mother's Day was created by Hallmark. But you know what? Mothers – mine first among them – deserve it, and how." **[bit.ly/mama3]**

When people claim that Mother's Day is not a Jewish holiday, they aren't completely correct. A sort of Mother's Day is observed in Israel (especially among preschoolers) on the 11th day of Cheshvan. That's the traditional date of the death of the matriarch Rachel. Eliezer Segal investigates how Rachel embodies the Jewish ideal of motherhood – who "for much of her married life had to resign herself to watching her sister, Leah, bear Jacob many children, until she herself finally gave birth to Joseph." **[bit.ly/mama4]**

Inda Schaenen wants to be a Yiddishe mama. The problem is that she had no role model since she grew up with a Jewish mother not a "mama." ("Her body was Jean Naté and hair dye, razors and eyebrow tweezers. Our kitchen did not reek of the yeasty, buttery, beefy fumes of daily cookery. It smelled clean."). So Inda turned to *The Molly Goldberg Jewish Cookbook*, "[which] became a kind of lodestone for me: if I cooked with enough butter, salt, sour cream and chicken fat, I could land myself and my family in the warm, loving, safe world of Molly Goldberg." Unfortunately, Schaenen had a bit of falling out with her newfound mama. But you'll have to check out her article at Salon.com to find out what happened. **[bit.ly/mama7]**

If you want to read about the lives of some real Jewish mothers who brought up some famous boys and girls, read the interviews with Beatty Rutman (Bob Dylan), Florence Hoffman (Abbie Hoffman), Leah Adler (Steven Spielberg) as part of the book the "Official Jewish Mothers' Hall of Fame." **[bit.ly/mama16]** Or you can find a list of dozens of books that focus on, or feature, Jewish mothers in fact and fiction. **[bit.ly/mama10]**

Slate.com has put together a great slide show looking at the history of some real and fictional Jewish mothers, including a classic clip from Woody Allen's movie *New York Stories*, in which a Jewish mother shows up as a huge head bobbing above the skies of Manhattan and continues to embarrass her son, Sheldon. **[bit.ly/mama12]**

You can never be too famous to thank your mama for your success as I learned while poring over some lovely anecdotes from the book *Yiddishe Mamas: The Truth About the Jewish Mother*. Did you know when Albert Einstein won the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921, he sent a telegram home that read, "Mother – WE won the Nobel Prize." **[bit.ly/mama14]**

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Feature

Canadian soldier helped liberate Netherlands

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, Larry Levy was a high school student at Central Tech in Toronto.

He could not have known then that he would play a role in the liberation of the Netherlands just five years later, on May 5, 1945.

Now 85, Levy was an artillery signaller in the 2nd Survey Regiment, one of 200,000 Canadian troops who helped to liberate the Netherlands in a bold offensive that left the Dutch people eternally grateful to Canada. "I was part of that force," recalled Levy in a reference to the First Canadian Army. "It was a terrific moment, a wonderful moment."

Levy enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces in January 1943 and was sent into the Netherlands in November 1944, spending part of the next five months there.

By the time he was demobilized in 1946, he had also seen action in France, Belgium and Germany.

And if Japan had not surrendered in 1945, he probably would have fought in the Japanese islands as well.

Levy, given his current health problems, does not expect to be in the Netherlands this week to mark the 65th anniversary of its liberation from the Nazi yoke.

But a decade ago, he and his wife, Betty, flew there to celebrate the 55th anniversary. As guests of a Dutch family, they were treated with the utmost hospitality and respect.

As he and 2,500 Canadian veterans marched through the town of Apeldoorn in a tumultuous victory parade, they were cheered on by Dutch onlookers. "Hundreds of thousands of people watched. Kids were grabbing and kissing us. The people of Holland were great. They so admire Canadians."

On the day the Netherlands was liberated 65 years ago, Levy was in a halftrack military vehicle clanking and clattering down a road somewhere in the country. "I had heard there was a ceasefire," he said.

In fact, German troops had already laid down their arms, two days ahead of their capitulation in the rest of Europe.

Levy was fortunate enough to emerge from World War II virtually unscathed.

While more than 7,600 Canadian soldiers lost their lives to liberate the Netherlands, including 25 of his friends and acquaintances, Levy was twice wounded, first when he cut his left arm on barbed wire and contracted blood poisoning and then when he twisted his nose in a foxhole during a fierce German bombardment.

Even now, he feels lucky he returned to Canada in one piece. As he put it in a recent interview at his home in northern Toronto, "There were many times when I doubted I'd come out of it alive."

Larry Levy today *[Sheldon Kirshner photo]*

The son of Nathan and Annie, Russian immigrants who settled in Toronto in the first decade of the 1900s, Levy was employed as an assembler in a radio manufacturing plant when he volunteered for the Canadian Army. He was spurred on by the deaths of some of his friends in the disastrous Dieppe raid in August 1942.

By that point, he was already in the reserves. "I was a kid of 17 or 18, doing a little bit of training," he recalled.

His brother, Irving, a graduate of the University of Toronto's medical school, joined the army too and served in Italy.

Trained for battle in Ottawa, Petawawa and Kingston, Levy left Canada from Halifax on a troop ship bound for Liverpool, Britain.

As an artillery signaller assigned to a five-man crew usually deployed in trenches on the front lines, Levy's job was to spot enemy gun positions, tanks and artillery fire.

Once they located a target, they radioed the information to headquarters.

Continued on page 23

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A meeting of Members of the Jewish National Fund of Toronto will be held at 6:30 P.M. on Wednesday, June 2, 2010 at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, 100 Elder Street, Toronto. Jerry Werger, President, JNF Toronto*

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Feature

Larry Levy as a young Canadian soldier

'It was quite an experience'

Continued from page 22

After artillery guns softened up the target and the air force responded with bombing runs, the infantry advanced.

Levy's 2nd Survey Regiment landed at Beny Sur Mer, on the coast of Normandy, in the summer of 1944. During the hazardous landing, his unit was bombarded by German artillery and Messerschmitt aircraft, resulting in its first casualties. A while later, he discovered that 124 captured Canadians were executed by the Germans under the command of an SS officer.

Despite these atrocities, Levy has respect for the German troops he faced on the front. "They were excellent soldiers, strong and determined, ready to kill."

In the Netherlands, Levy spent much of the time in the Nijmegen salient, which had been captured by British and American forces and was close to the German frontier. "We set up a position in a school, but it was bombed by the Germans." Levy was dug out of the rubble, miraculously uninjured.

From Nijmegen, Levy's regiment was dispatched to Germany, crossing the Rhine River on pontoon bridges at Emmerich and deployed in a series of towns from Cleve to Calcap.

The roads were virtually impassable, the Germans having flooded the area. Nonetheless, Levy's unit pushed on to Oldenberg – where he had his first shower in months – and the port of Emden.

As the war ended, he found himself back in the Netherlands. But it was not until 10 years ago that he finally managed to visit Amsterdam.

Levy joined the Canadian Far East Force before returning to Canada. But after atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan surrendered and Levy's services were no longer required.

Discharged in February 1946, he was a taxi driver before buying his own fleet of cabs and branching off into real estate development. Although he is not in the best of health, he still works as a broker. He and his wife have three children, all girls.

A feisty man who keeps his war memorabilia – five Canadian service medals and a black German bayonette – in his bedroom, Levy looks back at his days as a soldier with a sense of awe and disbelief.

"I can hardly believe I went through it all," he said. "It was quite an experience, an unbelievable one."

SHOVE

yourself, your friends, your spouse/significant other or whomever in the you-know-where and get over to the Miles Nadal JCC for a mystical night of learning. For those of you who don't know, Shavuot (Shove-ooh-ot) is the celebration of the Jews receiving the Ten Commandments. You know why we got them? God offered them to a dishonest person, who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not steal, they turned God down. God then offered them to a philanderer who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not cheat, they turned God down too. God then offered them to a workaholic who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not work on the Sabbath, they turned God down as well. Wanna know what happened next?

-OOH

ooh, ahh, I knew you'd be curious. So here's what happened. Finally, God offered the Ten Commandments to a Jew, who asked how much they'd cost. When God said "nothing" the Jew said, "They cost nothing? Great, I'll take Ten." Aha, so now you know the whole story. Here's a slightly more traditional explanation. Exactly seven weeks after we Jews left Egypt we arrived at Mt. Sinai (you know, on University below College) and were given the Torah, we then became a nation committed to serving God. Shavuot is a Hebrew derivative of "weeks" since we're counting them. We traditionally eat good cheesecake.

-OT

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On Campus

York psychology prof receives Killam Prize

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

"Extraordinary" is how York University psychology professor Ellen Bialystok describes winning the prestigious Killam Prize for her work on the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development.

Renowned internationally for research, Bialystok, who has taught at York since 1982, "discovered that bilingual children and adults have distinct advantages over unilingual people when completing both linguistic and nonlinguistic tasks," according to a York statement on her win, which is given for a scholar's body of work and worth $100,000.

Perhaps more importantly, her research is also revealing that as bilingual and multilingual people age, their language skills may help provide a buffer against diseases such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

Speaking to *The CJN* after her win, Bialystok said winning the Killam is "extraordinary," as recipients are determined after their body of work is evaluated by their peers.

"It's an incredible recognition. In academia you're only as good as your last paper. So you can put out a flashy finding and then no one remembers you. This [award] is quite outside of that model," she said.

The prize, administered by the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), is given out annually to five Canadian scholars "for their distinction in health sciences, engineering, humanities, natural sciences and social sciences," according the CCA's website. Bialystok won in the social sciences category.

The prestigious award could help her work become more accepted in mainstream science. This has not been the case for many years, she said.

Her work "has always been perceived as a kind of 'non-mainstream' sideline, as far as the larger field of cognitive psychology was concerned," Bialystok said. "One thing this award does is acknowledge that [bilingualism] is actually part of the mainstream questions we need to understand when we investigate the mind."

Ellen Bialystok
[Stephanie Lake photo]

Bialystok said one of her most "exciting" finds of the past few years came from a study conducted at Baycrest, where she compared monolingual and bilingual patients with dementia or Alzheimer's.

"There was a sense that if bilingualism is doing something to support cognitive functioning in healthy aging, then what would it be doing if the aging process included some pathology" such as Alzheimer's, she said.

The study of 200 patients produced an interesting finding among the bilingual half of the sample.

"Patients wait about three years between noticing a problem and their first clinic visit. The difference is that bilinguals were on average four years older when they, or at least their families, first noticed symptoms," she said. "This means that they are coping better with the growing pathology and appearing to function normally, even though the disease has already started. We now have some new brain data showing that the disease is more advanced in bilinguals who are functioning at the same cognitive level as monolinguals."

In other words, bilingualism provided a four-year buffer – or "cognitive reserve" – for patients before the effects of dementia or Alzheimer's forced them to first seek out treatment or diagnosis.

Bialystok, who lectures worldwide on her research, said that during her travels, she's noticed, not unsurprisingly, that people in regions that are more multilingual tend to show more interest in her work.

She noted that in Spain and Wales, there currently is "very active research" on the effects of bilingualism.

Bialystok said the emphasis on bilingualism in Canada helps make her research tasks here easier.

Asked what she is working on now, Bialystok said some of her research is beginning to focus more on neural imaging to look at actual brain function.

"We're much more interested in getting information about brain networks now. My idea is that using two languages over a sustained period of time re-wires cognitive networks. All of higher cognition depends on these networks. That's increasingly the position that the field is coming to," she said.

A new group being researched now are people who have "intense" musical training. Bialystok wants to compare their cognitive networks to those of bilingual people, although this is proving difficult.

"We're trying to find monolingual musicians. But this isn't easy, because the people who send their kids for intensive musical training from an early age are [generally] not monolingual English speakers."

THE LEO BAECK DAY SCHOOL
announces the appointment of
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effective July 1, 2010

The Leo Baeck Day School is pleased to announce the appointment of Yvette Burke as North Campus Principal, succeeding Howard Laderman. The North Campus Principal is the senior administrator responsible for all educational/academic site operations. Ms. Burke will assume her duties July 1, 2010.

Ms. Burke has been in charge of Student Services at Leo Baeck for 24 years, supporting the learning and socialization of all students. Her selection is the result of significant and thoughtful deliberation on the part of the school's Parental and Faculty Advisory Committees.

In her current position as Dean of Student Services, Ms. Burke has played a fundamental role in the development of the school's educational program, particularly our key mission objective of providing a child-centred learning environment. As a member of the senior administrative team, she has been engaged in all aspects of Leo Baeck's candidacy for the International Baccalaureate designation, including training and implementation. Ms. Burke has also worked closely with Howard Laderman in his tenure as Principal, and plans to champion the positive initiatives Mr. Laderman began, most notably his significant commitment to innovative teaching practices in the area of early literacy.

Ms. Burke's commitment to the Leo Baeck community, together with her excellence as an educator, will serve the North Campus well. We would like to congratulate her on, and welcome her into, her new role.

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May 10, 2010
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Class Acts

BLAST FROM THE PAST: Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly United Synagogue Day School) Grade 3 students, Mikayla Alice, left, and Bayla Saltzman practise writing the old-fashioned way using a quill pen and handmade ink as part of their visit to Black Creek Pioneer Village.

TZEDEKAH PROJECT: Grade 8 students at Leo Baeck Day School's Holy Blossom campus took a class trip to Caledon to perfect their woodworking skills and make tzedekah boxes. The boxes will be used to collect money for various tzedekah projects next year. Pictured is student Marlee White working on her box.

FAMILY READING: Yitzchak, left, and Eli, read with their mother, Rachel Cousineau, at Netivot HaTorah Day School's Family Reading Night recently. The evening featured publisher displays, handouts, stories, a raffle and freebies, as well as teachers giving workshops on questioning, making connections, genres and predictions *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy 85th birthday Adam Harris, and happy 75th birthday Zelda Harris. Love from your children, the Skalnik clan and the Harris-Camerons.

Happy 93rd birthday Bubbie Jennie! Much, much love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Happy 105th birthday Clare Berman! From your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The Carrs, Goulds, Soils, Turks and Youngs.

Harriet Star & Howard Bisgould are engaged and both families are so happy. Mazel tov and best wishes for a long and happy life together.

Happy 101st birthday to Sara Langer. From your loving family and friends.

Happy 102nd birthday, Meyer Jacobson. With our love and best wishes on this, another special May 5. Keep smiling. Rhona, Leon, Pat, Jac and Elliott.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to **cblackman@thecjn.ca** or go online to **WWW.CJNEWS.COM** and click the **Family Moments** button!

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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Leila Speisman, is away on medical leave.

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Please note holiday deadlines for What's New. Deadline for May 21 issue is May 10. Deadline for May 27 issue is May 13. Deadline for June 3 issue is May 21. Phone 416-391-1836. Fax 416-391-0829. E-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 6

SEPHARDI ZIONISM

Sarah Taieb-Carlen, professor in the Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, on "Sephardi Zionism: From Biblical to Modern Times." Beth David, 7:30 p.m. Free. 416-633-5500

Sunday, May 9

MORNING OF LEARNING

Join Torah in Motion and Tzohar at Shaarei Shomayim from 9:30-12 p.m. for a Morning of Learning in honour of Yom Yerushalayim with **Rabbis Alex Israel, Eric Levy** and **Aviad Tabory**. 416-633-5770, www.torahinmotion.org for info

MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day chai tea, fashion show by Options for Her. Kol Rina choir performs. Beth Tzedec. 3-5 p.m. $36. **Avital**, 416-781-3511

Monday, May 10

JEWISH AMERICAN SWING

Jordan Klapman, musician and music lecturer, on "History of Jewish American Swing." Beth Tzedec boardroom, 1:30 p.m. $3. Coffee and cake served.

U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS

Temple Emanu-El presents **Sergei Plekanov**, professor of political science at York University, on "U.S.-Russian Relations: Past, Present, Future." 2-4 p.m. $10 416-449-3880.

COMEDY EVENING

Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital presents Laughing Matters, a standup comedy event. Featuring MC **Lawrence Morgenstern, Les Aaron, Greg Eckler** and **Steve Levine**. 7:30 p.m. Beth Tzedec. $36, $18 for students. 416-256-4222, herzoghosp@rogers.com.

FILM SCREENING

Po-lin: The Slivers of Memory, Beneath the Eye of Time and *Painting Daddy*. Commentary by **Prof. Piotr Wrobel** follows. 7:30 p.m. Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto. Suggested donation: $5 members, $8 non-members.

PLAY AUDITION

Medina Theatre Ensemble holds auditions for staged reading performance of *There Comes a Time*, written by **Roselle Stone** and **Fran Elliot**. May 10 and 11, 7-9:30 p.m. Temple Sinai. **Roselle**, 416-633-2057 or **Morris**, 416-785-0344.

Tuesday, May 11

LUNCH AND LEARN

Rose Reisman, nutritionist, restaurateur and TV personality on "The Art of Living Well." Beth Tikvah, 12:15 p.m. $20. Reservations only: 416-221-3433 ext. 352

MOVIE NIGHT

Beth David Sisterhood's Israeli Movie Night. 8 p.m. Guests welcome. $5 at the door.

Wednesday, May 12

MUSICAL PRESENTATION

"The Uniqueness of the Great Cantor and Composer – **Leib Glantz**." A musical presentation by his son, **Jerry Glantz**, author of a book about his father – *The Man Who Spoke to God*. 10 a.m. Holy Blossom. 416-789-3219, ext. 224.

FUNDRAISER

The second annual Play Your Games fundraiser. Proceeds to Eating Disorders of York Region. Texas Hold'em, Blackjack, Scrabble. 6 p.m. Boutique shopping, 6:30 p.m. Dinner. $65. Cash bar. Door prizes and raffle. Meron Banquet Hall, 1600 Steeles Ave. W. RSVP by May 6, 905-886-6632.

FELT MAKING

Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles presents **Andrea Graham** on "A Journey in Felt Making." Showcase of her work. All welcome. $5. Shaarei Shomayim, 8 p.m.

Continued on page 27

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What's New

Continued from page 26

Thursday, May 13

ART SHOW

The Israeli Artists Group of Toronto presents its 2nd annual art show. To May 16. May 13-14 from 12-9 p.m. May 15-16 from 10-6 p.m. Opening night May 13 6-9 p.m. Free. J.E.H. Thoreau MacDonald House. 121 Centre St., Thornhill.

INFORMATION NIGHT

Info night for Melton Adult Mini School. Model lesson, meet the teachers and learn what Melton is about. 7:30 p.m. Beth Torah.

LOSS, GRIEF AND HEALING

Bereaved Jewish Families of Ontario presents "Loss, Grief and Healing in the Book of Ruth" with **Rabbi Rena Arshinoff**, chaplain at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. 7:30 p.m. Congregation Habonim, 5 Glen Park Ave. RSVP 416-638-7800, ext. 202.

AT SHAAREI TEFILLAH

Spring lecture series continues with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. "The Mystical Meaning of the Hebrew Alphabet." 7 p.m. Free. Register at 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.org.

OTHER NEWS

LEMONADE 4 HEART

Amanda's 12th Lemonade Stand and **Joshua**'s 2nd Cookie Counter for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. New location at 33 Post Rd. May 16, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Pony rides, Bulldog Fitness games, pizza and more. Meet **Dora** from 11-12:30. **Dan the Music Man** performs. Auction includes Las Vegas **David Copperfield** tickets, **Chris Bosh** jersey, items from **Donald Trump**, **Larry King**, Argos, Maple Leafs and Harlem Globetrotters. www.lemonade-4heart.org or 416-898-4556.

MIDDLE EAST LECTURE

Beth Isaiah Synagogue presents the Richard C. Youngman Memorial Lecture, May 16, 7:30 p.m. **Rev. Majed El Shafie**, founder of One Free World International, tells a story of the struggle for human rights and religious freedom in the Middle East. Free, all welcome. 47 Surrey St., Guelph. www.guelphsynagogue.ca.

SUPPORT GROUP

Baycrest Holocaust resource program is opening a new support group for child survivors of the Holocaust. Contact **Shoshana Yaakobi**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or syaakobi@baycrest.org.

GENERAL MEETING

The Association of Jewish Seniors general meeting, May 15 9:45 a.m. Shaarei Shomayim. **David Zimmer**, MPP, Willowdale, will discuss "What Your Government Is Up To." Members free, guests $2. Tammy, 416-635-2860 ext. 458.

ISRAEL LECTURE

Registration is open for the summer session of Melton Mini School on Israeli Society Seen Through the Eyes of Modern Hebrew Literature. In English. Five sessions at Beth Tzedec. 416-789-7400 for information.

ALUMABrunch

National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section, holds their 2nd annual brunch in support of ALUMA – Israel Family Counselling Association Tel Aviv. Guest speaker is **Shira Herzog**, co-host of *Our Jewish World*, on "Keeping Israel Strong: Changes from Within." Women and men welcome. 4700 Bathurst St. May 16, 11:00 a.m. $54 and up. RSVP, 416-633-5100 or 905-737-0607.

CHARITY BOOK LAUNCH

"An Evening with **Anita Diamant**." The bestselling author discusses her new book *Day After Night*. May 27. Cocktail reception 6:30 p.m., main event 8 p.m. Tickets $40 and up. Proceeds to Canadian Hadassah-WIZO projects. **Jodi**, dorldor@live.ca, 416-873-6902.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill is looking for people interested in joining their organ and tissue committee. Volunteers needed for community outreach, admin work, serving as interpreters and assisting at an organ-and-tissue-donation information evening in September. **Jon Levy**, 905-764-0656, ext. 224, jlevy@bellnet.ca or **Heather Lamasz**, 416-409-4080.

CULTURAL CONCERT

Juno nominee **Aviva Chernick** performs at Pride of Israel with **Aaron Lightstone**, **Ernie Tollar** and **Adam Campbell**. May 16. Silent auction 7:00, concert 7:30. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

SINGLES DANCE

Shaar Shalom Singles, in conjunction with the Intersynagogue Singles 45+, has a Spring Fever Dance featuring **James Regan** of Tapps, with dance cards for prizes. May 23, 7:30 p.m. Shaar Shalom Synagogue. $8, includes coffee and cake. **David**, 416-224-9494.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29

FITNESS CLASS

Exercise for Your Body and Brain. Tuesdays, 10:15-11 a.m. Thursdays, 11:15 a.m.-12 p.m. Baycrest. For adults 60+. Aerobic and strength exercise to enhance physical well-being and enjoy brain benefits of exercise. Class appropriate if you are well or have challenges like diabetes, osteoporosis or mild to moderate arthritis. Balance should be good. Fee will apply. **Dianne**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2341.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 215, or go to www.jfandcs.com.

Note: registration required for all programs.

Social Networking in the 21st Century: Workshop for parents on the dangers and realities of what kids may be sharing with the world. With **Chris Vollum**. May 13, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Centre. Space limited.

Surviving Divorce: Avoiding Financial Disaster: Explore the common financial mistakes made in divorce and how to avoid them. For those thinking of divorce, currently in the process of, or living with a finalized divorce. May 18, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green.

Effective Parenting: A four-session group to help parents learn what they can do to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. For parents of children ages 2-11. May 25, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC: May 13, 1:30 p.m. "The Rise of the Early Toronto Jewish Community," a talk with **Bill Gladstone**, journalist, writer, publisher. 416-924-6211, ext. 155, for info.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, May 12, departs 10 a.m. Sunday dance, May 16, new time: 6-8:30 p.m. Line dancing Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Social bridge Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112

May 11, lecture: "How Golden Was the Jewish Golden Age of Spain?" **Loretta Tanenbaum**, adult educator, speaks. 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

May 12, health fair. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Speak with representatives from different agencies about health and wellness. Free.

May 13, wellness lecture: "Insight into Alzheimer's." 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

Beth Sholom Synagogue, 1445 Eglinton Ave. W., 416-783-6103

Lunch and a movie, *The Blade of Constantine's Sword*, May 12. Lunch at 12 p.m. Movie and discussion following. $10.

Games afternoon, May 26. Mah-jong, bridge and bingo. 12 p.m. Lunch served. $10.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Kolel offers a mini semester of short courses through the month of May. "Jewish Paths into Understanding Illness and Healing," "Dollars Incensed," "Jewish Food for Thought" and Conversations about Conversion." Ext. 4235 for information.

May 11, 1-1:30 p.m. Ages 3-5. Register for the Living Rhythm Drumming program. Drum to the beat, stomp your feet! $10. Space filling up fast.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211 or www.mnjcc.org.

May 6, author **James Sturm** on his new graphic novel *Market Day*. Special guest **Miriam Libicki**. Free. publicity@drawnandquarterly.com or media@torontocomics.com.

May 10-13, 7:30 p.m., Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company presents "In the Beginning: A Jewish Playwright's Festival." New plays selected from an open call will be presented as staged readings. Free. theatre@mnjcc.org, ext. 606, or visit the website to see which plays will be featured.

May 13, 7:30 p.m., at Holy Blossom. Stagecraft Company of Holy Blossom Temple presents *Gideon*, a play about what happens when a man runs into the overwhelming and all-consuming love that is the Angel of the Lord. Also on May 15, 7:30 p.m., at MNjcc. Starting at $18. Proceeds go to future Stagecraft productions. ext. 511, theatre@mnjcc.org.

May 16, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Toronto Jewish Film Society is screening *Two Lovers*, with **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **Joaquin Phoenix**. Guest speaker **Adam Nayman**, *Eye Weekly* film critic. Al Green Theatre. $15 general admission, $10 ages 18-29 (7:30 screening only). Rush seats on sale 15 minutes before each screening. ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org.

May and June 2010. "Jason Schwartz: Fragments," CONTACT Festival of Photography. Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space, MNjcc.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

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OBITUARIES
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BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Arthur Schwartz	Apr 17/10	92 Whitehorn Cr
Ronald Smith	Apr 19/10	28 William Carson
Bessie Rinzler	Apr 20/10	4 Wingate Place
Grigory Voronchuk	Apr 21/10	33 Drewry Ave
Beverley Nisenboim	Apr 23/10	161 Strathearn Rd
Henry Perkell	Apr 22/10	12 Denewood Cr
Dr. Al Hoffman	Apr 23/10	1 Northwestern Ave
Clara Reyto	Apr 22/10	55 Ameer Ave
Harry Lewis	Apr 23/10	90 Fisherville Rd
Moishe Perlmutar	Apr 24/10	2 Neptune Dr.

HEBREW BASIC

Esther Sheffield	Apr 13/10	132 Gloucester Grove

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Bierbrier, Beatrice	April 12/10	484 Steeles Ave. W.
Kelman, Gerald Irving	April 12/10	3636 Bathurst St
Goldenberg, David	April 11/10	550 Cummer Ave
Posner, Miriam	April 11/10	Florida
Szlosberg, David	April 14/10	Private
Zusmanovsky, Raisa	April 16/10	Private
Valter, Reizel	April 16/10	55 Ameer Ave
Lapidus, Ian Lorne	April 16/10	80 Rockwood Cres
Spegel, Henry	April 16/10	Private
Benibisky, Ida	April 17/10	Private
Kvint, Efim	April 15/10	Private
Slobodsky, Sonia Helen	April 16/10	541 Finch Ave. W
Goldstein, Geraldine	April 16/10	81 Townsgate Dr
Feig, Rose	April 17/10	244 Waterloo Ave
Profeta, Eleanore	April 15/10	Private
Katz, Ethel	April 18/10	Private
Levin, Shulamit	April 17/10	Private
Chudnovsky, Khaskel	April 17/10	4300 Bathurst St
Chudnovska, Leya	April 19/10	Private
Zlotnik, Leonid	April 19/10	Private
Civil, Louis	April 20/10	36 Rockland Dr
Plotkin, Rachael	April 21/10	775 Steeles Ave.
Marigold, Theodore (Ted)	April 20/10	133 Torresdale Ave
Gould, Sarah	April 21/10	541 Finch Ave. W
Chertov, Genia	April 22/10	6250 Bathurst St
Godfrey, Allan	April 22/10	520 Markham Rd
Moscovitch, Iriving Frank	April 22/10	82 Howlett Ave
Perlis, Chaim	April 23/10	333 Clark Ave. W
Silver, Sylvia	April 24/10	15 Doncrest Dr
Kocsis, Klara	April 23/10	Private
Epstein, Sydney	April 26/10	Private
Zuchowski, Sam	April 26/10	4415 Bathurst St
Helfand, Edward	April 26/10	
Senelnick, Dora	April 26/10	6010 Bathurst St
Gold, Helen	April 27/10	33 Hawleaf Cres
Krasner, George	April 28/10	
Dejong, Henri	April 28/10	Private
Kaufman, Rachel	April 26/10	15 Reddick Crt
Bell, Gerald Wayne	Mar. 30/10	
Bryce, Phyllis	April 27/10	980 Elgin Mills Rd.

The unveiling of a monument to honour the memory of our beloved

SAM (SZLAMEK) ORLAN ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 16th, 10:00 am
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

Apter Friendly Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Sam was a kind & loving soul who is greatly missed.

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of

HELEN ROSS ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

Blue Star Lodge Section

Relatives and friends are welcome to attend

To place an unveiling notice, please call at least 15 DAYS prior to the date of the unveiling.

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פון ווייאַן פּעלץ

הייַנט טרעפֿן 65 יאָר זינט די ווייסטשע נאציס האָבן זיך אונטערגעגעבן. עס איז ווי־כּמעט צו דערמאָנען די ראָלע וואָס די קאָנצעפּציאָנאַרלאַגער אַרמיי האָט געשפּילט אין דעם ג רויסן דג קעגן היטלער. אָן ס'איז אויך ווי־כּמעט צו דערמאָנען די ראָלע פֿון ייִדישע סאָלדאַטן אין דער קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר אַרמיי.

וועגן דעם האָט געשריבן מ מין זיידע, דער ייִדישער שרייבער און זשורנאַליסט י . מדרש, אין זיין בוך צווישן צוויי וועלט מלחמות. מדרש באַמערקט אז "אזוי שנעל ווי דער קריג איז דערקלערט געוואָרן, זענען ייִדישע יונגעלייט געווען פון ד ' ערשטע וועלכע האָבן זיך פֿריוויליק אָפּגעראָפּן צו דינען אין ד ' באַוואָפנטע כוחות פֿון לאַנד . דער גרעסטער טייל פֿון די איז געאָבגעזאָגן אין לויפֿ־פּלאַץ. ייִדישע פּליטים זענען געווען פון די העלדן וועלכע האָבן געקר אָגן אויסציכנען פֿון קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר לויפֿ־פּלאַץ." קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר האָט אויך אַרבאַ ביירט אַ שטאַרקער אַרמיי.

אין 1944 איז צו דער קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר ערשטער אַרמיי געגעבן בעוואָרן די מיטיג צו באַפרייען בעלגיע און האָלאַנד . קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר מאָלדאַטן האָבן געברענט דעם ווידערשטאַנד פֿון ד ' נאציס אין באַפרייאַנ איין שאָס נאָך דער צווייטער . אין יעדער בעלגישן און האָלאַנדישע שטאָט אין וועלכער די קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר אַרמיי איז אריינגעקומען , האָט ראַבי שמעולי קנס , וועלכער איז געווען דער ייִדישער משפּחלין , זיך פֿאַרנומען מיט זוכן ייִדן וואָס האָבן זיך אויסבאַהאַלטן אין דזשרמאַניע פֿון קריג. מען האָט די געפֿענגן אין אַמסטערדאַם, בריסל , און אַנדערע ערטער.

אין יענע טעג האָט מדרש באַקומען אַ בריוו פֿון זיין זון פֿמיוול, ווועלכער איז געווען אַ זע לנער אין דער קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר אַרמיי אין האָלאַנד . אין זיין בריוו , האָט ער דערצײלט ווי אין אַ האָלאַנדישער שטאָט האָבן קאָנצעפּציאָנאַר סאָלדאַטן דורכגעפֿירט אַ תּוכּה פֿיינרוב פֿאַר ייִדישע קינדער וואָס זיי האָבן דאָרט געפֿונען. די קינדער אין סאָלדאַטן האָבן פֿאַרשטאַנען אַז זיי פֿיינען דער יום־טוב פֿון פֿרייהייט.

פֿיוול האָט אונטערגעשטראָכן אַז בײַ דער פֿיינרונג איז געווען אַ קריסטלעכע פֿרוי, וועלכע האָט באַהאַלטן זיבן ייִדישע קינדער, צווישן 2 אין 7 יאָר אַלט. איינער פֿון אָט די קינדער האָט נים געוווסט פֿון וואָנען ער האָט געשטאַמט אין מען האָט נים געווווסט זײַן נאַמען . מען האָט אים ג ערופֿן יוסף. אָט די קריסטלעכע פֿרוי האָט אינגעשטעלט אר איינ לעבן בדי זיי צו באַהאַלטן פֿון די נאַציש מערדער.

אין דעם צווישן וועלט־קריג האָבן ייִדישע סאָלדאַטן געפֿילט אַז זיי האָבן אַ צווייעדיק מיסיע – צו קעמפֿן קעגן נאַציזם, ערשטן אַלץ קאָנצאַנטרירט בירגער, אין צווייטנס אַלץ ייִדן.

פֿון רעדאַקציע: אויב איר האָט נפֿרואָקנען חענן אונדזער וויקל לאָזט וויסן. שרייבט מיר אויף מײַן אַדרעס, דורך פּאָסט אָדער בליץ פּאָסט:

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New MEC rules make boycotts harder

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VANCOUVER — It's unlikely Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) will see another resolution aimed at eliminating its business relationships in Israel, thanks to a series of five special resolutions tabled by the co-op's board of directors and unanimously passed in recent MEC elections that ran between February and April.

The resolutions were a response to events last May, when a few MEC members tried to convince the company to stop sourcing products made in Israel. Their motion was defeated by majority vote at MEC's annual general meeting. Seventy per cent of the 256 members who attended the AGM voted against the resolution.

Among the five resolutions passed this year, the first and third prevent single-issue political activists from using the co-op's constitution to bring forward motions to be considered by the membership at an AGM.

The first resolution requires a 60-day written notice of an ordinary resolution prior to the AGM, which means members can no longer simply stand up at the meeting and propose an ordinary resolution. The third resolution empowers the board to disallow ordinary resolutions that MECs directors deem to be against the co-op's best interests.

"Before this rule came into effect, any ordinary resolution proposed would have to be heard," said MEC spokesperson Tim Southam. "That's why last year, when we were called on to stop sourcing from Israel, that resolution had to come forward. This special resolution means that the board could decide, were this to happen again, to disallow it."

The third resolution wasn't proposed specifically in response to last year's boycott, although it did play a role in its proposal.

"In the past we've had resolutions composed by competitors of the co-op who also happened to be MEC members calling on MEC to change its business practices in untoward ways," Southam said. "Last year, the board recognized they needed to address this shortcoming in our rules to enable them to assess ordinary resolutions."

More than 30,000 votes were cast in the election on the special resolutions, and the first and third resolutions, which required 75 per cent approval from voting members, passed by 91 per cent and 89 per cent, respectively.

"That's an endorsement of the board's governance, and it shows that members view our board as being very responsible, trustworthy and of representing their interests," Southam said.

Michael Elterman, chair of the Canada-Israel Committee, Pacific region, commended MEC members on taking "a step in the right direction towards preserving MEC the way it should be – a co-operative that unites its members and puts politics aside. These measures will prevent groups that seek to misuse MEC's organizational structure to make controversial and divisive political statements from doing so."

Galloway case still under review

Compiled by CJN Staff

Lawyers for banned British MP George Galloway argued in Federal Court last week that he was unjustly barred from Canada because the federal government has a "pro-Israel" bias.

Galloway has taken Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney to court in an attempt to overturn the ban.

Last March, Galloway was refused entry into Canada by the Canadian Border Services Agency for allegedly financing terrorism via his charity, Viva Palestina. On its website, the charity's stated purpose is to provide "food, medicine and essential goods and services" to Gazans.

Galloway has also given money to Hamas, which Canada lists as a terrorist organization. As a result, the government views Galloway himself as a member of a terrorist organization. Late last week, the *Toronto Star* reported that Galloway's lawyers told a Federal Court hearing in Toronto that the government "has no right to enforce… views on us as Canadians who want to hear George Galloway speak."

Pro- and anti-Galloway protesters sparred verbally outside the court building last week, with those defending the British MP calling for the defence of free speech, while members of the Jewish Defense League chanting support for the government's stance that he provides a "material support" for terror groups.

At *The CJN*'s deadline, the court was still reviewing the ban.

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Kingston shul celebrates 100th birthday

By JORDAN PRESS
Special to The CJN

KINGSTON, Ont. — Beth Israel Congregation's main sanctuary can be humbling when it is flooded with light from the domed skylight overhead, but for those who pray here, there is always the feeling that it is home.

From May 14 to 16, Beth Israel will hold a homecoming to celebrate its 100th anniversary. The celebration is more than a milestone – it's also a testament to the life of a Jewish community in a small city, a community that remains vibrant despite the fact that its members are slowly declining, a fact that also raises questions about the future of Kingston's Jewish community.

"How will [the community] be 100 years from now?" ponders Marion Meyer, a retired Queen's University sociology professor who has researched Kingston's Jewish community. "It's a very interesting question I've asked myself."

The central question as the nearly 170-year-old community has evolved is about religious affiliation. Beth Israel is modern Orthodox, but that could change.

"At some point, it's going to have to happen," says Mayor Harvey Rosen, a former Beth Israel president and lifelong Kingstonian. "There are some serious challenges with the secularization of the Jewish community."

In Beth Israel's early years, Jews were deeply involved in congregational life. Today, they are more integrated into the community and serve in a number of philanthropic and public positions.

In 1842, brothers Abraham and Samuel Nordheimer became the first known Jews in Kingston, but they moved to Toronto in 1844. The first Jews to settle here were Celina and Simon Oberndorffer, who came in 1857 and were instrumental in founding the first congregation in 1908.

Beth Israel Congregation

On Oct. 10, 1910, the community laid the cornerstone for the first Beth Israel building. The local Jewish community paid for most of the building, but the wider community chipped in 20 per cent of the cost. In a sense, the evolution of Kingston's Jews into a community that now leads many philanthropic organizations can be seen as a means to give back to the city that helped provide Jews with a place of their own.

"It has been an incredibly active community," says Vivien Ludwin, one of the congregants who researched the synagogue's history through its archives. Ludwin says the archives provided examples of Jews involved in public life beginning with Celina and Simon Oberndorffer. Simon was an alderman, the first of several Kingston Jews to serve in public office.

Historically, Kingston's Jews were merchants from eastern Europe. Material from the synagogue's archives shows that board meeting minutes were recorded in Hebrew and Yiddish. Today, Jews still have a strong commercial presence in Kingston, but they are more diverse, including a number of South Africans.

For many years, the congregation was housed downtown on Queen Street, but today it's on Centre Street in one of Kingston's oldest residential areas, near the university and Lake Ontario. Community events, like Israel Independence Day, attract large crowds to Beth Israel.

Continued on page 31

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto Section
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Coast to Coast

Celebrations planned for May 14-16

Continued from page 30

The synagogue started out as a place of worship, but has become the de facto Jewish community centre, Meyer says.

The lifeblood of the community partially flows through Queen's. Each year, Jewish students take part in synagogue life at Beth Israel or through the Hillel events held at Hillel House next door to the synagogue. The university has also attracted a number of Jewish intellectuals who hold positions at the university, including the principal, Daniel Woolf.

While Queen's has been a saving grace for the community, a few core families who have been in the city for generations – whom Meyer describes as the "dynastic families" – also help maintain Jewish life in the city.

The number of Beth Israel members has stayed relatively steady over the years. A study Meyer conducted for the 100th anniversary found that in 2009, Beth Israel's membership numbered 142 households. In 1976, there were 143.

Between 1976 and 2009, the religious makeup of the Jewish community in Kingston changed, according to Meyer's research. In 1976, the majority of Beth Israel members considered themselves Conservative or Orthodox. A 2009 survey of members under the age of 60 showed only two Orthodox families. Rosen and others believe a change of religious affiliation is coming in the next few years.

Of the approximately 1,100 Jews living in Kingston, only half are affiliated with Beth Israel or Iyr HaMelech, Kingston's Reform congregation. Both congregations are looking for a way to reach out to the others and feel the pressure to come up with an answer soon.

For now, though, the Jewish community is thriving – something that can't be said of other small communities, Meyer says.

And it is also focused on the celebrations at hand, which include:

- the presentation and sale of a commemorative DVD, highlighting the shul's history through its archives;
- Friday and Shabbat morning services, the latter being dedicated to Beth Israel's 18 presidents;
- a Saturday "Deli Schmoozefest" for up to 400 expected guests;
- a Sunday concert titled "100 Years of Jewish Music" at Grant Hall on the Queen's University campus.

"The synagogue is undergoing a massive spring cleaning, and a palpable enthusiasm is bubbling through the congregation," says Gini Rosen, co-chair of the 100th anniversary celebrations. "There is a sense of satisfaction as well as the gift of revelation. Hidden benefits emerge from every undertaking – particularly a sense of having done something meaningful together."

For more information, visit www.kingston-bethisrael.ca/100-years.htm.

IRANIAN ACTIVIST VISITS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets with Shirin Ebadi, Iranian human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, in his Centre Block office last week.

Shi Lei of Kaifeng, China

Shi Lei, a descendant of one of the original Jewish families, will present the history of the remarkable community of Kaifeng. Cut off from the Jewish world for hundreds of years the community remained intact until the 19th century. Some 300 descendants still live there today and this ancient Jewish community is undergoing a remarkable resurgence. Shi Lei, a graduate of Henan University, is an accomplished and experienced speaker.

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Health & Lifestyles

Survey aims to help people with disabilities

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Lorna Rosenstein and Deborah Cohen are trying to make a difference for people with disabilities.

They are conducting a customer service survey, in which they are gathering ideas, suggestions and concerns to be compiled into a report that will be used to inform businesses, organizations and the government on how to improve accessibility to their goods and services, and how to enhance customer service.

Rosenstein said she and Cohen, who both have vision problems, share the same philosophy. "We both feel that we can't make decisions for people unless we know what they need. We cannot speak for someone else. We decided to start with a survey… that asked broad questions about the major barriers to accessibility."

Their intent, she said, is to identify standards with which organizations and businesses will have to comply.

The questions are intentionally general, Cohen said, so that people won't identify with specific issues. "For example, people with different disabilities responded that they have problems with dim lighting. Those who are hearing impaired need good lighting so they can see for sign language, and those with mobility and agility issues need good lighting so they can move freely. If we streamed barriers according to disabilities, we would miss a lot."

The two met when Rosenstein, who is visually impaired, joined the board of directors of Abilities Arts Festival, where Cohen was executive director. The organization promotes diversity, inclusiveness and the power of art as a means of enriching the cultural fabric of our communities.

"Lorna is a businessperson – she has 20 years executive and senior management experience in the high-tech industry – and we needed someone with business, and not not-for-profit experience."

They continued to meet after Cohen left the festival, and "we began talking about accessibility. The survey got going because Lorna thought it was important," Cohen said.

Rosenstein said that after she took early retirement, she wanted to volunteer on a board where she could make a difference. "When I met Deborah, it all fell into place."

Since the passing of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) in 2005, she said, the government is developing mandatory accessibility standards designed to identify, remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in key areas of daily living.

Deborah Cohen

Lorna Rosenstein

"[We thought] it was vital to hear from those who actually experience barriers. It is critical to provide a voice to those most affected."

The survey, which is self-funded by their companies, Performance Solutions Network and LLR & Associates, "is an integral part of a project examining what Ontarians with diverse disabilities view as the most important issues and barriers to accessing everyday goods and services."

Cohen, whose vision problem means that she sees triple, says they have sent the survey out to community organizations, distributed it at events and led focus groups.

"We started simple and small, but we realized that that wouldn't accomplish what we wanted. People were responding to us with passion, so we decided we had to be thorough."

Not only will the survey make a difference to society, she said, it will also help businesses and organizations. "It's financially smart to be accessible to everyone."

Rosenstein said there would be a lot more places she would visit if there were not so many barriers.

"Our key is to open dialogue, and express concerns. Accessibility is much more than constructing a ramp. Barriers also include attitudes, information and policies. Even though a business is physically accessible, people still may not be able to use it."

The survey, which takes about 20 minutes to complete, is available online at www.psncorp.com.

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Proximity talks to address final-status issues

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JERUSALEM – Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on Monday said indirect peace talks scheduled to begin this week with Israel will address final-status issues, including borders, Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem, Army Radio reported.

"There is a historic opportunity before Israel, if it withdraws from all Palestinian and Arab lands," said Abbas adding that in exchange, under the Arab peace initiative, Israel would be officially recognized by Arab states.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to open the indirect talks with the Palestinian Authority this week with a discussion of the security arrangements in the West Bank and of water resources.

A senior official told *Ha'aretz* that Netanyahu had recently asked the defence establishment and the National Security Council to elaborate on the so-called eight-points brief, which lists Israel's security demands in terms of a permanent status agreement, as framed by Ehud Olmert's government.

Also Monday, chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told Army Radio that Israel should avoid taking any unilateral steps in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, adding that he felt Israel had no reason to sabotage upcoming talks.

Erekat also refuted recent reports stating there had been a falling out between Abbas and PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, saying that those reports were "rumors and illusions that Israel is spreading. Their relationship is very good."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday in Sharm el-Sheikh. *[Israel Sun photo]*

Meannwhile Deputy Prime Minister Dan Meridor said in an interview with Army Radio that upcoming proximity talks were unlikely to succeed, adding that it was "clear to everyone that the real talks are direct, and as soon as we get to them the sooner we can get to the crux of the matter.

"Proximity talks are a peculiar thing. For 16 years, almost every government has talked to the Palestinians and suddenly they ask for this," Meridor said, adding he felt indirect talks were "a Palestinian attempt to push the Americans in."

Meridor also said it was "a mistake to think Israel didn't want to push things forward," adding that both sides "were losing from the present situation and need to advance to an agreement.

"These talks don't just represent an Israeli interest, even though we have a clear interest, but a Palestinian as well," Meridor said.

Earlier Monday, Army Radio reported that official documents showed Jerusalem's municipal planning committee would not be discussing any significant construction plans for Jewish housing in east Jerusalem in its upcoming meetings.

Jerusalem officials claimed the lack of discussion regarding east Jerusalem building was an attempt to appease U.S. President Barack Obama's administration in the wake of recent tensions between the allies.

Netanyahu met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Sharm el-Sheikh on Monday to discuss the upcoming negotiations.

U.S. special envoy to the Middle East, George Mitchell, was expected in Israel on Monday to launch the negotiations. Mitchell will spend the first phase of the proximity talks shuttling between Jerusalem and Ramallah.

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We thank all applicants, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Protesters menace Israeli diplomat in Britain

JTA

LONDON — Pro-Palestinian protesters tried to attack the deputy ambassador of Israel to Britain.

Protesters lunged at Talya Lador-Fresher following her lecture April 28 at the University of Manchester. The envoy, who was not hurt, told Britain's *Jewish Chronicle* that she feared she would be physically assaulted by the protesters.

Lador-Fresher was removed from the area by a security vehicle, which she entered from the back entrance of the lecture hall. The demonstrators attacked the car, some holding Palestinian flags up to the windows and others climbing on the hood and trying to smash the windshield, according to reports.

"I don't think they wanted to kill me, but I genuinely believed they wanted to physically hurt me," she said. "If I had not had the police and security team, I would have been beaten up."

Lador-Fresher told the *Jewish Chronicle* that "No foreign diplomat should have to go through what I went through."

She had been scheduled to give the lecture in February, but it was postponed following reports of planned demonstrations and the inability of university authorities to properly protect her. At that time, more than 300 protesters from the Action Palestine student society scuffled with Jewish students and police.

The lecture was scheduled for April 28, when police and university authorities said they were prepared to deal with the demonstrators, including a complete lockdown of the building, a high-level security presence, ID checks at the door and ticket-only arrangements.

Anti-Semitism discounted as cause of demolition in Morocco

JTA

TANGIER — The president of Morocco's Jewish community discounted rumors that the demolition of a Jewish-owned property in Tangier was related to anti-Semitism.

Over Passover, authorities in Tangier began carrying out a longstanding demolition order of a building that used to house the Jewish Benchimol Hospital in the city. The property still belongs to the Jewish community. The action prompted the president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Spain, Jacobo Israel Garzon, to send a letter of protest to the governor of Tangier demanding that Jewish rights to the property be respected and restored.

The president of the Jewish Communities Council of Morocco, Serge Berdugo, who met with the governor of Tangier after Passover, confirmed that a November 2008 demolition order against the building was being carried out because the structure was unsafe and not for any other reason.

"The fact that the building was demolished over a Passover evening is a mere and unfortunate coincidence," he said. "The decision to demolish the Tangier-based Benchimol hospital was taken after studies showed that this facility, decommissioned and vacant since the mid-1960s, was beyond redemption and could not be revamped at reasonable costs for the Jewish community of Tangier. Although I can understand the feelings sparked by such a decision, the worries and rumours spread in this regard are baseless."

The president of Tangier's Jewish community, Abraham Azencot, was out of town when the razing began, leading to speculation about the reason and timing of the demolition, Berdugo said. Several other structures in the area also are being demolished, including a mosque and church, as well as private and public buildings, he said.

Berdugo said the Jewish community must decide whether to sell or rent the property parcel, or exchange it for another property.

"We have to discuss what is best for the Jewish community because we need money to preserve a Jewish cemetery and historical Jewish synagogues," Berdugo said.

Divestment bills defeated

JTA

BERKELEY, Calif. – The student government at the University of California, Berkeley fell a vote short in a bid to override a veto against a divestment bill.

Meanwhile, a vote early last Thursday morning by the Associated Students at the University of California, San Diego reportedly was unsuccessful in passing a similar measure.

At Berkeley, 13 senators voted early in the morning of April 29 to override the veto, with five voting to uphold it. Fourteen votes were necessary for the override.

The vote at about 4 a.m. followed a meeting that began in the evening attended by about 200 people, according to reports.

"We lost the vote, but won the night," read a statement on the CalDivest from Apartheid website. "We made a statement recorded for posterity and forced everyone to listen and watch what the nature of Israeli occupation is, to listen to Palestinian voices, from Palestine and from the US, telling their stories. These transcripts will stay preserved in recorded history, and we shall overcome."

A vote April 15 failed to overturn student government president Will Smelko's veto of the Associated Students' bill, which was adopted 16-4 in March. However, following several procedural votes, the bill was tabled, making it available again for reconsideration.

The bill would have required divestment of students' association assets from General Electric and United Technologies, two companies cited frequently by Israel's detractors for complicity in alleged war crimes and perpetuating Israel's occupation.

Four female Nobel peace laureates had sent a letter April 28 to the Associated Students at Berkeley in support of the divestment bill.

The San Diego bill was sponsored by several campus organizations, including Students for Justice in Palestine and the Student Sustainability Collective. The resolution identifies by name General Electric and United Technologies, "companies that materially support the occupation of the Palestinian territories."

Unlike the Berkeley measure, the San Diego resolution also condemns human rights violations around the world, though seven of the resolution's 13 points specify Israel and its conflict with the Palestinians.

Claims Conference ועידת התביעות

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

MORE HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS TO RECEIVE PAYMENTS

FOLLOWING CLAIMS CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS

Following negotiations with the German government, the Claims Conference has obtained changes to eligibility for the Article 2 Fund, enabling certain additional Holocaust survivors to receive payments:

Western Persecutees

As a result of negotiations in March 2010, persons who were previously excluded from receiving a payment from the Article 2 Fund due to the fact that they were citizens of certain Western European countries at the time of persecution and citizens of such countries at the time of the Global Agreement between the Western European country and the Federal Republic of Germany, may now be able to receive a payment from the Article 2 Fund if (i) he /she meets the persecution criteria of the Article 2 Fund (ii) any payments received from a German source are less than DM 35,000/€17,895 and (iii) he/she meets the income and assets requirements of the Article 2 Fund. This applies to persons who were citizens of one of the following countries at the time of persecution **and** in the year stated: Belgium (1960), Denmark (1959), France (1960), Great Britain (1964), Holland (1960), Italy (1961), Luxembourg (1959), Norway (1959), Sweden (1964), Switzerland (1961), Austria (citizenship only on or before 13 March, 1938 is relevant). For full details see www.claimscon.org.

Survivors of Concentration Camps

During the negotiations in March 2010, the German Government and Claims Conference have agreed that applications from Holocaust survivors who were in a concentration camp, for whatever period of time, and do not receive an ongoing pension from the BEG, certain pensions from the Israeli Ministry of Finance, Article 2 Fund or the Central and Eastern European Fund (CEEF), will be submitted by the Claims Conference for review by the German Ministry of Finance to see whether those cases are cases of special hardship and eligible for the Article 2 Fund. Such survivors should contact the Claims Conference. Eligible applicants must meet the income and assets requirements of the Article 2 Fund. For full details see www.claimscon.org.

Payments will be as of the later of the date of application or April 1, 2010.

If you think that you may be eligible, please contact the Claims Conference immediately:
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1359 Broadway, Room 2000 New York, NY 10018, USA
Tel: 646-536-9100 Fax: 212-679-2126
Email: info@claimscon.org **www.claimscon.org**

Goldstone attends grandson's bar mitzvah without incident

JTA

JOHANNESBURG — Richard Goldstone attended his grandson's bar mitzvah without protests.

Members of the congregation stood at the road leading to the Beth Hamedrash Hagadol Shul in Sandton, South Africa, to make sure that only family and their guests entered for last Saturday's service, the *South Africa Times* reported.

Goldstone, the author of a United Nations report on the 2009 Gaza war that many deemed unfair to Israel, originally had planned to skip the bar mitzvah after the South African Zionist Federation threatened to protest the former South African judge outside the synagogue.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies brokered a deal last month between Goldstone and community organizations angry with him over his report in which the Jewish groups agreed not to protest during the bar mitzvah celebrations and Goldstone agreed to meet with the leadership of South African Jewish communal organizations.

British elections are 'up in the air'

By WINSTON PICKETT
JTA

LONDON — With Britain's three-way race for prime minister entering the final lap, many Jews in Britain are wondering what Nick Clegg's meteoric rise – and the possibility of a "hung parliament" – means for them.

The dark-horse candidate from the Liberal Democratic party has upended British politics with a surge in the polls that has put him in a virtual dead heat with the two other hopefuls for Britain's top office, the incumbent, Gordon Brown of the Labour party, and David Cameron of the Conservative party, who holds a slight edge in the polls.

Nick Clegg

As no single party is expected to capture a majority of Parliament's 650 seats in the May 6 ballot – known as a hung parliament – the office of prime minister may go to whichever party leader is able to secure a coalition deal or win the support of another party.

While Clegg, whose candidacy has drawn comparisons to that of Barack Obama, is unlikely to be that man, his party's strength significantly increases the chances that the Liberal Democrats either will be a governing coalition partner, or that Clegg's party will exact concessions in exchange for throwing its support behind a minority government of either the Conservatives or Labour.

"So many things are up in the air," said Rosalind Preston, a vice-president of the national Jewish umbrella body, the Board of Deputies of British Jews. "But one thing is certain: Whoever is elected will have to deal with some very real and pressing issues, not only on the national and international level, but as they affect British Jews on the home front."

British Jews, she said, are concerned with "boycotts of Israeli goods, the spike of anti-Israeli resolutions and speakers on university campuses, and the impact of the economy on the social service sector."

With the possibility looming that the ruling party will form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, British Jews are preoccupied with the party's record on Israel.

During the 2009 war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, Clegg penned an op-ed in the *Guardian* newspaper calling on Labor to "condemn unambiguously Israel's tactics" and demanding an immediate arms boycott of Israel by Britain and the European Union. Last December he was the lead signatory of a letter claiming that Israel has 1.5 million Palestinian prisoners, and he wrote that the legacy of Israel's operation in Gaza is a "living nightmare" for Gaza's residents.

Clegg's party also has come under fire in pro-Israel circles for the activities of Jenny Tonge, a former member of Parliament who became a member of the House of Lords in 2005. In 2004, Tonge said she would become a suicide bomber if she had to suffer the indignities of the Palestinians. In 2006 she suggested that the pro-Israel lobby had "financial grips" on Britain and on her party. Last March she met with Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal in Syria.

The last straw came in February, when Tonge called for an inquiry into the far-fetched claim that Israel Defence Forces' earthquake relief teams in Haiti harvested the organs of quake victims. Tonge's remark prompted Clegg to fire her as the party's spokeswoman for health in the House of Lords. Critics said the move came too late.

It didn't help the party's reputation in pro-Israel circles when William Wallace, a deputy Liberal Democratic leader in the House of Lords, offered a politically tone-deaf address when he met with the Board of Deputies of British Jews on April 18. Wallace defended Tonge's "over-emotional approach" to Palestinian rights, called Israel's Likud government "very intolerant of all criticism" and said Israel's blockade of Gaza constituted "collective punishment." Several members of the Board of Deputies walked out of the meeting in protest.

Later, a Liberal Democratic spokesperson denied that the speech was anti-Israel and told the *Jewish Chronicle*, "It was because we are friends of Israel that we will be candid and critical."

Meanwhile, Clegg used the second of three U.S.-style national debates to slam the Conservative party for making common cause with far rightists and anti-Semites in Europe. In the April 22 debate, Clegg said Cameron has aligned himself with "nutters, anti-Semites, people who deny climate change exists and homophobes" in the European Parliament.

Clegg was referring to Cameron's decision last year to ally the Conservative party with right-wing nationalist parties in the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) grouping in Brussels.

Brown also criticized Cameron for his alliances.

"These are the friends David Cameron has chosen in order to satisfy the Euro-skeptic wing of his party," Brown said. "I think that demonstrates poor judgment, and that British voters should understand the compromises to British values and British influence that the Tories are prepared to make in order to appease a significant section of their fanatical backbenchers."

Cameron dismissed Brown's charges as slurs, denied that the party is associated with anti-Semites and affirmed the Conservative party's pro-Israel record.

In such a closely contested and unpredictable national election, the three main parties are scrambling to chase every vote, including the Jewish ones.

While Jews traditionally have favoured Labour over the Conservatives, Jews are upset with Labor's failure to amend the universal jurisdiction law that permits private citizens to apply for the arrest of Israeli politicians for alleged war crimes while they are on British soil.

Cameron has said he would rescind the law.

As concerned as British Jews are with the party leadership race, because voters don't vote directly for the prime minister, the race will be determined in large part by which way the votes go in local races, where bread-and-butter issues prevail.

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BUSINESS STUDENTS CRUISE TO THE TOP

Rachel Zimmer and Bram Warshafsky won a 2011 Chevrolet Cruze in Canada's Next Top Ad Exec.

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It started with a bagel lunch and ended with a car.

This was how Rachel Zimmer and Bram Warshafsky met, at a Hillel bagel lunch during their first year at Queen's University.

It may have been the beginning of a beautiful friendship, but more importantly, it was the beginning of a marketing partnership that would eventually win them $1,500, a VIP weekend in Toronto and two brand-new 2011 Chevrolet Cruzes.

"It wasn't planned," Zimmer said of their partnership. "We were coincidentally doing the same things... I think we don't take ourselves seriously. We just have a lot of fun."

Zimmer and Warshafsky are both fourth-year students in Queen's commerce program with a passion for marketing. Together, they've entered and won three marketing contests this past school year.

The first was the Queen's Marketing Association Conference Sunsilk Challenge, sponsored by Unilever. Students in the competition, which was held in Kingston, Ont., in January, had to create a marketing campaign for Sunsilk shampoo. Zimmer and Warshafsky proposed a $5-million marketing campaign that would include using Shakira, a singer who works with Unilever in Latin America, to endorse the product.

Their prize included a meeting with Unilever's CEO.

The duo also entered the Commerce Society's business-plan competition at Queen's, for which they had to come up with an idea for a business. Zimmer and Warshafsky proposed an online business that would help students with their resumés. The two placed first and won $1,500.

But the pièce de résistance was Zimmer and Warshafsky's latest victory. Recently they entered Canada's Next Top Ad Exec, sponsored by Chevrolet. The national competition attracted 196 teams from 28 business schools throughout Canada, and asked students to create a non-traditional marketing campaign that used elements of social media and event marketing. The campaign would launch the new Chevrolet Cruze, which comes out this fall. The competition, with a hypothetical marketing budget of $500,000, included a quick initial pitch, a written report and a final 25-minute pitch.

While Zimmer and Warshafsky, who tied for first place last month with Mark Scattolon, a student at McMaster University, signed a confidentiality agreement and can't discuss the details of their proposed campaign, Zimmer and Warshafsky said that it used Facebook and Twitter and included an event.

Warshafsky added that the two also filmed a video for the judges to get their point across.

"It was a lot of hard work," he said, adding that he doesn't know how long he spent working on the marketing plan.

"Oh God, I have no idea. I lost track after the first sleepless night."

For the business student, the competition was a chance to apply the skills he learned at Queen's.

"I believe it's important to contextualize academia with real industry learning," he said.

Mikhael Metauro, the co-chair of Canada's Next Top Ad Exec, agrees.

"It provides students with that opportunity to finally apply what they're learning in the classroom," he said. "In class, you don't get those real-life rewards."

Like many involved in the competition, Metauro was impressed with Warshafsky and Zimmer.

"I've heard they're a powerful force," he said. "They definitely have a bright future ahead of them."

Apart from winning a brand-new Chevrolet Cruze each, General Motors may apply some of the concepts from the duo's marketing plan to their new campaign for the 2011 Cruze.

For Warshafsky, both prizes are exciting.

Bram Warshafsky and Rachel Zimmer, Queen's University commerce students, have been working with each other since their first year at Queen's.
[Michael Lea photo]

"I found out I had that internal passion for cars. There's this universal aspiration to own your own car," he said. "They handed us the keys on stage, it was pretty surreal. I didn't really know what was going on."

The two students have created a solid partnership together. Coincidentally, they'll both be working for Johnson and Johnson's as assistant brand managers once they've graduated.

"Both of us are idea generators," Zimmer said. "I focus on numbers and writing, and Bram does writing and the Photoshop work and creative design."

Warshafsky agrees.

"We've been working together for a while. There's an element of trust. If she says an idea I have isn't good, I'm not going to take it offensively because I respect her opinion. We just gel," he said.

When Warshafsky first applied to Queen's, he enrolled in the biology program.

"Queen's was the only program I applied to... I was set on biology. I got in and thought I'd just give it a shot," he said. "Then I found a passion for marketing. It's kind of weird, but I think a lot of the same principles that are true in sciences are true for business. Adapting a niche for supply and demand, you can be talking about evolution or economics."

For Zimmer, going into business school was a natural decision.

"It was instinctive," she said, adding that, in high school, she was involved in DECA Ontario, a business organization for students.

"[Business] is the best guess at what I want to do. I enjoy business. I love thinking creatively and outside the box."

Profile

Art college president is a born teacher

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Sara Diamond can be called an artist and a historian. But she has always been an educator.

She's known this since she was 12.

"I think I knew I wanted to be an educator early on. Very early on. I guess because I was such an active learner as a young person," she said. "It just seemed somehow natural to want to make education more effective."

At 56, that's exactly what she's doing. For the past five years, Diamond has been the president of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD). It was a natural fit after she founded and ran the Banff New Media Institute in 1995, a research and development facility at the Banff Centre, an arts, cultural and educational institute in Alberta.

"It began as a set of workshops and over the years grew to be a really significant institute," she said of the new-media centre. "I built a number of major laboratories there... we had a great number of partners from the commercial world, so it really was a very exciting period of my life."

For her part, Diamond received an extensive education herself. She has a degree in communications and history, a degree in new-media theory and practice and a PhD in computer science.

Diamond, who was born in New York and moved to Toronto as a child, attributes her love of education to her childhood.

"I had, partly through the good tutelage of my family and life experience... good exposure to really effective ways of learning. I equally had exposure to learning situations that maybe didn't challenge me," said Diamond, who spent her high school years at SEED, an alternative public school in Toronto.

"In the '60s, it was a time where there was a lot of attention paid to the individual experience, change and also social engagement," she said. "It was partly the world I was living in that somehow made education more attractive... it convinced me [education] is something to care about."

Like teaching, Diamond's appreciation for art also stemmed from her childhood. While this appreciation eventually led to her first teaching job and later to the National Gallery of Canada, which owns more than a dozen of her video works, it started as a mere hobby.

"There was a creative thread always in my life as a child," she said. "I never took art classes outside of school, but I was always actively engaged... in those classes."

As a teenager, Diamond was involved in theatre, music and dance.

"As I grew older, I was more interested in history and, as an academic, in becoming a historian, but I always had this strong interest and connection with

Sara Diamond *[Tom Sandler Photography photo]*

various theatrical movements."

This transferred to an interest in film, which led to the Video In, a film centre in Vancouver. Diamond started a set of classes for people in the art community interested in film there.

"[Film] wasn't being taught as an art format... Before I knew it, the courses were really popular," she said.

That eventually led to a position at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

"I kind of fell into it and I just loved it. I loved teaching. To this day, I think there's nothing so important as that engagement that teachers can have with students."

The connection between teacher and student shapes Diamond's teaching style. It still does.

"There's an art to teaching, I think. It was something I really focused on trying to learn," she said.

"I loved that kind of engagement with students and to this day, the excitement you have when you see someone learning, it's one of the greatest things in the world."

As president of a large educational institution, Diamond can get a little busy. Her days are filled with speaking engagements, conferences and administrative work. But they're also filled with students.

"I try and have presence in the school," she said. "I'm one of the only, if not the only, president I know who has office hours."

She invites groups of students to her house for dinner, the Dining with Diamond program.

"We have an opportunity to have dinner together and get a sense of what it is in their lives that makes them who they are. I tend to invite students who are mentors and who are in need," she said.

Everything in Diamond's life seems to lead back to OCAD. Even reconstructive surgery.

On a recent trip to Argentina, a train she was travelling on burst into flames, forcing a quick evacuation.

"There was a weird power surge... it was like being in a bad action film," she said. Diamond and the other passengers were forced to jump off the train. She broke her foot and required surgery.

"It gave me a great perspective on something I really care about, which is accessibility and making sure OCAD is inclusive for people who are physically challenged as well as mentally challenged."

Based on Diamond's link to OCAD, and many other educational institutions, the educator understands what makes a good teacher.

"It's a certain charismatic quality. I don't mean that in a cultish way," she said. "[I mean] someone whose personality and own love of the subject comes through in what they teach."

And Diamond would know. She's done it long enough.

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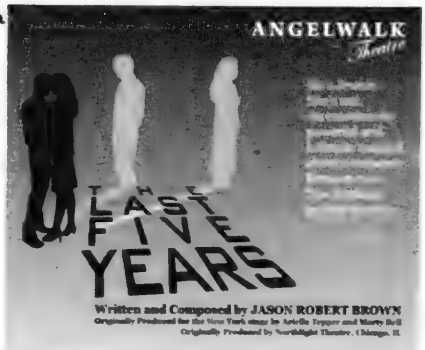

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Arts & Travel

Musician's fateful encounter with a blind violinist

By JORDANA DIVON
Special to The CJN

As far as arguments for the existence of fate go, this one is pretty convincing.

It is Ramat Gan, Israel, in the late 1950s. Moshe and Simcha Dalal, recently arrived from Baghdad, take their three-year-old son, Yair, along to a neighbourhood party. Iraqi parties are often filled with music and celebratory spirit, and this one is no exception.

The wide-eyed boy stares in wonder at the scene unfolding around him: three musicians command the room, vigorously playing traditional Iraqi songs. People dance and sing along; laughter mingles with the scent of pita and fried eggplant.

The boy's eyes lock on the violin player, a well-known Jewish-Iraqi musician named Daoud al-Kuwaity. He is mesmerized.

"Daoud was blind, and Daoud used to smoke, and he used to smoke while he played," Yair Dalal, now a prolific Israeli ethnic musician, recalls. ""The cigarette was in his mouth, and the ash was falling on his violin… He was blind, so he didn't see."

At that moment, the three-year-old makes an important life decision. "I think his figure, and the way he looked, and the sound that came out of his violin really did something to me," Dalal, who was in Toronto last month performing with Juno Award-nominated Jaffa Road, says.

For the next three years, the boy pesters his father to let him play violin. At six, Dalal begins studying classical violin at a nearby conservatory, where he remains until he is called to the army.

When his service ends, the young man goes to work at a nature reserve. It is at that time he decides to break from the classical European tradition and seek out the Middle Eastern music of his parents' roots.

That's how Dalal meets Yosef, master of the oud – a twangy pear-shaped string instrument common to the Middle East. Then the strange coincidences begin.

"I came into his house one day, and what do I see?" says Dalal. "I see a photo of Daoud [al-Kuwaity] playing the violin with a cigarette in his mouth and the ashes falling down – exactly as I remember seeing him at three years old."

Shocked, Dalal asks his new friend about the man in the picture. He learns that al-Kuwaity and Yosef had played together for 40 years, and that al-Kuwaity had died recently. Dalal then begins to learn the oud.

Around the same time, Dalal moves to a kibbutz and strikes up a friendship with Ariyeh, a boy who comes to check on the milking cows.

They quickly bond over their mutual love of music. Dalal continues to study oud with Yosef, commanding the instrument as he had the violin.

A few years later, Dalal decides to mount a tribute concert in honour of al-Kuwaity's music: he will play violin and Yosef will play the oud. The concert is a rousing success. After the show, Dalal is surprised when his friend Ariyeh rushes to the stage, grabs his hands, and starts to bless him.

"I said, 'Ariyeh, what are you doing at this concert? What do you have to do with Iraqi music?'"

"You didn't know?" his friend replies. "Daoud was my father."

Dalal stared at his friend, speechless. He continues. "Yair, I hated his music, I didn't like his behaviour, I didn't like his late-night concerts. But now you changed my attitude. I'm going home and gathering all his cassettes. I want to make a collection of my father's music."

Yair Dalal, right, with Jaffa Road

Dalal helps Ariyeh organize his father's music. In time, Dalal would go on to record and archive traditional Bedouin and Babylonian folk songs as part of his celebrated cultural roots projects and to become one of the most prolific ethnic musicians Israel has ever produced. But for now, he remains entrenched in the world of his childhood idol.

Two months zip by and Ariyeh calls his friend over. "I want to give you something," he says. Ariyeh slips into his room and returns with a battered violin case. "Here," he says, handing it to Dalal. "I want you to have this."

The musician opens the case and sets his eyes on a violin filled with ashes from a thousand cigarettes. Al-Kuwaity's violin. "I was thinking, should I clean it up? And then I said, 'No, if I clean it up it will never be Daoud's violin. So I left it."

Yair Dalal playing the oud, a twangy pear-shaped string instrument, common to Middle Eastern music.

The violin is heavily damaged and Dalal is unable to play the instrument, but he picks up the bow and holds it in his calloused hands. And it is with al-Kuwaity's bow that Dalal played to a jam-packed house at Hugh's Room in Toronto's west end on April 25 with Jaffa Road.

The show, Musical Melding, did just that, weaving between Dalal's repertoire of traditional Arabic and Hebrew songs and Jaffa Road's earthy world music blends. Vocalist Aviva Chernick handled Dalal's moody, complex vocal riffs with fluid ease, and Dalal added a palpable energy to the band's award-winning songs.

Sponsored by the Koffler Centre and the New Israel Fund, the concert was an opportunity to witness a pairing of musical kindred spirits, and to experience the quiet magnetism of Dalal's artistry as he handled the violin bow that set him on his path.

Still don't believe in fate?

Arts & Travel

Lauren Lipson co-stars in a play about love

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Lauren Lipson, a local actor with numerous TV and film credits, is co-starring in the first Toronto production of the critically acclaimed off-Broadway romantic comedy, *Almost, Maine*.

Directed by Jennifer Copping, the inaugural offering of Little Tiny Things Productions, runs at the Tarragon Theatre's Extra Space until May 15.

An ensemble piece by John Cariani, the play takes place in the remote, mythical town of Almost in Maine. Lipson said the play is about love and all that love encompasses. *Almost, Maine* consists of three vignettes that follow different sets of characters. "It's all about the shades of love and the different stages of love and the joy, the pain, the confusion, the frustration and the loneliness and all the things that happen when you let yourself fall in love with someone," she said.

Lipson plays Ginette in the vignette "Prologue," Hope in "Hope's Story" and Gayle in "Getting It Back."

"In 'Hope's Story,' Hope goes back to Almost, Maine, to recapture her youth and the love she once had, only to find out that man she has come back for, isn't the man she sees at the door," Lipson said.

"In 'Getting It Back,' I have been with my boyfriend for 11 years and I'm waiting for the ring, and it has not happened yet. I come with 'bags of love' representing all the years we've been together… and I am returning them all," she added.

Lauren Lipson

Lipson, along with Copping and actor Kate Spurgeon, founded Little Tiny Things Productions. They said the theatre company is dedicated to the power of truth in storytelling, with their mission being to serve the story, honour the characters and celebrate human connectedness.

Lipson wants audiences to come away from seeing *Almost, Maine* with a feeling of renewal and a feeling of strength in love and the belief in love, and that it's OK to love. She said love is a journey and not always a bowl of cherries, but that love is a part of life if you let it happen.

Lipson, the lone actor in her family, is a graduate of the Acting Conservatory at York University. Her acting credits include the television shows *The Rick Mercer Report*, *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, *The Line* and *Beautiful People*, and three animation series, *6Teen*, *Total Drama Island* and *Stoked*. Lipson also starred in the short film *Gorgeous*.

Besides acting, Lipson is a writer. She co-wrote and starred in the 48-hour Toronto Film Challenge award-winning short, *AD/BC*, and the award-winning short film, *The Exquisite Corpses*. Her first screenplay, *Swirly Girl*, is currently in development.

When she's not working, Lipson, who is single, enjoys jogging, yoga and reading.

For tickets to *Almost, Maine*, call 416-531-1827. For more information, visit www.tarragontheatre.com.

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Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

ANITA DIAMANT TO DISCUSS LATEST BOOK AT HADASSAH-WIZO EVENT

Anita Diamant, author of *The Red Tent*, discusses her new book *Day After Night* in a Toronto event hosted by the Dor L'Dor chapter of Canadian Hadassah-WIZO in support of Children Healthcare and Women projects. General admission $40; with book $70. Patron ticket $150 includes book and cocktail reception at 6:30 p.m. Beth Tzedec Synagogue, 1700 Bathurst St. Thursday, May 27, 8 p.m. dorldor@live.ca or Jodi, 416-873-6902.

• • •

Jewish Book Awards: A novel about a Jewish immigrant adjusting to life in a 19th-century Newfoundland outport community has won this year's fiction prize in the Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish book awards. *The Winterhouse* by **Robin McGrath** is one of eight winners of the 22nd annual awards.

The other winners are: **Allan Levine** (history category) for *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*; **Michael Marrus** (Holocaust literature) for *Some Measure of Justice: The Holocaust Era Restitution Campaign of the 1990s*; **Eva Wiseman** (youth literature) for *Puppet*; **David Sax** (biography and memoir) for *Save the Deli*; **Kenneth Sherman** (Jewish thought & culture) for *What the Furies Bring*; **Jeffrey Veidlinger** (Jewish scholarship) for *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire*; and **Goldie Sigal** (Yiddish) for *Stingy Buzi and King Solomon*.

As well, writer **Howard Engel**, famed creator of the Benny Cooperman series of detective novels, is to receive a special achievement award. The awards ceremony takes place at the Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, 750 Spadina Ave., on Thursday, May 27, 8 p.m.

• • •

Playwriting Festival: The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company's new playwriting festival, *In The Beginning: A Jewish Playwrights Festival*, presents staged readings of four new plays: *Pillars of Salt* by **Michael Ross Albert** on Monday, May 10, 7:30 p.m.; *The Three of Us* by **Ron Fromstein** on Tuesday, May 11, 7:30 p.m.; *Zay Shnl* by **Bekky O'Neil** on Wednesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m.; and *Corpus* by **Darrah Teitel**, Thursday, May 13, 7:30 p.m. All readings feature professional casts and admission is free. The plays were chosen from more than 70 received from across Canada. www.hgjewishtheatre.com

• • •

Names in the News: Barak Heymann, director of *The Lone Samaritan*, and **Pierre Sauvage**, director of *Not Idly By: Peter Bergson, America and The Holocaust*, were named recipients of this year's David A. Stein Memorial Award at the recently concluded Toronto Jewish Film Festival. The $5,000 award is given each year in memory of Toronto filmmaker **David Stein**, who died in 2004.

Sandra Schulberg and **Josh Waletzky** were the first recipients of the TJFF's new Legacy Award for the powerful film *Nuremberg: Its Lesson For Today*. The duo painstakingly reconstructed the long-forgotten 1948 film about the famous Nazi trial after the original picture negative and sound elements were lost or destroyed.

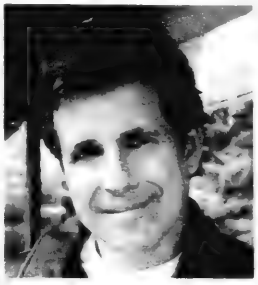
• • •

Music & Drama

• *A Jew Grows in Brooklyn*, **Jake Ehrenreich**'s acclaimed stage memoir, has begun its run at the Panasonic Theatre, where it continues through May 16. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

• Osculum Productions presents **Ariel Dorfman**'s acclaimed play *Death and The Maiden*, a moral thriller about a woman who believes that a mysterious stranger who has arrived at her home is the same doctor who, years earlier, tortured and raped her. $40 to $50. St Lawrence Centre for the Arts. May 5 to 22. 416-366-7723, www.stlc.com

• Angelwalk Theatre presents *The Last Five Years*, **Jason Robert Brown**'s emotionally charged and intimate musical about two twentyish New Yorkers, one of whom is Jewish, who fall in and out of love over five years. The two principals tell their stories in a unique way: she starts at the end of the relationship, he starts at the beginning. $40-$25. Toronto Centre for the Arts, May 7 to 23. www.angelwalk.ca



Jake Ehrenreich

• The Civic Light-Opera Company presents the musical *Funny Girl*, about the life of Jewish vaudeville and Hollywood legend **Fanny Brice**. Featuring **Ashley Medeiros-Felix** (as Brice), **Julie Lennick**, **Edward Karek**, **David Haines** and others. Also features a full orchestra, many popular songs such as *People* and *Don't Rain on My Parade*, and even some Ziegfeld girls. $25. Fairview Library Theatre, 35 Fairview Mall Dr. May 26 to June 12. 416-755-1717, www.CivicLightOperaCompany.com

• **Resa's Pieces** is an adult band that was formed a decade ago to provide an opportunity for people to return to playing instruments they hadn't touched in years. Under the directorship of **Resa Kochberg**, the band is preparing for its 11th gala concert, which is already nearly sold out. Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, June 8, 8 p.m. www.resaspieces.org

• • •

At the Galleries: Canadian artist **Brian Jungen** has won the $25,000 Gershon Iskowitz Prize for his contribution to visual arts in Canada. The Art Gallery of Ontario, which administers the prize, is planning a public reception on May 6 and an exhibition of Jungen's work in the coming year.

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Senesh documentary out on DVD

By JOSEPH SERGE
Arts Editor

If you missed the documentary *Blessed Is the Match* on TV last month – the PBS screening date we published was incorrect for Toronto-area viewers – fear not. The DVD of the film is now in stores.

Blessed Is the Match is an extraordinary and inspiring documentary about Hannah Senesh, the 22-year-old Hungarian-Jewish resistance fighter who parachuted into Nazi-occupied Europe to try to save Hungarian Jews.

Through interviews, eyewitness accounts, rare family photographs, dramatic re-enactments and the writings of her mother, Catherine, the documentary brings Senesh's moving story to life.

The DVD includes around five minutes of deleted scenes, a photo gallery and the trailer.

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Arts & Travel

Theatre company presents new works at Miles Nadal

By KATHRYN KATES
Special to The CJN

Toronto-born actors David Eisner and Avery Saltzman, the co-artistic directors of the Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company, have lived and breathed theatre since they met at William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute more than 30 years ago.

Harold Green Jewish Theatre is a professional non-profit company that produces plays that reflect the Jewish experience.

"Our mandate is to celebrate and embrace Jewish stories, 5,000 years in the making, our triumphs and struggles. David and I feel it is our honour and privilege to do so," says Saltzman.

Avery Saltzman, left, and David Eisner

The company's 2010-11 season, their fourth, will feature *Lenin's Embalmers*, a co-production with Winnipeg Jewish Theatre by Vern Thiessen and directed by Geoffrey Brumlick; *Zero Hour*, written and starring Jim Brochu and directed by Piper Laurie; and *To Life*, directed and conceived by Tim French and Saltzman.

"We had a great past season, and this season looks very exciting for us," Saltzman says, noting that subscription sales are reflecting that. "It has been great and met every expectation. People appreciate the gift we are providing to the city by telling our stories, Jewish stories. We are getting towards good sustainability, but we are always looking for support… people to donate or buy subscriptions."

Saltzman says they want to provide great theatre and to tell great stories for every generation and every ethnicity. He takes pride in producing plays that teach students, Jews and non-Jews alike, about Jewish history, including the Holocaust, as they did with the play *Transport*.

"We want to tell about our past, but we also want to tell new stories that are coming up – that is why we developed the In The Beginning Festival at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, May 10 to 13," Saltzman says. "We asked for submissions from emerging young Jewish playwrights from across Canada, and we got close to 70 scripts and we chose four. It is amazing how many young Jewish theatre writers want to tell their story through a Jewish perspective."

The company has garnered praise for their efforts from both their Jewish and non-Jewish audiences for their array of theatrical offerings, including the controversial and challenging play *Talk*, about the Mideast situation. Each performance ended with a well-respected guest speaker, including Martin Luther King III. Saltzman and Eisner also brought in Theodore Bikel, a legendary thespian who delighted audiences in *Sholom Aleichem: Laughter Through Tears*.

Also on tap for next season is the Conversations on the Green series, at the Jane Mallett Theatre. The program is co-sponsored by the Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.

"[Broadcaster] Ralph Benmurgui hosts one-on-one conversations with people in the community who are Jewish and how their roots affected where they are today. For the audience, it is like being a fly on the wall, and don't we all like to be that hearing these personal stories," says Saltzman.

This year's guests are singer-songwriter Amy Sky, lawyer Edward Greenspan, theatre impresario David Mirvish and the host of *Fashion Television*, Jeanne Beker.

Harold Green Jewish Theatre hopes to one day have its own home theatre. Saltzman is also hoping to form an acting company of Jewish kids with outreach to great directors and actors by next year. For more information about Harold Green Jewish Theatre, visit www.hgjewishtheatre.com.

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Capitalism a source of pride and prejudice for Jews

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Capitalism, as American historian Jerry Z. Muller succinctly observes, has been both a blessing and a curse for Jews.

In his superb book, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton University Press), Muller, a historian at the Catholic University of America, places this complex issue in its proper perspective.

On the one hand, Jews who mastered the intricacies of capitalism enjoyed its fruits. Yet there was a price to pay for this success. Jewish economic prowess emboldened anti-Semites, leading them to condemn capitalism as a form of Jewish domination and exploitation.

Muller, in this erudite volume, traces the relationship between Jews and capitalism and the anti-Semitic backlash it sometimes engendered in free market and Communist societies.

Although Jews were not a "merchant people" for much of their history, they became one in medieval Europe, thanks in part to Christianity's negative attitude to commerce.

Before the rise of modern capitalism in the 17th century, Jews were rank outsiders, falling outside the feudal order of serfs, landowning gentry, merchants and artisans in exclusive guilds.

Since they were forbidden to join guilds, Jews gravitated toward trade and were middlemen between producers and consumers. As well, Jews were involved in the lending of money, known as usury.

The integral role they played in capitalism, he points out, made them "a lightning rod" for the drastic changes it ushered in. Capitalism, in its purest form, brought about "creative destruction," as the economist Joseph Schumpeter noted in a perceptive essay. Capitalism irretrievably displaced older forms of production, consumption and styles of life. After capitalism, the world was never the same again. Those who could not adapt invariably blamed Jews for their misfortunes.

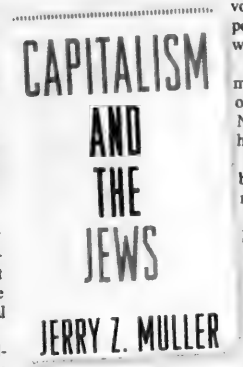
Yet not all Jews were enamoured of capitalism. From the mid-19th century onward, a minority of Jews embraced its polar opposite, communism, thus enabling anti-Semites to pour scorn on Jewish capitalists and Communists.

In the European mind, Muller writes, Jews and capitalism were inextricably linked because Jews were permitted by the church to engage in the stigmatized activity of lending money at interest.

Usury, expressly forbidden as sinful by the Catholic church in 1139, triggered anti-Semitism among the common people. But since money lending was a lubricant in the development of national economies, political authorities protected and tolerated Jews.

The linkage between Jews and capitalism, however, was not always cast in dim colours. The important Austrian economist Freidrich Hayek was of the view that the talents of Jewish entrepreneurs were vital to economic progress. Yet he, too, understood that anti-capitalism bred anti-Semitism.

During the 19th century, Jewish bankers loomed large in European capitalism. The Rothschilds, with branches in Frankfurt, London, Paris, Vienna and Naples, financed peacetime projects and wars. And bankers such as the Bleichroders in Berlin and the Oppenheims in Cologne were instrumental in mobilizing funds for for economic development.



By Muller's estimate, about half the Jewish working population in Germany on the eve of World War I was involved in commerce, trade and finance. The percentage in the Austro-Hungarian Empire was similar.

Not surprisingly, he adds, Jewish economists have won a disproportionate number of Nobel prizes. Since the inception of the Nobel Prize for economics in 1970, Jews have been the recipients 22 times.

Muller's comments on Israel reflect his belief that Jews are particularly adept at managing capitalistic economies.

As he puts it, "By the 1990s, [Israel] had become a centre of entrepreneurial energy, with thousands of startups, and more [Israeli] companies traded on the major New York exchanges than any other country aside from the United States and Canada.

"Thus, in Israel, too, Jews have once again become a highly commercial nation, finding their historical proclivities well suited to the global economy. Indeed, Israelis created their own Diaspora, forming new transnational social networks that recapitulated the experiences of earlier Jewish Diasporas."

Although Jews have been identified with capitalism, they have also been associated with its flip side, communism.

Inevitably, anti-Semitism often pushed Jews to become socialists and Communists. The link is clear. Socialism and communism promised to abolish anti-Semitism by eliminating its partial roots in capitalism.

Elaborating on this theme, Muller says, "The universalism of Marxism, its promise to end all distinctions based upon ethnic or religious origin, was almost irresistible to some young Jews."

As he hastens to add, the identification of Jews with radical political ideologies and movements served to bolster anti-Semitism. "The result was a dialectic of disaster," he writes.

The myth of the Jew as Bolshevik emerged after World War I and became central to Nazism and prompted European collaborators to participate in the Holocaust.

"After the war, the dialectic of anti-Semitism and Jewish involvement in communism continued to influence… eastern Europe, as the conspicuous role played by men and women of Jewish origin in the Sovietization of eastern Europe once again transformed anti-Semitism, this time into an adjunct of popular opposition to Stalinism. And then, in a final twist, the Soviets and the Communists of eastern Europe endeavoured to use this new anti-Semitism for their own ends."

In reality, the vast majority of Jews in Russia considered communism with distaste. Its atheism contradicted Judaism, while its economic policy threatened Jewish merchants, traders and shopkeepers.

But it is undeniably true that in the early Soviet Union and in post-1945 Hungary and Poland, for example, Communists with Jewish backgrounds were appointed to leadership positions before being purged in anti-Semitic show trials and campaigns.

In *Capitalism and the Jews*, a stellar work of intellectual history, Muller draws on his vast knowledge and synthesizing powers to make the case that capitalism has been a source of pride and prejudice for Jews.

Thus it was hundreds of years ago, and thus it will be hundreds of years from now.

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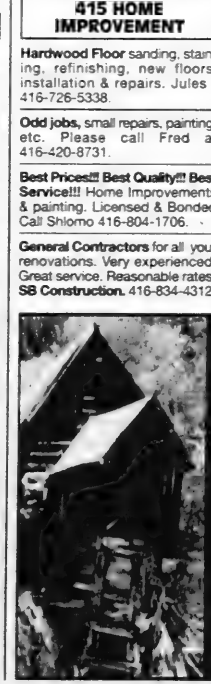

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JobKatif helps Gaza evacuees

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

When 28-year-old Yoni Chaim (not his real name) was removed from his home in Neve Dekalim, Gaza, in August 2005 along with his parents and his five siblings, he suffered a serious personal crisis.

Like many people from the Gush Katif bloc of settlements, his entire life was dismantled before his eyes: his house was bulldozed by the Israel Defence Forces; his school and synagogue were destroyed, and his father was forced to abandon his organic vegetable greenhouses, and without his income, the family was suddenly below the poverty line

In short, his entire community – every place he knew and loved – was gone.

He and his family found themselves in a crowded Jerusalem hotel room, where they stayed for more than seven months while he was bounced from school to school. By the time the family moved into a temporary mobile home in Nitsan, the biggest trailer park for Gaza evacuees, Chaim had dropped out of school, wasn't working and refused to get out of bed in the morning. His parents suspected he was taking drugs.

Then, one day, a counsellor appeared at his home from the Jerusalem-based non-profit organization JobKatif. It took a few meetings, but eventually she learned that Chaim was interested in becoming a bus driver. In a matter of days, he was enrolled in a certification program. After passing his exam, the counsellor helped him land the one opening available to new drivers. And since the job was quite far away, she arranged a loan for him to buy a second-hand car.

Today, Chaim is a different person. He goes to work every day and pays back his car loan diligently every month. And he's happy to say he recently started dating someone.

Chaim is one of 1,500 people from Gaza and northern Samaria in the West Bank that JobKatif has helped get back on their feet since the organization was founded in March 2006.

Immediately after the Gaza pullout in the summer of 2005, and even before the temporary trailer parks for the evicted were ready, Rabbi Tzvi Rimon, rabbi of the Alon Shevut community of Gush Etzion in the West Bank, mobilized his community and began reaching out to the evacuees who had been put up temporarily in Jerusalem hotels. They helped them with basic needs, from food and laundry to children's programs.

As time moved on and the evacuees' temporary situation dragged on for months and became more dire, he decided to tackle employment. He went from government office to government office to see who was dealing with the issue, and he quickly discovered that no one was.

Guided by a Jewish tenet that if you see someone in need and no one is helping them, the onus is on you to help, Rabbi Rimon started to search for jobs for the evacuees, and JobKatif was born.

It was Rabbi Rimon's motivating philosophy that appealed most to Judy Lowy, executive director of JobKatif, who joined the organization two years ago.

"I also appreciated the organization's holistic approach to helping," says Lowy, an employment professional with more than 10 years experience. "If someone is beset by personal problems, it is very difficult for them to find a job. These people required a unique approach."

The evacuees from Gaza and northern Samaria underwent extraordinary emotional and psychological trauma, she says. They stood by as the houses they'd built with their own hands were bulldozed by the IDF. They watched their hothouses – the pride of their communities – get torn down by the Palestinians to whom they were left, and they saw their synagogues desecrated and their cemetery torn apart and their dead reburied. They lost everything: their houses, their communities and their livelihoods.

Five years later, their lives are still asunder. Eighty-five per cent of those who moved into the temporary trailer parks are still living there (only 20 per cent of evacuees chose not to move into these parks). It's only in the last six months that the Israeli government has started to make good on its promise to build them new communities inside the Green Line. But by the time construction is finished, many won't be able to afford the new houses, having spent the last five years frittering away their house grants while out of work.

Preliminary results of a census being conducted jointly by JobKatif and the Tnufah Authority, the government agency established to handle the Gaza pullout and its aftermath, indicate that most former residents of Gaza didn't believe the withdrawal would happen and are still in denial. Many are still extremely angry and feel betrayed by the state. The population shows higher incidences of health problems, divorce and teen drug use than the national averages.

Their unemployment rate has also soared, jumping from two to three per cent before the pullout to 21 per cent (the national average is eight per cent). With some 70 per cent of the population having been employed in agriculture or other private businesses, the population's employability outside Gaza has been a major problem, since many farmers are too old and lack the physical strength to rebuild their farms.

"We have the most trouble helping the people who worked in agriculture. They were the hardest hit," Lowy says. "If you spend years building a business, especially if it involves growing something alive, and it is destroyed, it is extremely emotionally destructive."

Another challenge has been finding work for people who ran their own businesses – such as stores, repair and service shops – that are now gone. Many others worked in positions – in daycares, schools, and regional councils – without certification, and despite years of experience, are very hard to employ inside Israel.

Altogether, the evacuees present a unique employment challenge, so JobKatif has come up with a special, one-to-one approach to helping them.

Ariel Porat was able to re-launch his agriculture company in new greenhouses with the assistance from JobKatif.

"These people don't just need job opportunities," says Lowy. "They need motivating, empowering and boosting."

The process starts with outreach. Rather than waiting for individuals to take the initiative, JobKatif sends employment counselors, all specially trained former Gaza residents, to each family with a known need for work. In paying a visit to their home, a counsellor can assess the family's entire situation and determine if there's a larger need there – such as for a social worker or psychologist – and can refer a specialist to the family.

The objective of the first meetings is to get the individual to a point where he or she is ready to get back to work. It's a process that can take from one meeting to 10 or more, Lowy says. Once the person gets there, the counselor starts helping them to review job postings, arrange interviews, prepare their resume and learn interview skills.

For the many people who aren't yet prepared to jump in with both feet, JobKatif has a volunteer program that helps people just get out of bed in the morning and on track to get back to work.

Lowy estimates there are still some 1,000 families in need of employment assistance.

"As time goes by, the nature of our work gets harder," she says. "People who haven't been working for five years at this point are really in a bad way, both financially and emotionally. It gets harder and harder to find these people jobs."

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Daring young man flies with the greatest of ease

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Spring is finally in full bloom, with flowers poking their heads through the soil, trees blossoming, cyclists on their bikes and golfers working out the kinks, but for Marlon Bass, this summer will include a quest for snow.

And not just any snow. It's got to be sculpted and groomed and cared for so that freestyle skiers like himself will feel comfortable doing the kind of nerve-wracking tricks and jumps that leaves spectators gasping.

Bass, a Grade 9 student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto, will join fellow skiers from the Ontario Junior Ski team at Whistler, B.C., later this summer to prepare for next winter's competitive freestyle season.

Bass will work on the "tricks" of his trade, such as the "900" – two-and-a-half rotations in the air (900 degrees) – and a "switch 720," in which a skier enters a jump backwards and does two-and-a-half rotations in the air.

This clearly is not the relatively gentle downhill skiing that includes slaloming between gates or even hurtling quickly to the bottom in a downhill race. It's the kind that makes his mom shut her eyes when he's spinning in the air.

Freestylers are the skiers who perform death and injury-defying spins and twists in the air and, as winter sports go, are first cousins to the snowboarders who wowed spectators at last winter's Vancouver Olympics.

Marlon Bass

Bass' disciplines are not yet Olympic sports, though they might be by the time he's old enough to qualify for the Canadian team. At this point, striving for that sort of elite competition is not what motivates him. Freestyle skiing, which "is growing a lot in the last couple of years, more than racing has" is just plain fun.

"I like the extremeness, the air," he said. "I like it a lot."

Bass got his start on skis at a relatively young age. He was three or four when he was first introduced to the sport, but it came naturally to him as his family members were all avid skiers at Georgian Peaks, near Collingwood, Ont.

"I really liked it from the start. My parents and brothers liked it. I never got into hockey, so that's what I did in the winter months."

Three or four years ago he heard about freestyle skiing. "I tried it. I liked it."

"It was a big adjustment," he continued. "It took a while to get over the fear of big air [great heights] and knowing how to land a jump without falling.

"I still fall all the time," Bass, 14, acknowledges, but he's suffered no injuries so far.

To excel in freestyle events, "you need to be determined, have good leg strength, and if you fall, you have to get right back up again. If you get hurt, you have to get up and try again," he said.

Bass competes in the half pipe and big air events. The former is completed in a barrel-shaped course flanked by two high walls. The skiers go wall to wall, gather speed, fly into the air and do multiple tricks during a single run.

Big air tricks are completed on a single run off a ramp that permits skiers to gain elevation quickly.

Last winter in Truro, N.S., he was part of the Ontario team that competed in the 2010 Junior National Freestyle Championships. Bass earned two bronze medals, and others on the team did even better. The year before, he finished first at the Rail Comp at Earl Bales and first at Slopestyle Devil's Glen events. The high finishes built a point total that earned him a spot on the provincial team.

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Fichman wins big at Fed Cup

By MARVIN GLASSMAN
Special to The CJN

Sharon Fichman of Toronto helped Canada sweep Argentina 5-0 at the recent Fed Cup World Group Two playoff held on the indoor hard courts of Montreal's Jarry Park Tennis Centre by dominating her doubles match in the final event of the Fed Cup tie.

Fichman teamed with Marie-Eve Pelletier April 25 to defeat Jorgelina Cravero and Aranza Salut 6-4, 6-2 and make the one-sided event joyful for the home crowd.

Fichman was impressive, not losing serve, and breaking the Argentine team with strong net play and backhand shots.

One of Fichman's many highlights in the match was her volley at the net at break point in game three of the second set to give Canada a 3-0 lead, followed by winning the next five points on her serve.

"I was very pleased and feel confident that I will have more success to come this year. We [Canada] jelled as a team, fought for every point, and had everything go as planned," said a jubilant Fichman after her match, which ended with a victory lap around the Tennis Centre with her teammates.

"Sharon knew her role would be in doubles when selected and did all and more than was expected of her this year," said Canadian Fed Cup captain Sylvain Bruneau.

Bruneau selected Fichman to play both singles and doubles for Canada in February at the regulation zone tie in Paraguay, and she came through with two singles and a doubles victory in her three matches.

Fichman, whose aim in 2010 is to be ranked among the top 100 in women's tennis, seems to be well on her way to her goal with a current high of 134.

She had her best tournament in late February in Acapulco, upsetting the number-40 ranked player, Soroma Cirstea of Romania, 6-2, 6-0 and fourth seed Mariya Koryttseva of Ukraine 6-2, 6-3 en route to a quarter-final finish.

Fichman won Tennis Canada's Ace award as Canada's most improved player in 2009. With her high ranking, Fichman will be allowed to enter the qualifying rounds of the major tournaments on the women's pro circuit.

She is an impressive 14-1 in Fed Cup play, being the youngest Canadian ever, at age 14, to earn a spot on the Canadian national team in 2005. At 19, Fichman is still the youngest player on the Canadian Fed Cup and is the first Jewish player selected to play Fed Cup for Canada since Vicki Berner played from 1964 to 1967.

My furry new friend

"Mommy?" says my daughter as she rubs my shoulders in a strange way. "Mommy, do you love me?" she asks in a sweet voice.

I can smell danger. "Well?" she asks again, this time impatiently.

That's my sign – the impatient attitude. It won't be long until she requests the impossible – such as, let's adopt a cat!

"We're not having a cat," I say laconically, anticipating the question.

She seems insulted. "I wasn't gonna ask you about that. Why are you so suspicious?" she replies, adding sulkily "Why not? We want a cat!"

I feel a sneeze coming on.

"Because, tragically, Mommy's allergic to cats, and you know that very well," I reply.

Her brother enters the conversation out of nowhere. "We've discussed it with Dad," he says gravely. "Turns out, it's our call: we can keep you, or we can get a cat and give you away."

In bed, I give Meir the silent treatment.

"But I've read that children can benefit from a pet for their well-being," he offers.

"A child can benefit from a mom now and then, too," I answer, giving him food for thought. (Why can't I ever maintain the silent treatment bit?)

He's somehow not convinced. "Let's try. Just for a few days. Maybe you're not allergic anymore?"

I look at him severely. "I am too! And for God's sake, respect my silent treatment and rub my back!"

The next day, at the shelter, I spot a cheerful kitten. He laughs and plays with his buddies, until he spots my family. Then, right away, he lies down on his side and meows in a pitiful way. I hate the manipulative son-of-a-gun immediately.

In the car, after he throws up, I'm ready to offer him up, but due to my family's declaration in regard to my place on the food chain, I say nothing. But I do sneeze 28 times before we get home.

NEW TO CANADA
By NINA SHENHAV

The kids and Meir are having a blast. I've gotta hand it to them (as they hand me my tissues) – they really are committed. Sneezy gets to be fed, cleaned and put to sleep (no, not that way, unfortunately), all with unconditional devotion. And then, comes day number 2...

It seems that Sneezy's grace has begun to fade away. Sentences such as "It's YOUR turn to clean up his kitty litter!" Or "YOU should brush him before he swallows his fur and chokes [God willing!]" waft through the house. Plus, Sneezy isn't allowed to cower on the kids' beds, only on the couch, the armchairs, the loveseats and my bed.

As days go by, I start to get used to the situation. We buy a year's supplies of tissues, and we watch as our expensive pieces of furniture give their lives for the sake of animal rights.

As for Sneezy? He treats me as if I'm his Jezebel and runs away every time he sees me coming. That is, if we have company.

When we're by ourselves (which is most of the time), he jumps on my lap passionately and purrs with satisfaction.

He's really gotten to know me, the little guy. The only time he avoids me when we're alone is when a tissue isn't attached to my nose (then he doesn't recognize me). But that seldom happens, so I can't complain.

Nina.shenhav@gmail.com

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1/2 red onion, sliced
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Toss greens, oranges, almonds, gorgonzola and onions together in large bowl
Vinaigrette - Whisk all ingredients together.
3/4 c olive oil
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2 tbsp mandarin orange juice
1 tsp orange peel (optional)
dash salt and freshly ground pepper.
Add dressing and toss to coat. Top with crumbled gorgonzola.

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FITNESS CORNER
By FELYCE ZOMPARELLI

Exercise helps prevent heart disease by strengthening the heart, lowering blood pressure and increasing good cholesterol while decreasing bad. Moving your body enhances overall blood flow by enlarging blood vessels and arteries, thus reducing your risk of Alzheimer's disease, dementia and stroke by up to 20 per cent.

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Happy birthday, Mom

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

Often women do not like to announce their age, so suffice it to say, on May 2, my mother turned an age older than 29 and younger than 81. Mazel tov, Mom.

Between the two world wars, a little girl was born to Hinda and Moishe Chaim Flicht. They named her Gitel. She was Menashe's younger sister and Meyer's older one. Gitel was adorable. She bobbed her hair and had straight bangs.

URBAN WRITER

Of course, there were lots of people living in the Flicht house on Oxford Street in Toronto, next to the pop factory, so Hinda was busy. That translated into Gitel, at four years old, babysitting and pushing her little brother, Meyer, around in the stroller, up Oxford to Augusta Avenue, along Nassau Street to Spadina Avenue and back to Oxford. Once she left Meyer by Weinstein's grocery. She went to play. Why not! He was okay, but Hinda wasn't great.

Gitel was a hardy little girl brought up by the sweetest of parents. Their deep love of family would serve her well throughout her life, particularly later on when she would become a rebbetzin. But we're not there yet.

Everyone was involved in fighting the Nazis, including Gitel.

At 12 years old, in the summer of 1942, she, Meyer, and her cousin, Fishie, collected comic books door to door and sold them at the corner of Spadina and College Street. There, they stood near the bank, encouraging passersby to buy the books to help the victims of the bombings in Britain. They raised $1200.

Gitel was always an "A" student, both at Lansdowne Public School, where she won an oratorical contest, and at Central High School of Commerce.

And she was athletic, as were her brothers. Menashe was a football and basketball player and swimmer and Meyer, a baseball pitcher and later a handball player.

At Central Commerce, Gitel was the captain of the girl's basketball, baseball, and volleyball teams; played on the winning badminton team and was on the regular swimming team and ornamental swimming team. Today, she continues to swim laps every day.

The '40s passed and news came that six million Jews had been slaughtered, including Gitel's Uncle Moishe, his wife and two children, shot in their village of Wirzbnik, Poland. Gitel's bubbie went into bed upon hearing the news and never came out. But Gitel's spirit continued to soar.

In 1953, she married Shragah Phyvle, a Jewish leader who had saved war orphans and launched the Agudah in Toronto. He was a rabbi. That suited the Flichts just fine.

Gitel and Phyvle moved to Kitchener, Ont., and for 36 years worked hand-in-hand leading the Jewish community as rebbetzin and rabbi. Her job was demanding, but she was splendid. She took care of her five children and people in need who lived in the family's house, taught in Talmud Torah, and belonged to the Hadassah and other committees.

In 1989, her beloved Phyvle died. In 1991, she married Marcus Weinberger. (Gitel accepted Marcus' proposal knowing he had cancer. Through her unconquerable love, she gave him another 11 years of life). Phyvle taught Gitel about her Jewish spirit and Marcus showed her the world.

Today, my beautiful mother, with baby-pink skin, has over 25 grandchildren and more than 20 great-grandchildren. She tends to each one, and makes all of us feel that we are her favourite. She is an entrepreneur and a fine businesswomen.

Happy birthday, Mom! I believe you have personified Jonathan Swift's words: "May you live all the days of your life. You should be well and healthy until 120."

By the way, I know I'm your favourite!

We turn not older with years, but newer every day.

– Emily Dickinson

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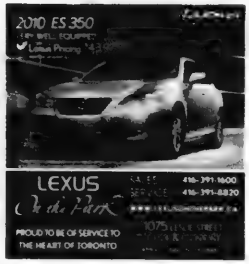

This Week

National

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El Al launches one-stop website. *Page 21*

Anti-Semitism in Montreal exaggerated, community officials say. *Page 28*

No Place Like Home

The HST: What does it mean for you? Plus lots more. *Section B*

On cjnews.com

Canada should press UN on Israel, ex-envoy says.

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Honour and respect for the veterans

World War II veterans marched in a celebratory parade last week in downtown Jerusalem marking the 65th anniversary of the victory of the Allies over Nazi Germany. *[Flash90 photo]*

Netanyahu to visit Canada

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to be in Canada on May 31.

During his working visit, he will meet Prime Minister Stephen Harper and senior Canadian officials.

Netanyahu will be accompanied by two of his ministers, Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz and Diaspora Affairs Minister Yuli Edelstein.

As the first Israeli prime minister to set foot in Canada since Yitzhak Rabin's trip in 1994, Netanyahu is expected to pay visits to Ottawa and Toronto.

"It is a pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to Canada," Harper said in a statement. "Our countries have a close and enduring friendship, which we are working to further strengthen."

He added: "There is tremendous respect in Canada for the courage, resilience and determination of Israel and its people."

Benjamin Netanyahu

Harper and Netanyahu spoke on the phone on April 30 to discuss the visit, which coincides with the 60th anniversary of Canada-Israel diplomatic relations

Harper has forged close ties with Israel since becoming prime minister in 2006, having been supportive of Israel during the Second Lebanon War and its invasion of the Gaza Strip in 2009.

Netanyahu and his entourage will fly to Canada from Paris, the headquarters of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The OECD has invited Israel to be a member and will officially accept Israel into its membership later this month when Netanyahu is in Paris.

David Weinberg, director of the Canada-Israel Committee's Israel office, said that Netanyahu's planned visit to Canada is "a reflection of the extraordinarily close ties between Canada and Israel on a wide range of political issues and bilateral matters," as well as "an acknowledgment of Prime Minister Harper's principled leadership and friendship for Israel."

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Israel accepted into OECD – please see page 35

The News in Brief

Canada

Man Awaits Sentence

GUELPH, Ont. — An 83-year-old German-born man who scrawled anti-Semitic symbols and graffiti in public spots around Guelph, Ont., last year is expected to be sentenced this week. Max Mahr, who pleaded guilty in March to wilfully promoting hatred against Jews, was to have been sentenced last week, but the judge in the case said he needed more time to consider an argument made jointly by the Crown and defence that a sentence served in the community might be fair, given Mahr's age and that he was a product of his times, having served in the German army and been indoctrinated by Hitler Youth. Mahr admitted to scrawling hateful messages in washrooms in a mall, as well as in a Walmart, Chapters and Pizza Pizza. Police also caught him on video in a park, the *Guelph Mercury* reported. The incidents occurred between January 2009 and September 2009.

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World

Galloway Ousted

LONDON — British MP and strident critic of Israel George Galloway won't be in the next British Parliament. Galloway, running for the Respect-Unity party, placed third in the London riding of Poplar and Limehouse, losing to Labour minister Jim Fitzpatrick. Galloway was elected MP in the London riding of Bethnal Green and Bow in 2005. The May 6 vote failed to produce a parliamentary majority, with the Tories getting the most seats, with Labour in second and the Liberal Democrats third. Galloway is the subject of a court case in Canada, which banned him from entering the country last year over his support for Hamas.

Dershowitz Courted

JERUSALEM — Harvard University law professor Alan Dershowitz reportedly turned down an offer to serve as Israel's UN ambassador. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman courted the well-known U.S. lawyer, *Yediot Achronot* reported. If he had accepted the post, Dershowitz , 72, would have had to make aliyah.

Home Vandalized

BERKELEY, Calif. — The home of Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of the progressive *Tikkun* magazine, was vandalized. Posters attached to his door and the fence around his Berkeley home attacking him personally, and liberals and progressives, as being supporters of terror and "Islamofascism," the magazine said. The vandalism was discovered the morning of May 3. It followed a week in which *Tikkun* and Rabbi Lerner received hate mail, apparently because *Tikkun* said it would give controversial Judge Richard Goldstone its Tikkun Award. Some have pilloried Goldstone, a South African, for his United Nations report that accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity in the Gaza war. No one has claimed responsibility for the vandalism.

Talks Discuss Report

CAPE TOWN — A delegation of senior South African Jewish leaders met Judge Richard Goldstone May 3 to discuss his participation in the 2009 UN fact-finding mission into the Gaza war and his committee's report. The talks were part of a deal between the South African Zionist Federation (SAZF) and Goldstone that allowed him to attend his grandson's bar mitzvah May 1 without protests. The SAZF said the talks were "frank and open" and included "the hurt and concerns" of South African Jews about his report, which accused Israel and Hamas of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity.

Suspect Arrested

PARIS — A man suspected of playing a major role in the attack on an elderly Jewish man in southern France is being held for questioning by police. The "No. 1 suspect" in a May 2 attack in the town of Nimes on a 78-year-old Jewish man was arrested May 4 and was being questioned, police said. The suspect, whose name wasn't released, is in his 30s and lives in the area. The victim was attacked with tear gas not far from his shul. One of the synagogue doors was vandalized with the words "F--- the Jew." Police are looking for two other suspects seen on shul surveillance cameras. The incident follows an April 30 attack in which a man wearing a kippah was attacked by two knife-wielding men with a metal bar in Strasbourg.

Newspaper Removed

LONDON — The student newspaper at a British university was removed from campus after publishing a comment by a Palestinian journalist seen as derogatory toward Jews. Sameh Habeeb, owner of the *Palestinian Telegraph* newspaper, told a reporter for the *Leeds Student* at Leeds University that mainstream media "have a hidden agenda." "They are certainly pro-Israeli," Habeeb said. "I think you have to ask yourself who controls the media." The April 30 issue was removed by order of the Students' Union. One of the officers is Jewish, the *Jewish Chronicle* reported. A Facebook group against the decision has more than 700 members.

Prof's Human Rights Complaint Dismissed

TORONTO — A human rights complaint by York University history professor David Noble that York discriminated against him for protesting its former policy of cancelling classes on the High Holidays has been dismissed.

In a decision released late last month, the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario said there was "no pattern of reprisal" and no proof York gave Noble unpopular Friday teaching time for protesting the practice, which was changed last year. The tribunal also ruled York didn't retaliate against Noble for issuing a press release saying York's fundraising foundation was controlled by the "Israeli lobby."

The ruling did say, however, that "the evidence does show that the complainant's activities in relation to other matters, such as challenging limits on campus demonstrations, participating in campus debate on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and exploring and publishing on the issue of interlocking corporate directorships did result in the respondent considering, or taking action against him."

Noble told the *Toronto Star* that while he was "on some level disappointed," the tribunal did note that he might have faced reprisal for other activities on campus.

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Atwood accepts major Israeli literary prize

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Celebrated Canadian author Margaret Atwood has accepted a prestigious Israeli literary prize, despite being urged to boycott it because of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

On Sunday night, Atwood and Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh each were awarded half of the $1-million Dan David Prize at Tel Aviv University (TAU).

The novelists both faced pressure from their peers to refuse it.

In an interview with Bloomberg News prior to the award ceremony, Atwood said: "We don't do cultural boycotts," adding that "I would be throwing overboard the thousands of writers around the world who are in prison, censored, exiled and murdered for what they have published."

In an open letter to Atwood last week, Rob Maguire, editor of Saskatoon-based *Art Threat* magazine, called on her to reject the prize so as not to lend support to an Israeli government that "systematically abuses the human rights of Palestinians."

Numerous similar letters were written to Atwood and Ghosh in the months prior to their acceptance of the prize.

In April, Toronto filmmaker John Greyson – who led the campaign to boycott the Toronto International Film Festival last year because of its special focus on films about Tel Aviv – asked Atwood to decline the prize in order to recognize "the growing boycott movement which is trying to achieve peace in the region."

Margaret Atwood

In another letter, from the Gaza-based Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel (PSCABI), Atwood was told not to accept the prize because she would be "giving a slight and inadvertent nod to Israel's policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide."

But in a joint response to their detractors posted on Atwood's blog after their win, Atwood and Ghosh said they were no one's pawns.

"The letters we have received have ranged from courteous and sad to factual and practical to accusatory, outrageous, and untrue in their claims and statements; some have been frankly libelous, and even threatening. Some have been willing to listen to us, others have not: they want our supposedly valuable 'names,' but not our actual voices."

In their joint acceptance speech, Ghosh and Atwood said novelists don't deal in absolutes.

"Both of us were urged by some people and groups not to come to Israel on this occasion. We were told that no artist should attend any cultural event here – no matter how hopeful and moderate such an event might be – considering the unequal, unjust, and harsh and dangerous conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories," Ghosh said.

Atwood continued: "Propaganda deals in absolutes: in yes and no. But the novel is a creature of nuance: of perhaps, of maybe… when we said we felt the urgent necessity of keeping doors open, we were informed that we were deluded, and worse."

Attempting to put their positions on the Israel-Palestinian issue into context, the novelists said they hoped that all people who "truly want a chance for Palestinian people to be able to live a decent life, to be compensated for what they have wrongfully lost, and for the destruction of their infrastructures – and all those who hope Israelis will be able to live without rocket fire, bombings, and worse – can only wish [peace talks] well, trust that those engaging in them are doing so seriously and in good faith, and hope that a fair and secure two-state solution will finally result."

The Dan David Prize is awarded annually from an endowment by the Dan David Foundation at TAU.

The CJN's efforts to contact Atwood for comment were unsuccessful.

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Greater Toronto Area

'A devastatingly sad day'

From the editor's desk...

Last week, the ivy on the brick and concrete walls on the exteriors of the buildings of Brandeis University outside of Boston was considerably ruffled.

Controversy erupted in the famed liberal arts college named after Louis Brandeis, the first Jewish justice on the Supreme Court of the United States and noted Zionist activist.

A great many students and faculty were upset that Israel's ambassador to Washington, Michael Oren, would receive an honorary doctorate from the school and had been asked to deliver the keynote address to the graduating class on May 23.

The student newspaper, the *Justice*, was highly critical of the university's decision, JTA reported.

"Mr. Oren is a divisive and inappropriate choice for keynote speaker at commencement, and we disapprove of the University's decision to grant someone of his polarity on this campus that honour... The invitation constitutes at best naivete and at worst disregard concerning the reality of the range of student political orientation on this campus."

Jeremy Sherer, president of the campus chapter of the left-of-centre Jewish lobby group J Street, is also opposed to the invitation. In an article in the student newspaper, he wrote that he was personally "bothered" by Oren's politics. But "far more important," he added was the "possibility that the ambassador's speech would offend some of the graduates.

To its credit, a spokesperson for J Street actually contradicted its student representative and welcomed the invitation to Oren.

Much harsher criticism was levelled at the university's administration by computer science professor Harry Mairson. He berated the school for inviting an "apologist" for Israel to speak to the graduates. Outraged by Israel's defence of its citizens against the rockets of Hamas, the learned professor said the decision would "compromise Brandeis' commitment to social justice."

The newspaper's editorialist, J Street's student rep and the professor – all for their own reasons – were very obviously upset that the ambassador of Israel had been honoured by the university.

But even some students who did not oppose the decision were cravenly circumspect in its defence.

For example, Heddy Ben-Atar, the student representative on the school's board of trustees, justified the invitation on the basis of Oren's "academic excellence, rigorous research practices and fearlessly honest writing."

Senior graduating-year student Adam Ross urged members of the Brandeis community to "fully embody the rich academic quality and sophistication of our university and receive Ambassador Oren's speech respectfully, regardless of personal opinions regarding the country that Ambassador Oren represents."

Neither Ben-Atar nor Ross could bring themselves to utter the name "Israel."

This reflexively hostile reaction of so many Brandeis students to the invitation extended to Oren should send the red flag of alarm high up on the flagpole of the communal agenda. That a large number of Brandeis students are Jewish should send a shudder of ice-cold air into our hearts.

Rabbi Daniel Gordis, senior vice-president of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, eloquently summed up the woeful lack of knowledge by the Brandeis students of any aspect but one of Israel's current condition.

"It is a devastatingly sad day for world Jewry," Gordis wrote in his blog, "when those issues [related to the conflict with the Palestinians] are the only ones that one associates with Israel, when mere mention of the Jewish state evokes not the least bit of pride from students graduating from a prestigious institution long associated with the very best of American Jewish life... But that kind of instinctive pride in the Jewish state is, sadly, a vestige of days gone by, even for many American Jews."

Though he craved it with all his heart, Brandeis, alas, did not live to see the establishment of the Jewish state. He died 2-1/2 years before Israel was proclaimed. How cruel a betrayal that 65 years after he died, the students at "his" university should know so little about the cause he championed, and even worse, should care so little.

"The undying longing for Zion is a fact of deepest significance – a manifestation in the struggle for existence... Zionism seeks merely to establish in Palestine for such Jews as choose to go and remain there, and for their descendants, a legally secured home, where they may live together and lead a Jewish life; where they may expect ultimately to constitute a majority of the population, and may look forward to what we may call home rule.

"The establishment of the legally secured Jewish home is no longer a dream. For more than a generation, brave pioneers have been building the foundations of our new-old home. It remains for us to build the superstructure."

Justice Brandeis spoke those words at a conference in 1916 in an address he titled "A Call to the Educated Jew."

At the university that bears his name, how sad and melancholy an irony that so few today can answer his call.

–MBD

See JN

JNF RETURNS TO DOWNSVIEW PARK

The Jewish National Fund and the Downsview Park Foundation held their second annual twinning day on May 6. Fifteen hundred Toronto-area students from grades 3 to 8 planted trees, played sports and attended an educational session. The Twinning Program highlights environmental values shared by Canada and Israel. For each tree planted at Downsview Park, one will be planted in the Toronto Community Forest in Yatir, Israel. Inset is a photo of Alexa Zoltak, left, and Li-elle Rapaport, Grade 5 students at Associated Hebrew Schools, Kamin branch, planting a tree. JNF and Downsview Park will host the second Twinning Program community event on Sept. 26.

Synagogue museum brings Herzl to life

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

When Theodor Herzl died in 1904, an estimated 6,000 mourners accompanied the funeral cortege to the Viennese cemetery where he was buried.

Among them were leading figures from the literary world (Herzl was a journalist and playwright), politicians, members of Zionist organizations and, given the scale of the event, scores of common folk from across Europe who came to pay their last respects to the founder of the modern Zionist movement.

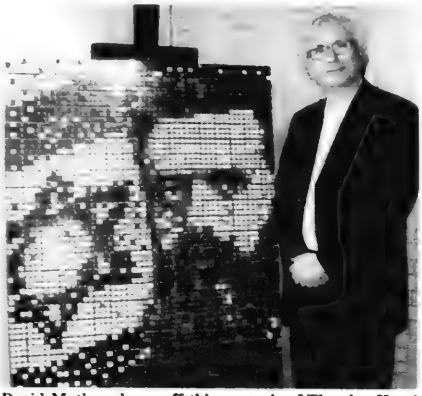
A vintage photograph of the funeral procession is among the many artifacts, pictures, papers, books, stamps, coins, postcards and other ephemera that will be on display at Beth Tzedec Congregation's Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum to honour Herzl on the 150th anniversary of his birth. The exhibit will run from May 12 to Nov. 18.

Herzl died at 44, and in the seven preceding years, he laid the foundation of the modern state of Israel. His influence on the Jewish imagination and on the wider world was reflected in the many everyday objects that were based on his life.

Lawyer David Matlow is a collector of Herzl memorabilia and the artifacts on display at Beth Tzedec are borrowed from his personal collection.

Glass cabinets have been set up in the synagogue's main lobby containing items such as miniature busts, books and magazines – including one from March 1946 from the Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp with Herzl's visage presiding over an exodus to Palestine. And given that the memorabilia often reflected the communities in which they were created, there is even a Herzl bobblehead hockey doll from the Goodmans law firm annual hockey tournament, which Matlow organizes.

Collecting the everyday objects bearing Herzl's image "was one way to connect with the Zionist dream," Matlow said.



David Matlow shows off this portrait of Theodor Herzl made out of Rubik's Cubes by artist Josh Chalom.

That applies to himself as well.

"Herzl has permeated and has been part of my life since I was a student at [United Synagogue Day School]," he said.

The first piece in his collection was a 1960 poster issued on Herzl's 100th birthday that came from his grandmother's home in Ramat Gan. "Something about the portrait resonated with me," he said. He acquired it after his grandmother died in 1991.

A longtime stamp collector, he found many Israeli stamps that featured Herzl, plus others from such unlikely locations as Australia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Saint Thomas and Chad.

As he collected more and more Herzl objects, he found "the more you get into something, you learn there are more and more things."

"A collector always collects," he said, and last November he purchased 900 items to bring his collection up to 2,000 Herzl and Zionist Congress pieces.

Herzl is a particularly intriguing figure, because of the influence he exerted on the Jewish world, Matlow said.

"He was an outsider in Jewish life. He didn't grow up very identified with the Jewish world" and only became so after covering the Dreyfus trial in France and witnessing an outpouring of anti-Semitic hatred.

In 1896 he wrote *The Jewish State* and in 1897 convened the first Zionist Congress.

"He started the ball rolling. He took a totally different approach to what was called 'the Jewish question,' through politics and diplomacy."

He predicted the creation of a Jewish state within 50 years and it took only a little more than that before Israel was established, Matlow said.

Staging an exhibit on Herzl educates the public about a history that is not well understood, he continued. "Many think the story of Israel started with what happened in Europe after the Holocaust, with the need to put people someplace from displaced persons camps. But the story of Israel's independence went back well before that."

There were 22 Zionist Congresses up to 1946, he said, and by 1948, when Israel was created, "the Zionist idea had spread all over the world."

"There was a huge effort to cause this miracle to happen, and men and women such as Herzl, who came from outside the mainstream of Jewish life, were able to make a difference. That's why I'm fascinated by Herzl. He did make a difference, and any of us can. He inspired people and he had it right: 'If you will it, it is no dream,'" Matlow said.

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Greater Toronto Area

New Technion president puts focus on change

Aims to broaden school's student body, research capabilities

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

The new president of the Technion, Israel's oldest university, is not asleep at the wheel.

Peretz Lavie, a specialist in sleep research who assumed the presidency last October, is bringing significant and historic changes to the Haifa-based Technion.

Formerly its dean of medicine and vice-president of its resource development and external relations department, Lavie is broadening the Technion's scope in terms of research capabilities and future student body.

A sabra born in Petach Tikvah, he is fostering interdisciplinary research as the pace of scientific and technological knowledge escalates.

Peretz Lavie

Facing the challenge of globalization, Lavie is recruiting students from abroad for the International School of Engineering, which opened in 2009 and whose language of instruction is English, the world's lingua franca.

Lavie, who has published a slew of books and learned articles on the phenomenon of sleep, said that interdisciplinary research has become an absolute necessity as the quantity of knowledge doubles every three to four years.

"Science is now big science," he said in an interview last week. "The sharing of information is essential. Collaboration is needed."

The Technion, which offers degrees in science and engineering and in such related fields as architecture and industrial management and education, has established interdisciplinary programs in four fields: nano sciences, life sciences and engineering, robotics and energy.

In line with these innovative programs, Lavie has recruited 25 new faculty members from abroad, including Canada.

To preserve and improve its ranking as one of the world's top 30 institutes in science and technology, the Technion is recruiting overseas students.

According to the United Nations, 2.5 million students studied abroad in 2007, a figure that is expected to jump to 7.5 million within a decade.

To date, the Technion has recruited 14 students from countries ranging from Canada and the United States to China and India. They will study at the International School of Engineering and take courses in English.

Buoyed by the influx of foreign students, however modest, Lavie hopes that 500 overseas students will be studying at the Technion in four years from now.

The idea of attracting foreign students is really an old one, Lavie explained. During the 1960s, many African students enrolled at the Technion, an experience they never forgot.

"They became ambassadors of good will for Israel. This can happen again."

At a time when Israel's legitimacy is challenged in different quarters, the recruitment of foreign students to Israeli universities is of utmost importance politically. "This will have a long-term impact on Israel," he observed.

Lavie fully agrees that Israel can win the battle for survival only by developing an expert knowledge in technology, as Albert Einstein declared.

"Necessity is the mother of invention," said Lavie.

In the wake of the Six Day War, after France imposed an arms embargo on Israel, the Technion created a microelectronics institute, which produced the first semi-conductors in Israel. These devices played an integral role in the upgrading of Israel's vital defence industry and laid the cornerstone of Israel's high-tech revolution.

Israel's leap into high-tech could not have happened without the Technion's engineering graduates. Since 1924, the Technion has churned out 70,000 engineers. "They built Israel's infrastructure," Lavie said.

Technion graduates also helped build Israel's all-important aeronautical industry. Without it, Israel could not have developed satellites, drones and various defence systems, he said.

Lavie bemoaned as "short-sighted" government cutbacks to Israeli universities. "We've lost 100 faculty members to cutbacks. It's been devastating."

But of late, he added, the government has been singing a new tune. "We'll see if the talk is translated into action."

Lavie is concerned that Israel's elementary and high school education system leaves much to be desired in terms of its effectiveness across the board.

Too many students in government-financed religious schools do not get a sufficient grounding in the liberal arts and mathematics.

"This is an existential threat to Israel," he said, pointing out that such students will represent 50 per cent of Israel's overall student body within a decade.

Praising Technion overseas support groups such as the Canadian Technion Society, he said, "They are critical to our development. We're lucky we have this group of friends."

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Demanding trust; creating mistrust

The U.S. State Department was both celebratory and stern on the weekend as it triumphantly announced that the first round of indirect peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA) was complete. U.S. special envoy George Mitchell left the Middle East and hopes to return to the area in a week to resume his Jerusalem-Ramallah shuttle.

State Department spokesperson Philip Crowley, in a statement that was quite upbeat, said both Israel and the Palestinians had taken steps to create an atmosphere conducive to successful talks. Israel had pledged not to build in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood of east Jerusalem for two years and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas vowed that he would work against incitement of any sort. Crowley also warned that Israel and the Palestinians would be held "accountable" for actions that "undermine trust" during the course of the proximity talks.

How inconvenient for the Palestinians, therefore, that on the very same day last weekend that the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* reported on the happy completion of the first session of the proximity talks, it also carried a story under the headline: "Israel fights to keep Palestinians from sabotaging its admittance into OECD."

Acceptance into the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) must be approved unanimously, and three of the organization's members – Switzerland, Ireland and Norway – were not boosters of Israel's application. In an attempt to block it, PA Foreign Minister Riyad al-Malki urged the OECD to delay the vote. In correspondence with the OECD member states' foreign ministers, al-Malki accused Israel of infringing "Palestinians' human rights" and "violating OECD values."

As well, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salem Fayyad recently called many of the leaders of OECD countries to argue against Israel's acceptance. This was in addition to his much publicized campaign calling for a boycott of Israeli goods produced or grown in the West Bank.

Israel's OECD negotiator, Industry, Trade and Labour Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, said last week that "Fayyad's efforts to thwart Israel's participation in the organization are extremely grave."

Yet, despite the Palestinian' efforts, Israel was unanimously voted into the important 31-member-state OECD on Monday. Membership is a significant endorsement of the Jewish state and will help attract even more foreign investment to the dynamic Israeli economy.

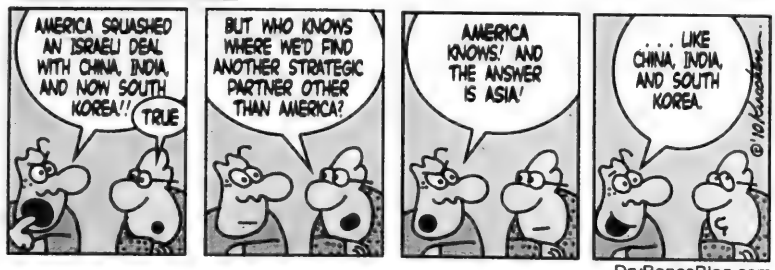
To our mind, Fayyad's behaviour in trying to block Israel's membership falls squarely within what Crowley called actions that "undermine trust" during the course of the proximity talks.

Will he be held accountable by the U.S. government for undermining trust among the Israelis? Given the American administration's record over the past 15 months, it is not very likely.

Pity.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

Maccabiah Canada announced that Montreal Canadiens legend Jean Beliveau would accompany the Canadian team to the 1985 Maccabiah Games in Israel and serve as the team's associate honorary *chef de mission*. He was scheduled to march with the Canadians at the opening ceremonies and keep in close contact with them throughout the games.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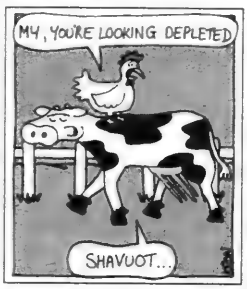
Update on Canadians who fought in Israel

I read with great interest the letter "Remembering the Canadians" (April 29) concerning those who fell in Israel's War of Independence.With reference to the two Torontonians in the Yiftach brigade of the Palmach, Harvey Cohen and Ed Lugech, there are more recent developments that alter the conclusions that the late Eddy Kaplansky shared with the letter writer, Wilf Mandel.

I was the source of Kaplansky's supposition, but subsequently the puzzle of their disappearance was taken up by two Israeli reserve officers charged with the task of determining the status of soldiers missing in action. Since I was the only one who remembered them and had photographs of them, there followed many conversations and a meeting in Israel of some of the unit. Their research determined that they were lost in the battle of Malkiyeh, on the Lebanese border, May 15,1948, not waylaid and killed near the camp of Sarafand.



While DNA research was not permitted by their families, it would seem that the army is satisfied that their remains were found near the battlefield, and have been interred, in a ceremony that took place last year. My thanks to Mandel, whose remembering is of great comfort to those of us who lost so many comrades-in-arms.

Maurice Moshe Sadeh
Montreal

* * *

Goldstone's attendance at bar mitzvah

It is offensive and outrageous that opponents/critics of Judge Richard Goldstone's report on the war in Gaza threatened to protest against and disrupt his attendance at his grandson's bar mitzvah ("Goldstone will attend grandson's simchah," April 29). That it proved necessary to come to any agreement to permit Goldstone to attend should strike us all as profoundly shocking and frightening.

Moishe (Thomas) Goldstein
Toronto

* * *

Dangers posed by IAW crowd

Letter writer Rudy Solomonovici says Israeli Apartheid Week was "practically non-existent" at York this year ("IAW is alienating people," May 6). Well, yes, it was much less apparent than usual, for many reasons that have little to do with anti-Israel militancy and more to do with other factors, one of which is that one of IAW's major supporters, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3903, has been under administration by CUPE national since October 2009 and cannot use funds to help IAW. There was also some, although rather half-hearted, indication on the part of the university administration that events such as last year's would not be tolerated. Disregarding the dangers posed by the IAW crowd at York is unwise and dangerous. IAW may not have been a big thing this year, but it was not for lack of intention, and it would be equally unwise to assume next year will be similar or that no other strong anti-Israel activities will take place. I would love to be wrong.

Judith Cohen
Toronto

* * *

Herzl not lacking in pragmatism

In "The brooding eyes of a dreamer," it is stated that Theodor Herzl was criticized as lacking in pragmatism (Editor's Desk, April 29). I question this. Herzl's commitment to a Jewish state sent him on a relentless quest for financial and political backing. His message, "If you will it, it is no dream," surely characterizes his pragmatic proactive approach. Moreover, in advocating the Uganda plan after the Russian pogroms, Herzl was surely demonstrating pragmatism. Herzl understood that any port in a storm could realistically provide refuge for those who were awaiting an uncertain future in Zion.

Donnie Friedman
Toronto

* * *

People search

My husband is looking for his biological mother. She put him up for adoption when he was born in Miami, Fla., on July 29, 1965. The Jewish Community Service in Miami provided this information: she is Jewish and was 18 years old when she had the baby. Her parents were from England and settled in Toronto, where she was born in 1947 (approximately). Her father was a pharmacist, and her mother was a high school graduate. Her father died in an automobile accident when she was six years old. She was an attractive woman, 5-feet, 1-1/2 inches tall, with brown hair, big brown eyes and well-formed teeth. She enjoyed playing the guitar, singing, dancing and reading. She wanted to working with children and hoped to major in psychology and teach children with problems.

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Perspectives

The JCall argument is self-serving

By EMANUELE OTTOLENGHI
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What are we to make of JCall, the new European liberal Jewish movement launched last week?

Two Jews and three opinions is a tirelessly repeated joke that conveys a sense of how contentious Jewish discord can be. Anyone familiar with Jewish media, organizations and grassroots activism can attest to that – as best characterized by the iconic line in the Monty Python film *Life of Brian*: "Excuse me. Are you the Judean People's Front?," followed by the response: "F--- off! We're the People's Front of Judea."

In this context, JCall is a welcome addition. Unfortunately, it is a disingenuous one.

Jewish "wars" punctuate Jewish history – Jews revel in their cacophonous legacy, even though historically, it has cost them dearly. Thus swings the Jewish pendulum – publicly, should Jews speak in one voice or air their differences? This question is largely rhetorical: No dispute (Chassidim vs. Mitnagdim; Zionists vs. Bundists; Orthodox vs. Reform; Diasporism vs. Israel-centric; Peace Now vs. Greater Israel) goes unnoticed. Jews argue – in the press, on the air, in academia and across their organizational alphabet soup. These days, such discord is even easier to conduct. In the Internet age, anyone can express an opinion – however different from the mainstream – without much effort, financial or otherwise.

Enter JCall, a group of European Jewish individuals and organizations mainly from the left. Their online petition, recently launched at a well-attended event in the European Parliament, alleges that the view it reflects finds no representation in the mainstream Jewish establishment, because of a presumed tendency of Jewish organizations to uncritically support any Israeli policy while silencing internal dissent.

The "uncritical support for Israeli policy" charge sets the stage for the JCallers' arguments: Israel's settlement policy is disastrous because it stands in the way of the two-state solution and will lead to the demise of the Zionist dream. Europe must pressure Israel to reverse this policy. And Jews, spearheaded by JCall, must break their communal code of silence and persuade Israel to heed this pressure.

Of the three arguments, the last is the most befuddling, and not just because the allegation of a code of silence, more suitable to the Mafia, is hardly applicable to the Jewish world. JCallers' views are the most mainstream and least contentious one can think of in the European landscape. If JCallers seek to promote a firm European stance against Israeli settlement policy, then they should already proclaim victory and go home. In Europe, Israel lost this argument long ago. If they seek to speak out, there is no shortage of sponsors who will gladly give JCallers a platform. By contrast, outside the narrow and largely parochial world of small-circulation Jewish media, only a handful of extravagantly pro-Israel magazines and papers – themselves with a small and dwindling readership – will give Israel's case a fair hearing.

> *No mainstream European Jewish organization stands today against the two-state solution*

Anyone familiar with the European lecture circuit on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict knows that speakers are rarely to the right of the JCall signatories themselves. They, not those whom they attack for supposedly silencing them, form the mainstream of public debate.

Any one of the almost 5,000 signatories to the JCall petition who can write, therefore, stands a chance of airing his or her views. Besides, many Jewish organizations stand behind the initiative. The suggestion that the Jewish establishment is silencing them is puzzling. They are the Jewish establishment – the intelligentsia, the academics, the cultural circles. The dark imagery alleging an uncritical Jewish leadership that sings from an Israeli score sheet while silencing dissenters smacks of insincerity. The self-depiction of a "band of brothers" intent on challenging the dominant paradigm is self-indulgent counterculture by self-important sofa intellectuals. It is far from the truth.

No mainstream European Jewish organization stands today against the two-state solution, or applauds, supports or fundraises for settlement activities. From left to right, organized Jewry across Europe tends to reflect Israeli political divisions on the existential questions Israel faces, including vociferous anti-Zionist groups on the margins of Jewish communal life but in the spotlight of public debate. It is hardly surprising then that JCallers feel on the margins: their views fail to strike a chord, not because of internal censorship, but rather because, having seen the Oslo process shipwreck and a decade of Palestinian violent rejectionism, not many Jews are convinced that peace will come on the wings of more Israeli concessions alone.

The JCall argument is also self-serving, because it allows the group to don the mantle of victimhood. By depicting criticism as censorship, the JCallers spare themselves the need to engage criticism, since anyone disagreeing can be dismissed as a censor.

Still, if their presumably unflinching support for Israel coupled with their discomfort with Israel's settlement policies reflect mainstream views, why have they been immediately met with a torrent of criticism?

First, because such is the nature of Jewish debate. JCallers should take their critics seriously rather than pre-emptively dismissing them.

Second, because their pledged love for Israel is overshadowed by the blame they squarely lay at Israel's doorstep. For them, solving the conflict is all about settlements. Not Palestinian civil wars, Palestinian rejectionism, Hamas, Hezbollah, terrorism, not even Iran: Israel's settlements are the epicentre of all troubles. They will find few Jews ready to endorse this worldview.

European Jews have been at the forefront of peace initiatives, reconciliation efforts and interfaith dialogue for as long as one can remember. JCall offers nothing new. In contrast, an equivalent "call to reason" among Arab and Muslim intellectuals across the Islamic world and beyond – now that would be news! Only when Israel's enemies choose moderation over extremism will peace stand a chance. When that moment comes – and only dreamers can see it coming today – settlements will not be an obstacle.

Emanuele Ottolenghi is a senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

European Jews get their own J Street

By DINAH SPRITZER and TOBY AXELROD
JTA

PRAGUE — The launch of JCall has brought the debate that American Jewry has seen over J Street to Jewish Europe: outside of Israel, how critical in public should you be of Israeli government policies you believe are not in Israel's best interests?

The founders of JCall, who seek to push what they see as a recalcitrant Israeli government closer to a two-state solution, say criticism of Israeli policies is constructive and necessary.

"All of us are Zionists, but by the same token we can express our ideas about the situation and the two-state solution," David Chemla, a JCall co-founder and the head of Peace Now in France, told JTA. "It is sane to have the debate openly and not leave it to the radicals."

But the emergence of JCall, which held its official launch last week at the European Parliament in Brussels, has aggravated European Jewish communal leaders with a long tradition of unconditional defence of Israel. The European Jewish Congress, an umbrella group representing elected European Jewish community leaders, condemned JCall's petition calling for European pressure on Israel's government as "divisive, counter-productive and unhelpful."

"It is important to note that continued one-sided pressure on Israel does not encourage the Palestinians to engage in serious negotiations and only endangers the already unstable situation in the region," European Jewish Congress president Moshe Kantor said, arguing that JCall represents a minority viewpoint in Europe.

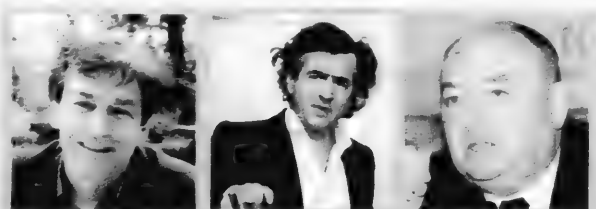
The debate JCall has engendered in Europe mirrors the one in the United States ever since the left-wing, pro-Israel lobbying group J Street was founded in 2008 as an alternative to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Chemla and other JCall leaders said they were inspired by J Street.

So far, the group's main activity has been to amass signatures for an online petition calling for the European Union to pressure Israel and the Palestinians to agree to a two-state solution, repudiating blind support for Israeli policies, and affirming that the establishment of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state is vital to Israel's survival as a Jewish and democratic state. The group says it is nonpartisan.

"The European Jewish Call for Reason," as the JCall petition is titled, seeks to "allow the opinions of European Jews, who have been silent for too long, to be expressed publicly and to allow a Jewish voice to be heard that is both committed to the state of Israel and critical of the current choices of its government."

As of last week, the petition had some 5,000 signatories.

Among JCall's supporters are some prominent French Jews, including philosopher Bernard Henri-Levy and essayist Alain Finkielkraut, as well as Jews from Belgium, Britain, Germany and Switzerland. Prominent Israelis – including Avi Primor, a former Israeli ambassador to Germany, and Elie Barnavi, a former Israeli ambassador to France – showed up at the Brussels launch to lend support to the cause.



Alain Finkielkraut — Bernard Henri-Levy — Moshe Kantor

Opinions

He should have been shunned

The (Goldstone) Report on the United Nations Fact finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict is recognized as one of the most harmful indictments of Israel in modern times, even prompting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to list it among Israel's three major strategic challenges, the others being the Iranian nuclear program and rockets aimed at Israeli civilians.

Lawrence Hart in Hamilton

And while it was enthusiastically endorsed by its sponsors, the United Nations Human Rights Council, which is of course not surprising, the report has been otherwise exposed for what it really is – a travesty based on faulty premises, flawed methodology and biased conclusions. Even its author, South African Justice Richard Goldstone, has admitted that "if this was a court of law, there would have been nothing proven."

Given such fallout, one might have expected someone in Goldstone's position to find a way to dissociate himself from the document, denounce it and try to make amends for his obvious lack of judgement. Sadly, Goldstone chose none of these options, preferring instead to defend his findings publicly and unashamedly.

Consequently, he has been shunned by the Jewish mainstream worldwide, and deservedly so. But just how his ostracism would play out if he wished to attend a social or religious event within the Jewish community has only just been tested.

What set the stage was the bar mitzvah of his grandson in South Africa earlier this month. Initial indications were that, on the urging of the South African Zionist Federation, an agreement with the family had been reached whereby Goldstone would not attend the synagogue service. But this news had hardly hit the wires before a wave of protest erupted against what was portrayed as an unseemly action against a fellow Jew.

The ensuing retreats, filled with hypocrisy and melodrama, were mostly rather pathetic. South Africa's chief rabbi bellyached about the "sacred principle of open shuls" while the head of the United Herzlia Schools in Cape Town urged the community to "embrace diversity and difference of opinion." The chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, Zev Krengel, stated similarly that "diversity of opinion in our community needs to be tolerated and respected." Meanwhile it was decided that Goldstone would attend the bar mitzvah after all.

It would have been commendable had South Africa's rabbinate and community leadership acted with common purpose when dealing with Goldstone's visit. Instead, their sycophantic backpedalling and inconsistent messaging have given a perception of welcome, rather than disapproval, to someone whose actions have energized Israel's enemies and sought to discredit those who support the Jewish state. What sort of example is this for a bar mitzvah boy?

Legal complexities in an outpost of heroes

Maj. Roi Klein and Maj. Eliraz Peretz had a lot in common. Both were in their early 30s and served as deputy battalion commanders in the Israel Defence Forces' Golani Brigade – Klein in the 51st, Peretz in the 12th. Both were killed in action.

Klein fell in July 2006, during the Second Lebanon War. He heroically leapt on a hand grenade thrown at his unit during a battle in the town of Bint Jbeil, saving his soldiers' lives. Peretz was killed this past March. His unit came under fire while patrolling the Gaza border. In one exchange of fire, a shot hit Peretz's grenade pouch, causing it to explode. He and one of his soldiers were killed instantly.

Yair Lootsteen in Jerusalem

Peretz's death was particularly tragic. Twelve years ago his brother, Uriel, also a commander in the Golani Brigade, was killed in action in southern Lebanon. With Eliraz's falling, the Peretz family joined a list of 60-plus Israeli families who have lost more than one family member serving in the IDF.

Klein and Peretz had other things in common. Both were Orthodox and had young families. Klein had two children, Peretz four, the youngest only two months old. Both also chose to live in a place called Hayovel, just south of the West Bank settlement of Eli. Yovel in Hebrew means Jubilee. The outpost was set up in 1998, during Israel's 50th year.

There's a complication to the already sad story of these two heroes. For almost five years, Hayovel has been subject to legal actions because it's an unauthorized outpost.

In September, 2005 Peace Now petitioned the High Court of Justice to order the destruction of 12 homes built in Hayovel. During the years the case has been before the Supreme Court, the state confirmed the homes in Hayovel were built illegally, most of them on land believed to be state-owned but some partially or wholly on privately owned Palestinian property.

While affirming the need to effectively remove all unlawful construction, the state informed the court that manpower and budgetary constraints make it impossible to immediately destroy all illegal building in Judea and Samaria, and that it has drafted a priority list for execution of demolition orders. According to this list, court-ordered demolitions will be the first to be executed. Next, construction still in preliminary stages will be destroyed. After that, in descending order, demolition orders will be carried out on buildings erected on privately owned Palestinian land, on non-government property, in unauthorized outposts established since March 2001 (a date significant because of a commitment by former prime minister Ariel Sharon to the Bush administration to dismantle all outposts established after it), those built on outposts inaugurated before this date, buildings constructed outside approved zoning areas, and finally all other illegal construction.

Given these criteria, last July, the court ordered the state to provide a schedule for dismantling homes in Hayovel, after hearing relevant homeowner objections. After further extensions, the court directed the state to submit its response by May 1.

Peretz was killed in the interim, and since then, politicians have been visiting his and Klein's homes, demanding the government retroactively authorize all buildings in Hayovel not erected on Palestinian property.

Defence Minister Ehud Barak, who's responsible for law enforcement in the West Bank, recently notified the court that given current circumstances in Hayovel, it would be inappropriate to provide a timeline for its dismantling at present. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his party's caucus he's investigating ways of approving some of the buildings in the outpost.

Peace Now also understands the sensitivity of the matter and recently issued a statement declaring that while it's "outrageous that the army allows career officers to live in outposts… [Peace Now is] considering amending the petition to not include the houses of the fallen. We are attentive to the pain of the families, like all of Israel."

The case is far from over. It's yet another example of complexities that are dealt with in this country, especially when soldiers' blood is involved. And not a word has been said about the United States and what it will have to say on the issue.

After 62 years, Israel has much to celebrate

As an Israeli academic and pundit, part of my job is to read, watch and listen to what other talking heads are saying about us. Over the years, I've learned to have low expectations, both from Israeli and foreign journalists, who often put their own agendas and moods into news articles and analyses. (I admit to occasionally falling into the same trap – so caveat emptor.)

Gerald Steinberg in Jerusalem

For many, analyzing Israel has become an exercise in gloom and doom, and this pessimism has dominated stories recently. Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) is a prime time for musing about the general state of the Jewish state, both externally and internally, and this year's analyses have been particularly ominous. In the *New York Times*, Ethan Bronner's Memo from Jerusalem was headlined "Mood Is Dark as Israel Marks 62nd Year as a Nation." Israel's zealous prophets warned of impending wars, civil strife and overall disaster.

In contrast, the prevailing mood was far from dark on Israel's streets, parks, beaches, and pre-holiday marketplaces. We joined thousands of Israelis packing Jerusalem's newly renovated Mamilla arcade, which leads to the brightly lit ancient remains of David's Citadel and Jaffa Gate. The diverse crowd enjoyed re-enactments of historic moments in the city's 3,000-year history, followed by a sing-along.

This scene wasn't merely an exercise in nostalgia or escapism, but a popular and deeply felt statement of freedom and homecoming. For many Israeli Jews (journalists and doomsayers excepted), every day is Independence Day. Despite the wars and hatred, both in the Arab and Muslim worlds, and increasingly on university campuses, newspaper columns and blogs, we are here – an independent, sovereign Jewish nation, able to defend our interests after 2,000 years of exile. From the perspective of Jewish history, 62 years is a very short time. The taste of independence, with its accompanying responsibility for both accomplishments and failures, is still exhilarating.

While media headlines continue to highlight threats of war from Hamas and Hezbollah, and the Iranian regime pursues nuclear weapons designed to crush the "Zionist entity," the national mood also reflects a renewed self-confidence that these enemies can be deterred, and if necessary, defeated. For Israelis who still hear the echoes of Palestinian mass terror bombings, our Independence Day stroll through Jerusalem was also a quiet celebration marking the defeat of Yasser Arafat's terror war.

Economically, Israel has emerged from the global recession almost unscathed – the shekel is more stable and stronger than either the dollar or the euro. The best-selling book *Start-up Nation*, which examines Israel's emergence as a leading hi-tech innovator, is as much a confident statement about the future as it is a history of this unexpected success.

Certainly there's concern about the signs of tension coming out of Washington, and, among some, fear of efforts to impose a counterproductive and unsustainable peace process. But some of this is overreaction and media hype, fanned by pundits with vested interests in overstating the friction.

Demonization of Israel – with its boycotts and bogus accusations of "war crimes," as reflected and promoted by Judge Richard Goldstone and his supporters – is also threatening. But there's a sense that this threat has overreached and is descending into absurdity and hysteria. Groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and their numerous Israeli and Palestinian allies, which have led this political warfare campaign, have been exposed as hypocritical and far from the "moral watchdogs" that they claim to be.

Internally, we have more than enough problems, including continuing revelations of massive corruption among former officials, compounded by an ongoing leadership crisis. There's plenty work to do for the next generation of Israel's leaders, whomever they turn out to be.

Yet, standing with crowds outside of Jerusalem's ancient walls at sunset, singing classic Zionist hits, our internal conflicts also seemed overstated. Amid the cacophony of Hebrew – with Russian, English, Italian, Ethiopian, and many other accents – and the full range of Jerusalem costumes, from sandals and miniskirts to black hats and coats, there was more unity than discord.

The Kirshner File

A 'miracle of resurrection' in the Netherlands

"This was a very deep wound," said Johannes Houwink ten Cate, a seasoned historian affiliated with the Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Amsterdam. "But Jews have managed to reconstruct and reorganize their lives." Pausing momentarily, he added, "It's a miracle of resurrection. It's a small miracle that Jews are still here."

Sheldon Kirshner in Amsterdam

Ten Cate, a specialist in the Nazi persecution of Jews, was referring to the sombre yet uplifting fact that while the Holocaust in the Netherlands claimed the lives of 107,000 Jews, or 78 per cent of Dutch Jewry, the highest death rate in western Europe, the Jewish community nevertheless managed to rebuild itself in a gradual postwar recovery.

On the eve of Germany's invasion on May 10, 1940, the Netherlands was home to approximately 160,000 Jews – 140,000 full Jews, 15,000 half-Jews and 5,000 quarter- Jews – comprising about 1.5 per cent of a total population of nine million.

The Nazi occupiers deported Jews mainly to Auschwitz and Sobibor via the Westerbork camp. Five thousand of the deportees survived their ordeal. Of the 25,000 Jews who went into hiding with the help of Christians, including Anne Frank, one-third were betrayed and killed.

These catastrophic statistics are jarring, since the Netherlands was a tolerant nation that admitted Sephardi Jews after the Inquisition and about 20,000 German Jews and 3,000 Polish Jews during the 1930s. It should also be recalled that pogroms were alien to the Dutch spirit. But with the Nazi conquest 65 years ago this month, the Netherlands was turned into a grim killing field.

To add insult to injury, Jewish survivors met with "a cold and bureaucratic reception" from the Dutch government after the war, according to a telling exhibit at the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam.

Proceeding from the strange assumption that the survivors should not be treated preferentially, since Dutch Christians had also suffered terribly and had been the victims of Nazi oppression and mass hunger, the government failed to take measures to address problems specifically pertaining to Jews. Amid this atmosphere, 9,800 Dutch Jews emigrated between 1950 and 1986, their destinations ranging from Israel and the United States to Canada and Australia.

"Jewish survivors were coolly received," observed Ten Cate, who previously worked at the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation and now teaches at the University of Amsterdam. "Perhaps Dutch Christians thought that returning Jews would rob them of their victimhood." By his estimate, 150,000 Dutch civilians were killed or died during the initially benign but increasingly brutal German occupation. A further 2,500 Dutch soldiers fell in battle during the Nazi invasion.

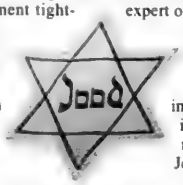
By whatever yardstick, the Holocaust has had a devastating impact on Dutch Jews. Ten Cate likens it to a trauma. Ruben Vis, the secretary-general of the Amsterdam-based Central Jewish Organization and the son of Holocaust survivors whose ancestors settled in the Netherlands four centuries ago, explained that the low rate of affiliation in the 40,000-strong Jewish community, bolstered by the addition of 10,000 to 15,000 Israelis in recent years, is directly related to the enormous losses sustained by the prewar community.

"After the Holocaust, Jews didn't want to be registered as Jews," said Vis, a Liberal party member of the North Holland state parliament. What he means is abundantly clear. Having had easy access to Jewish community membership rolls, the Nazis had no real trouble identifying Jews, some of whom were forcibly concentrated in Amsterdam.

Vis' father was hidden by Dutch Christians, but his mother was shipped to Theresienstadt. While he deeply appreciates the life-saving assistance his father received, he thinks that more could have done to protect Jews in their darkest hour. "The Dutch aren't the bravest people in the world," he mused. "They follow the flow."

On the eve of the Nazi invasion, the Netherlands had a fairly liberal refugee policy. But as the economic crisis worsened during the Depression, the Dutch government tightened entry regulations. Fearing an upsurge of anti-Semitism, Dutch Jewish leaders rallied behind this policy, said Ten Cate.

During this period, German Jewish refugees were virtually prohibited from legally working. Those who were jobless lived on their savings or were assisted by the Dutch Jewish community and the "Joint."



The Dutch yellow star in the Netherlands

In a sign of the times, the Jewish community was asked to defray expenses for the construction of the Westerbork work camp, where some refugees were housed. In the wake of Kristallnacht in Germany, the Netherlands closed its borders to refugees.

The Netherlands, having been neutral in World War I, hoped it could remain neutral again, a conviction buttressed by Adolf Hitler's insincere assurance that Germany would honour its neutrality. But in a shocking blitzkreig, Germany broke its promise. The poorly equipped Dutch army resisted, but on the fifth day of the invasion, the German Air Force bombed Rotterdam, killing nearly 1,000 civilians and causing widespread property damage. Cowed by the threat of further German bombing raids, the Netherlands surrendered.

Shortly afterward, Germany imposed a Nazi-controlled administration on the Netherlands under the overall direction of Arthur Seyss-Inquart. At first, as American researcher Anthony Anderson suggests, Germany respected Dutch laws. It pledged not to foist its Nazi ideology on the country and made sure that its troops were on their best behaviour. It was all a sham. "In the long run, Germany wanted to annex the Netherlands," said Ten Cate, an expert on Dutch-German relations. "The Germans considered the Dutch Aryans, like the Austrians and the Norwegians."

Within two months of occupying the Netherlands, the Germans imposed a series of escalating restrictions on Dutch Jews. A Jewish Council, led in part by a wealthy diamond merchant, grudgingly co-operated with the Nazis. By 1942, after the first deportation took place, Jews were forced to wear the dreaded yellow Jewish star.

To a degree, Dutch civilians collaborated or co-operated with the Nazis. After the royal family and cabinet ministers fled to London and established a government-in-exile, senior Dutch civil servants, known as secretaries-general, administered the Netherlands in conjunction with the Germans. One of these figures, Hans Max Hirschfeld, a half-Jew, was appointed the Netherlands' ambassador to Indonesia, its former colony, after the war.

The largest political party during the occupation, the Netherlands Union, with a membership of 800,000, espoused a policy of co-operation with the Germans until it was banned. On a more sinister level, 25,000 Dutchmen volunteered for the Dutch Waffen-SS, which participated in atrocities against Jews on the eastern front; the Dutch police helped the Germans round up Jews, and the Dutch Nazi party, under the leadership of Anton Mussert, collaborated with the Nazis.

On the other hand, the now famous sympathy strike in support of Jews in February 1941 organized by the illegal Communist party, as well as a telegram sent by Protestant and Catholic clergymen in 1942 protesting deportations, showed a measure of outrage.

In addition, the Dutch resistance movement belatedly aided Jews, while the Dutch government-in-exile denounced the Germans' anti-Semitic edicts. But in the end, due to fear and the effect of *verzuiling* – the strict stratification of Dutch society along religious and political lines– the extermination of Dutch Jews was greeted all too often by indifference.

Johannes Houwink ten Cate

Ruben Vis

Anton Mussert

[Sheldon Kirshner photos]

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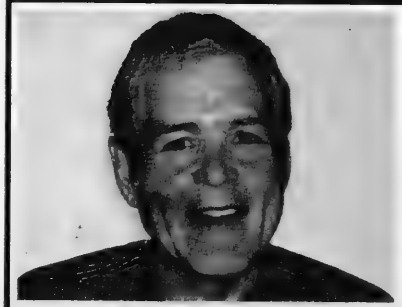

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Russian, Canadian vets mark victory over Nazis

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

A few months after the city of Leningrad was encircled in September 1941, the food finally ran out.

Desperate for something to eat, the city's residents took to scraping carpenter's glue from furniture and other wooden knick knacks around the house. They made a barely edible mixture out of it known as casein and ate it. They would also take leather goods, such as shoes and belts, and boil them up for whatever nutritional value could be extracted.

It kept them alive, but the hunger was devastating, recalled Boris Gurevich, 77, a survivor of the siege that killed as many as 800,000 Russians. Gurevich, who grew up on Leningrad's Vasilievsky Island, said starvation was everywhere, even in his own family. In January and February 1942, his grandfather and then his grandmother perished from hunger.

Liberation would not come until January 1944, nearly 900 days after the blockade began, and victory over the hated Nazis not until May 1945. On May 7, Russian army veterans, survivors of the Leningrad Blockade and Canadian army veterans will gather to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in a dinner and reception at the National Banquet Hall on Finch Avenue.

Alex Levin, one of the organizers of the event, said proceeds from the dinner will go to the Russian Jewish War Veterans and Holocaust Association, a group that includes about 200 former army personnel.

Though not a soldier, Gurevich, who immigrated to Canada in 2002, will be among the 300 guests at the dinner. His remarkable story is one that many Canadians find hard to understand, he said through an interpreter, Vladimir Kravtsov. "It's too hard for them from their life experience," he said.

Losing his grandparents was bad enough, but those weren't the first losses he'd suffered in the war.

His father, Yosef, an engineer who had been conscripted into a civilian militia unit, had already been killed in action. Only he and his mother, Annina Osipovna Gurevich, survived, thanks to the fact she was a recently graduated doctor who, after coming close to death, recovered enough to work and earn a (sawdust-laced) bread ration of 125 grams per day for her son, 250 for her.

Gurevich and his mother scraped by for close to 900 days, wearing layers of clothing and burning household furniture and books to avoid freezing to death in the bitter Russian winter. They also endured shelling attacks, including an incendiary bomb that destroyed part of the apartment building they lived in.

Living through the Leningrad siege, considered the bloodiest such event in all history, was its own kind of hell and was part of an enormous death toll on the eastern front that boggles the mind.

Canadians – at least those who are history buffs – are well aware of this country's contribution to victory over the Nazis: convoy duty across the Atlantic, the Dieppe raid, fighting in Italy, the Normandy invasion, closing the Falaise Pocket, the battle for the Scheldt estuary and the liberation of the Netherlands, among other battles. But the conflict in eastern Europe dwarfed the war in the west by orders of magnitude, and Jews were right in the thick of it.

Elen Steinberg Brodie, one of the organizers of the evening event, said an estimated "500,000 Russian Jews fought in the war, and almost nobody knows it." More than 250,000 of them were killed. (Amateur historian Dan Carlin in his podcast, Ghosts of the Ostfront, points out that the Soviets lost 10,000 men a day on the central front alone during the summer of 1941, attesting to the enormous scale of the conflict in the east.)

Remembering May 7

Brodie, whose grandfather, Maj. Lazer Liverant, died fighting at Stalingrad, said a few hundred Russian army veterans are expected at the banquet, all likely in uniform with their chests bedecked with medals. These survivors point to a reality little appreciated in the West, that "where Jews could fight back, they did."

"When I tell people that half a million Russian Jews were conscripted into the army and fought in the war, they don't know that and they are shocked," said Brodie. "The perception is that all perished in the Holocaust."

Brodie wants "to capture people's stories and include them as part of a new Jewish museum in Toronto and make sure they are not forgotten."

Gurevich certainly hasn't forgotten. When his grandparents died, he and his mother were so weak "we couldn't get up," he said. Luckily, a friend serving at the front line visited them on leave and brought enough food to keep them alive. When his mother got stronger, she began working.

On the day the siege ended, "there was a joyful commotion. Everybody embraced each other. We were very happy about it," Gurevich said. What followed was a long period of reconstruction and, of course, better food. But it wasn't until 18 months later that "food returned to normal."

Since then, Gurevich, a retired mining engineer, "never had leftovers thrown into the garbage. [I] never threw food away up to now."

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Walk with Israel enthusiasts tap their creative side

Annual event takes to the streets of Toronto on Sunday, May 30th

By Daniel Horowitz

When it comes to raising funds for UJA's upcoming 2010 Walk with Israel, members of Toronto's Jewish community are using creative, out-of-the-box thinking to help the children of Bat Yam.

Funds raised by the 42nd annual Walk with Israel presented by Metropia – the largest one-day Israel solidarity walk in the Diaspora – will help Bat Yam's young children, with proceeds being allocated to United Israel Appeal Canada for which authorized organizations will deliver services.

Located just south of Tel Aviv, Bat Yam has historically faced a number of challenges including unemployment, housing conditions and the educational system. The city is also home to a high population of Ethiopian immigrants striving to integrate into Israeli society. UJA assistance, through UIA, is literally transforming Bat Yam's educational and social situation.

The Walk kick-off party, held at Coronation Park – across from the CNE's Princes' Gates and sponsored by Horizons Betapro ETFs - will begin at 9 am, with the Walk starting at 10 am, rain or shine.

This year's Walk will again be chaired by the dynamic husband and wife team of Bruce and Lianne Leboff.

The Walk with Israel ends with the RioCan Festival, which starts at 11:30 am at The Direct Energy Centre, Exhibition Place, and features carnival rides and games; the Spin Master Play Zone, a petting zoo; the Teen Zone with Guitar Hero; The IBI Group Israeli Art Centre; The Gluskin Sheff Kosher Barbecue, and much more.

For one Toronto family, the Walk with Israel is not only a chance to help the people of Israel, it's also the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to a loved one who recently passed away.

"My father, Ernie Weiss, devoted his life to volunteer work and tzedakah and was the leader of our family on the Walk with Israel each year. He never missed it," explained Marilyn Sinclair, one of Ernie's four daughters. "A few years ago, we officially named our group Team Ernie."

Ernie, a Holocaust survivor, educator and ardent Zionist, had tears in his eyes every year when he saw Toronto's streets replete with Israeli flags, T-shirts, and passionate, enthusiastic youth participating in the Walk. He said it was always one of the happiest events of the year for him.

In 2008, Ernie went on the March of the Living as a Survivor and leader. From that point forward, he wore his March of the Living jacket on the Walk and loved that dozens of people would constantly stop to speak to him.

Unfortunately, Ernie passed away on January 7, 2010, but Team Ernie will continue as his legacy. Anyone who would like to walk in Ernie's memory can join the team, and Marilyn hopes that her friends and family will raise a significant amount of money, while having a great time.

(l – r) Back: Lauren Goldfarb, Michal Freedman
Front: Roni and Ari Freedman

When Shelly Markel was on her way to the grocery store recently, she may have wondered why her three children insisted that she pick up what seemed like an exorbitant amount of lemonade. The motives of her kids, Michal, 9, Ari, 6 and Roni, 3 soon became apparent.

"My husband Ian and I have been participating in the Walk with Israel since Michal was born, and whenever we had another addition, we were always thrilled to add to the Walk's attendance," said Shelly. "All three of my kids love the Walk and wanted to do something themselves to raise money for the children of Bat Yam."

So, on a warm, sunny April weekend, the kids opened a lemonade stand outside their Bathurst and Eglinton area home, raising over a hundred dollars in the process, and well over $1,300 from pledges, as well.

"We knew that we wanted to do something to raise money for Israel, and we figured that everyone would like a nice cold cup of lemonade," said Michal, a Grade 4 Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly USDS) student.

"At first, I didn't know that there was anything we could do to help poor kids in Israel, but, through the Walk with Israel, we could do something really good. I've been going to the Walk for a long time; I love seeing all my friends there, and I really love the RioCan Festival, too. I learned about tzedakah when I was really young from my Bubbie, so it's nice to do what I learned to help others."

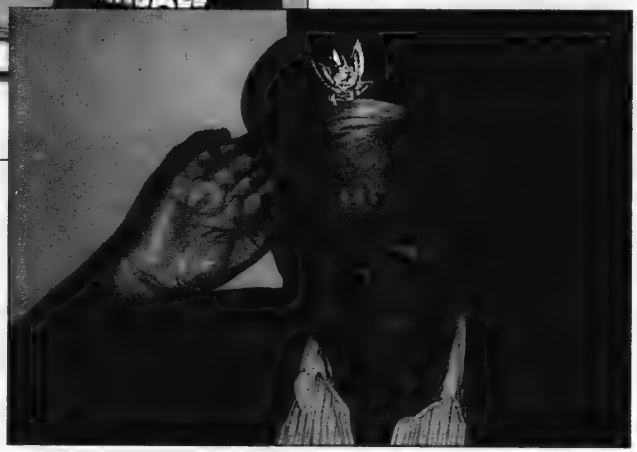
Ari, who as the "voice" of the lemonade stand, implored neighbours and passing motorists to sample their wares, has also made good use of his new allowance.

"I just started getting an allowance of three dollars," enthused the Grade 1 student at the Robbins Hebrew Academy. "One dollar of that is for me to spend, another goes into a bank account, and the third dollar goes to tzedakah. I really like helping others; it feels good and it's fun."

For the youngest member of this fundraising troika, Roni, her role in this fundraising initiative was clearly a success. "I liked yelling, 'lemonade,'" she said.

From the mouths of babes. It just shows that you're never too young to start helping others.

"They learn about tzedakah and other Jewish values at school, but to see them take those life lessons from theory and to use them is truly heartwarming. We were thrilled with the response from neighbours, friends and even complete strangers who were touched by the kids' enthusiasm and delighted to support the cause."



Ernie Weiss, z"l

For more Walk with Israel information or to register and raise funds online visit: walkwithisrael.com or call 416.631.5700.

Israel economic mission presents trade awards

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Israel doesn't confer knighthoods or award civilian medals, so instead the Israel Economic Mission and the Consulate General will present the Israel Trade Awards to a handful of corporations and individuals for advancing trade and investment between Canada and Israel.

The awards ceremony will be held about two weeks before Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty leads a trade delegation to the Jewish state.

"It was high time we held such an event," said Jonathan Levy, Israel's consul for economic affairs and trade commissioner. "Looking at the timing, we took a number of issues into consideration. We wanted it to be on the 60th year of diplomatic relations between Canada and Israel and as a buildup event to the visit of the premier and the business delegation."

Jonathan Levy

The 2009 Israeli Trade Awards will be presented to Given Imaging, Radware, Solemates Inc. and the Blackberry Partners Fund. In addition, a special award will be presented to businessman and philanthropist Leslie Dan "for a lifetime contribution for promoting bilateral trade" and to Erica Segal of Julie M. Gallery, for presenting Israeli art.

Levy said Given Imaging is famous for its pill-sized camera that, when swallowed, is used to diagnose digestive system maladies. Radware is a leading manufacturer of telecommunications equipment, while Solemates distributes Naot footwear in Canada.

The Blackberry Partners Fund, which is affiliated with Research in Motion and RBC, invests in cutting-edge technologies, Levy said.

The award recipients "are those companies in Canada that have been highly successful in bringing products or solutions from Israel," he added.

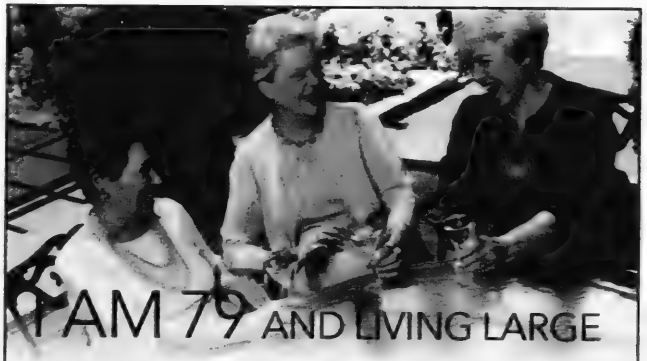
Since the Canada-Israel free trade agreement was concluded 10 years ago, the bilateral trade relationship has expanded at close to 10 per cent per year. In 2000, two-way trade reached $925 million, while in 2009, that figure jumped to $1.4 billion. The best year for trade was 2008, with $1.8 billion in products and services changing hands.

Last year's numbers were down due to the worldwide economic downturn, but Levy is confident 2010 will mark a recovery.

The bulk of Israeli exports are in the high-tech field, Levy said. "People use Israeli products and technology without even knowing it."

BlackBerry devices contain an Israeli-made chip, while Pentium and Core 2 computer chips were developed in Israel, as was software that runs voicemail, instant messaging and cellphone billing, he said.

TACKLING BULLIES: The Huddle Up Committee at Robbins Hebrew Academy's Beth Tikvah campus – back, from left, Daniel Sinukoff, Adam Feig, Noah Negin-Ulster, Sagi Kahane-Rapport and Taylor Hittner; and front, from left, Casey Gerstein, Toronto Argonaut Matt Black, Logan Gottfried, Argos Huddle Up manager Jason Colero and Sidney Serfaty – led the annual Toronto Argonauts Huddle Up Assembly. Huddle Up is a program that teaches students to be aware and sensitive to bullying situations. It's part of the Be a Mensch Campaign at the former United Synagogue Day School.



There comes a point when living at home just isn't what it used to be. But imagine a comfortable apartment with lots of friends and cheerful surroundings, where your day is all about choosing what you really want to do. With no worries about housework or upkeep. A place where you can live life as you decide, while knowing care is near if you ever need it. Come see for yourself.

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ALL-NIGHT JEWISH LEARNING FEST

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Tuesday, May 18, 7 – 8 PM (Kiever Synagogue, 25 Bellevue Ave) | 9 PM – 6 AM (Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave) | FREE

Visit *Auguststrasse 25*, then at 8 PM join a walking tour to the MNJCC for the evening's all-night multi-disciplinary events, including talks about architecture and contemporary art inspired by the Koffler Gallery exhibition. Full event details on our website.

Presented together with the Miles Nadal JCC, Kolot, The First Narayever Congregation, Congregation Darchei Noam, Makom / Kiever Synagogue, Limmud Toronto, Shir Libeynu, and Annex Shul.

Spring Fair Workshop: Celebration of Art, Flowers and Food

Thursday, May 27
9:30 AM – 1:30 PM | $85
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Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC | 750 Spadina Ave

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FICTION
Robin McGrath, *The Winterhouse*. Published by Creative Book Publishing.

HISTORY
Allan Levine, *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*. Published by Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada and Heartland Associates.

HOLOCAUST LITERATURE
Michael R. Marrus, *Some Measure of Justice: The Holocaust Era Restitution Campaign of the 1990s*. Published by University of Wisconsin Press.

YOUTH LITERATURE
Eva Wiseman, *Puppet*. Published by Tundra Books.

BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR
David Sax, *Save the Deli*. Published by McClelland & Stewart.

JEWISH THOUGHT & CULTURE
Kenneth Sherman, *What the Furies Bring*. Published by Porcupine's Quill.

SCHOLARSHIP ON A JEWISH SUBJECT
Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire*. Published by Indiana University Press.

YIDDISH
Goldie Sigal, *Stingy Buzi and King Solomon*. Published by Lomir Hofn Press.

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Feeding the poorest of the poor — in Israel

— *Hazon Yeshaya serves more than 14,000* —

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Abraham Israel, founder and director of Israel's largest soup kitchen – Hazon Yeshaya Humanitarian Network – knows what it means to be poor and hungry.

As a 10-year-old child in 1960, he fled with his parents and sister from his native Egypt to France, where the family spent almost four years in Paris before emigrating to Brooklyn, N.Y.

"We ended up surviving in soup kitchens for 3 1/2 years," he told *The CJN* during a recent visit to Toronto to meet with supporters.

Canadian Friends of Hazon Yeshaya has had a presence here for five years. The organization is planning a large gala event for March 2011, and a smaller dinner for sponsors next month, on June 9.

"I remember having torn clothes, and holes in my shoes," said Israel. "It was embarrassing, but it wasn't the end of the world. Thank God there were wonderful people there who would feed us every day. I always dreamt of paying back this favour."

Israel, now a retired shoe importer who made aliyah when he retired, started his first soup kitchen after a chance meeting in 1997 with a young woman who had multiple sclerosis.

Because she wasn't feeling well, he accompanied her home and saw that her one-room apartment was bare, with broken windows, a leaky faucet, and no electricity or refrigerator.

Shocked, he asked her what she was going to eat that day, and if she didn't receive money from the government. Her answer, he recalls, was that she would have a yogurt, and that, yes, she received a stipend, but that the money went for her medication.

Then he asked if she knew anyone else living in similar conditions. She referred him to neighbours across the hall, and before long he knew of 17 people who needed help.

"It's all led by the Almighty," said Israel, an accountant by training who also has rabbinic smichah. He hired an elderly woman to cook, and opened a storefront operation where he provided a daily meal to the group of 17.

Today his organization – named in memory of his late father – serves more than 14,000 people, providing daily meals as well as children's programs, dental care including implants, and vocational training that Israel said has a success rate of 85 per cent (referring to students who find jobs).

"We're seeing some success in this, that it stops the cycle of poverty. Therefore, we're very excited, and we're expanding it."

Abraham Israel

About a third of those who receive the meals are Holocaust survivors. There are also some Arab clients, including 350 children in East Jerusalem who receive the same kosher meals as other clients, at their school.

Given Israel's business background and training as an accountant, he runs his non-profit organization "in a most businesslike manner," he said.

The organization has an annual budget of $12 million, and only three per cent goes to overhead, a rate "unheard of in the non-profit world," Israel said.

In part, he explained, the overhead is kept down by the small staff – seven employees in all – and the large number of volunteers, including some visitors from overseas, who do everything from cutting vegetables to serving or delivering meals.

As well, Israel noted, "clients" or "customers" are screened to make sure they meet government criteria for poverty. "We work hand in hand with government and the municipalities, and we only service 'Status A,' the lowest poverty level."

Israel said that, despite well-publicized bureaucratic delays in Israel, there is a document his clients can obtain easily within 24 hours, and it is required within that time frame if they don't have the documentation the organization requests.

As well, he insists on maintaining the dignity of those who use the services. "I just let go of a good volunteer who yelled back at a client."

Hazon Yeshaya provides meals 365 days a year. On Passover, its kitchens are kashered overnight.

"We take it very seriously. These are Status A people. We can't skip a day."

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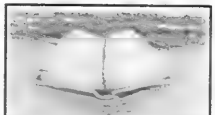
Jewish Life

No matter what you do, you'll always be Jewish

By RABBI AVROHOM JACKS

A Jewish couple – the man born in America, the woman in Europe – is vacationing. One night, all the hotels where they try to register are fully occupied. The only hotel with vacancies is restricted – it won't accept Jews.

The man says, "When we check, in let me do the talking. You don't say a word, because the moment that you open your mouth, they will know that you are a Jew."


Rabbinic Reflections

The woman agrees to the plan, and they register without a hitch.

The next morning, the woman goes down to the pool.

She dives in, but the water is very cold. The shock of the icy water causes her to call out "Oy vey!"

Suddenly, she sees everyone around the pool staring at her. "Vatever dat means" she adds.

American banker Otto Kahn was Jewish by birth, but he had converted to Christianity. He was once walking with a hunchback friend when they passed a synagogue. "You know I used to be a Jew," Kahn said.

"And I used to be a hunchback," his companion replied.

According to Judaism, no matter how a Jew conducts his or her life, if they were born Jewish, that's the way they remain. Circumstances may force us to forget that most important part of our being, but ultimately it will re-surface.

In spiritual terms, we always carry around our thick Yiddish accents. We can no more deny our Jewish essence than a hunchback can deny his deformity.

On the upcoming festival of Shavuot, we commemorate the fact that God gave us the 10 Commandments and together with them, the entire Torah.

The Ten Commandments were carved in stone tablets.

A letter carved into stone can get covered over with dirt over many years. The dirt can so cover the letters as to make them illegible. However, the letters are still there.

All we need to do is blow away the dirt to reveal them.

Similarly the Jewish soul is always present and always ready to burst forth into a powerful blaze, even if occasionally it is reduced to a small fire.

This idea is beautifully illustrated by the following meaningful story.

In Poland, survivors who tried to return to their former homes were often met with deadly hostility. A certain Jew told how, after liberation, he clandestinely led a group of 200 survivors to freedom.

The Polish authorities wouldn't readily grant their Jewish citizens exit permits. In order to escape from Poland, the 200 had to pose as Greek Jews seeking repatriation to Greece. Our friend instructed this ragged group not to speak Yiddish, Polish, Russian or any other regional language, lest they reveal their true identities.

Though none of them spoke Greek, the group's leader did speak a Sephardi Hebrew, which is often spoken by Greek Jews.

Misled by the leader's language, the Polish military at the Czechoslovakia rail terminal was eager to have the group of Greeks exit.

When they reached Bratislavia in Czechoslovakia, they were stopped by Russian troops.

An officer pointed to one of the members of the group and began questioning him in Russian.

The man became frightened, since he did not speak Greek or anything that sounded foreign.

However, he was familiar with the Hebrew prayer book.

Hoping to fool the Russian officer, he looked him in the eye and spoke the opening words of the Shabbat prayer *Yekum Purkan Min Shamaya*, Which means "May salvation come from heaven."

The Russian officer continued the prayer, "*Chinah vechisdah vrachamim*" – "With grace, kindness and mercy."

The officer then explained that he, too, was a Polish Jew forced into the Russian army. He concluded by saying in Yiddish "Perhaps someday we will meet in Israel."

Have a wonderful Yom Tov!

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks is spiritual leader of Congregation Zichron Kedoshim in Montreal.

On reaching 90

I consider myself fortunate having reached 90 years relatively intact in body and mind. It is hard to realize that when Moses was my age, he had already led the Children of Israel through the wilderness for 10 years.

In a restaurant these days when my waiter asks, "How is it so far?" I unfailingly respond, "So far, so good." In a similar fashion when my friends inquire, "How are you doing? or, "How is life treating you?" etc., I reward them with the same formula, "So far, so good."

Bookmarks
Bernard Baskin

Of course, old age can be frightening. Shakespeare, who was a keen and realistic observer of the human condition, depicted old age as second childishness and mere oblivion, sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Of course he knew nothing about dental implants, hearing aids, cataract operations, bypass procedures – or the magical power and range of our modern pharmacopoeia, from Viagra to Lipitor.

Old folks almost everywhere are considered a burden. Instead of facing up to the problem, we pretend that it does not exist. We devote a considerable proportion of our natural resources to perpetuate a deception that truly deceives no one, the lie that we are all eternally young.

As Hamlet said, holding in his hands a skull, "To this favour we must all come." The reality of our lives is that as time goes on, we grow older, and if we cannot find meaning and value in our later years, I think we betray the circumstance that our earlier years were also empty.

Life has been compared to a camel – you can make it do anything but back up. A Hollywood celebrity confided that the secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age.

Clearly, as author Ashley Montagu wrote, "the trick to life is to die young as late as possible." When he was 93, Pablo Casals, the famous cellist, wrote: "If you continue to work and absorb the beauty in the world about you, you find that age does not necessarily mean getting old. At least not in the ordinary sense. I feel many things more intensely than ever before, and for me life grows more fascinating... I do not think a single day passes by in my life in which I fail to look with fresh amazement at the miracle of nature. It is there on every side."

The irrepressible filmmaker Woody Allen proclaimed: "I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve immortality through not dying. I don't want to live on in the hearts of my countrymen. I would rather live on in my apartment."

Ultimately, if we are wise we will understand that the world is a temporary home; we are renters, not owners. Once a group of American visitors went to visit a European sage. With great anticipation, they were ushered into his study. There they saw a frail man sitting at a rickety desk on which sat a few books. In surprise, one of the visitors blurted out, "Master, where are all your possessions?" He smiled and replied, "Where are all of yours?" The man answered: "We have very few possessions with us. After all, we are just passing through." He nodded and said, "Me, too."

One waiter among the many who inquired about my meal reminded me that dessert was still to come. At my stage in life, I remain unconvinced. Surely, the main course of my years was enough. But an unheralded spirit whispers in my ear, "Try the chocolate cheesecake."

Jewish Life

We need Torah, and it needs us

By ELLIOTT MALAMET

As Jews around the world prepare for the annual Shavuot festival, marking the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai, it's worth considering the paradoxical legacy of global Torah study.

In Israel, many haredim continue to pursue Torah learning as their exclusive way of life, sacrificing material comfort to the extent that they have become a serious "economic underclass." In the words of Bar-Ilan University professor Noah Efron, "ultra-Orthodox males probably spend more time in formal study than any other class of humans ever has in the history of the planet. But small stipends do not easily support large families... as each generation exceeds the poverty of the last. Families of a dozen live in 600-square-foot apartments."

Efron, among others, argues that such a situation, in which the secular world is utterly shunned and hence necessary life skills to create economic opportunity are never incorporated, may not be sustainable for much longer: "Torah study thrives and children go to school in thrice-patched pants with an ache in their belly. Something has to give."

It's strange to compare this picture with that of many other contemporary Jews, for whom Torah study is an endeavour that takes place on a distant planet, one they have neither the inclination nor the inspiration to visit. Seen as an archaic remnant of a prehistoric culture, Torah is a curiosity at best, and at worst, an oppressive reminder of the days before science "enlightened" us all. In this version, only the profane is holy.

It seems difficult in the landscape of these polar opposites to recall that Judaism and Torah study is the inheritance of the entire Jewish people. The late philosopher Emmanuel Levinas suggests that this sentiment isn't just a canard used by Jewish educators, but rather a profound truth about what Torah really means.

In his seminal essay *Revelation in the Jewish Tradition*, Levinas writes that the Revelation calls to that which is singular in each of us, "as if every person, through his uniqueness, were the guarantee of the revelation of a unique aspect of truth, and some of its points would never have been revealed if some people had been absent from mankind."

As much as we need Jewish texts to enrich us, they need each of us to unlock some dimension that would have remained hidden, like a house with an infinite number of doors requiring each of us to open them with our own set of keys.

When a teacher asks a student to comment on how they understand a Torah text, it would be a a grave error to think that this is just a pro forma exercise and that all of the "real" meanings of Torah are already spoken for in thousands of years of dense commentary. Rather, the business of each person coming to own the Torah text, to fuse our particular sensibilities with the ancient and eternal words, creates a synthesis and hence an illumination that has been waiting for millenia for the student to be born, grow up and add their voice to Torah.

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook used to divide reality into "that which is holy and that which is not yet holy." The chosen poverty of haredim implies a lack of complete clarity about how to fuse all of the parts of God's world. Another kind of poverty, the lack of a generation of non-literate Jews, awaits remediation.

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The original Top Ten list

It's the original Top Ten list.

On Wednesday, May 19, *Aseret Hadibrot*, the Ten Commandments, will be read from the Torah to mark the first day of Shavuot. Aside from being fundamental to Judaism, those commandments have influenced civilization and worked themselves into all aspects of western culture. Today, 10 (or so) sites for the Ten Commandments.

I. The original text(s)

You can read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1. **[bit.ly/aseret1]** Actually, the Ten Commandments appear twice in the Torah, the second time with some variations, in Deuteronomy 5:5. **[bit.ly/aseret3]**

II. Counting the Commandments

In the Torah, the Commandments aren't actually numbered. According to Yitzchak Etshalom, that has been a source of controversy in Judaism. "Where does number 1 end, where does number 2 end, etc.?" Rabbi Etshalom presents three different numbering schemes. **[bit.ly/aseret4]**

III. Their special significance

If the Ten Commandments are raised to a unique status, what does that say about the status of the rest of the Torah? The essay Special Treatment for the Ten Commandments examines this question and related debates over whether it's proper for the congregation to stand while the Ten Commandments are recited, and even whether the tablets should be displayed inside the synagogue. **[bit.ly/aseret17]**

IV. The tablets

Speaking of which, Rabbi Anchelle Perl is happy to burst a misconception. We are all familiar with those iconic tablets, square on the bottom, round on the top. Not quite, says Rabbi Perl. He quotes the Talmud to argue that the tablets were also square on top. He says Judaism has a responsibility to depict accurately one of its most important symbols. *[bit.ly/aseret26]*

V. In song

Actually, in chant. You can listen to the Aseret Hadibrot, thanks to Cantor David Goldstein of North Shore Congregation Israel of Glencoe, Ill. **[bit.ly/aseret45]**

VI. The night before

One popular Shavuot tradition is to stay up and learn throughout the first night of the holiday in anticipation of the giving of the Torah, which is commemorated in the morning. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations has created a detailed booklet for the Tikkun Leyl Shavuot evening titled *Aseret Hadibrot: Illuminating the Ten Commandments*. **[bit.ly/aseret37]**

VII. For kids

The Jewish Theological Seminary site has a large poster celebrating the giving of the Torah that kids can print out and colour. **[bit.ly/aseret38]**

VIII. In the courts

The Ten Commandments are a common adornment to many synagogues. But when displayed in U.S. schools, government buildings and courthouses, controversy has been common because of the separation of church and state. This site provides links to some of the more famous debates. **[bit.ly/aseret40]**

IX. The movie

There have been several screen adaptations, but when you talk about *the* movie, you must be referring to Cecil B. DeMille's 1956 epic with Charleton Heston and Yul Brynner. **[bit.ly /aseret44]**

X. In popular culture

The Ten Commandments have not only become central to Judaism but they've also woven themselves into popular culture. Many sites even have lists of "new" commandments, some sensible, some sublime, some ridiculous, including the 10 commandments of breastfeeding: "You shall not wean your children for the sake of convenience." **[bit.ly/aseret41]**

Of square dancing: "Thou shalt take care that the words of thy mouth are not scented with garlic or beer." **[bit.ly/aseret42]**

Of sane living: "Strike a balance between work and play. Nobody ever said on their death bed, 'I wish I had spent more time in the office.'" **[bit.ly/aseret43]**

Have a very happy holiday.

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

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Criticism key to democracy, New Israel Fund president says

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

Maintaining human rights and allowing expressions of protest are crucial if Israel is to remain a democratic country, New Israel Fund (NIF) president Naomi Chazan emphasized at Congregation Darchei Noam May 9.

Having grown up in Israel, she said her views stem from her deep understanding of the Israeli declaration of independence, which she said talks about the essential values of the state, including "equality for all citizens regardless of race, nationality, gender or religion, extending a hand of peace to our neighbours."

> ***'If it's wrong, it's got to be stopped'***

The former deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset told the audience of some 250 her fear is that Israel, in an attempt to protect its Jewish identity, is marginalizing others, particularly Israeli Arabs.

"Democracy is measured by how [the people] treat their minorities," she said, speaking with an obvious sadness in her voice as she explained examples such as the difference in the level of funding for Israeli-Arab schools compared to primarily Jewish ones.

She also fights for gender equality, she said, explaining that in some areas of the country, women must enter buses from the back while men sit in the front.

"If it's wrong, it's got to be stopped," she said, describing herself as the mother of civil society in Israel.

About 15 protesters stood outside the entrance to the synagogue before the talk, distributing information on the NIF. Most of them were from the Jewish Defence League (JDL), a group that describes its goal as protecting Jews from anti-Semitism.

Meir Weinstein, JDL Canada's national director, told *The CJN* the goal of the protest was to make sure people understand what the NIF is about.

One issue, he said, is its funding of groups who describe the Israel Defence Forces as war criminals.

"Jews have to be united, and for Jews to start criticizing Israel, going as far as calling the IDF a war criminal organization is certainly not helpful to the cause of Israel," he said.

Chazan joked that she felt at home as soon as she saw the demonstrators, though she insisted that she strongly supports their right to protest, particularly because it shows they care.

In the past months, Chazan's views have come under fire, particularly those regarding Operation Cast Lead, Israel's offensive in Gaza December 2008 to January 2009.

Much of this criticism is related to the Goldstone report, a UN investigation into alleged Israeli human rights violations during the war in Gaza. In the report, several NIF grantees criticized Israel's actions.

However, Chazan stressed that the NIF has nothing to do with the Goldstone report.

Earlier this year, her opponents distributed and posted large signs and billboards depicting Chazan with a horn coming from her forehead, which she explained as playing on the fact that the Hebrew words for horn and fund are homonyms.

Many of her opponents also used protests to show their discontent with the NIF's actions.

Her admission that during the offensive she had signed a petition calling the operation a "slaughter" of Palestinians sparked the most obvious disagreement in the audience, with people booing at her words.

In general, however, the audience seemed attentive, sometimes applauding but mostly listening silently, though some people could be heard uttering disagreements under their breath.

Rabbi Eva Goldfinger of the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism said in an interview after the talk that she has been supporting the NIF since its inception. She said she supports about 80 per cent of its views, disagreeing mostly with its granting funds to what she called violent Palestinian groups.

They should support pro-Palestinian groups, she said, but must draw the line when the groups begin to promote violence.

She described Chazan as very warm, with a "listening voice," despite sometimes avoiding fully answering the questions, such as when one man asked for an explanation as to why the NIF supports certain groups.

However, Rabbi Goldfinger said this seemed to come from an effort to maintain a peaceful environment.

Despite disagreeing with some of the grantees, she said she supports the right to present varying opinions.

"It's because we don't listen to each other that we are angry," she said.

Chazan also stressed the importance of listening to opinions that may be contrary to public opinion.

She said a recent study showed that 79 per cent of the books on the reading lists for political science courses at Israeli universities criticize Israel.

While some people deem this inappropriate, she argued this critical thinking is the purpose of universities.

One audience member was a woman from Syria who thanked Chazan for her actions, stressing that it is her type of views that are key to creating peace.

Chazan responded that she dreams of one day being able to drive from her home in Israel to have lunch in Syria. However, she emphasized that in order for peace to come, Israel must treat democracy as a garden with a need for constant care.

"Anybody who is concerned about Israel's existence must first and foremost protect Israel's democracy," she said to an applauding audience, describing this as the heart of her lecture. "If we lose our democratic character, we will not survive."

Naomi Chazan

El Al launches one-stop website

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

El Al Israel Airlines unveiled a new website last week that lets travellers book "dream vacations" on their own while permitting travel agents to access low-cost packages from the airline's inventory.

"We are strengthening our commitment and adding products… to facilitate travel," said Dina Kutner, general manager of El Al's Canadian office.

"As of today, a passenger can in five easy steps book a trip," said Aviva Lavi, marketing manager for El Al Tourism, the airline's travel package division.

Travellers comfortable on the Internet now have the tools to arrange all aspects of their trip, including air, hotel, tours and land transportation. The web program is "quick, easy and very user friendly," the Tel Aviv-based Lavi said in a news conference that introduced the site to travel writers and tour operators.

In a pitch to travel agents taking part, Kutner and Lavi said the website "enhances the tools" available for those in the industry who are packaging a vacation for clients. Lavi noted some agents are expected to direct their clients to it to provide them with information about a trip to Israel. However, six agents at the media event were skeptical that they would ever use the web page for that purpose.

"We're going to lose business if we show the client this website," said one agent. "Why would they need a travel agent?"

"You would never send anybody to this website," said another agent, who didn't want her name used. "They phone travel agents for our expertise and knowledge."

"Why send them to this website? So they can tell me Israel is a beautiful country when they get back?" asked a third agent.

Kutner said the site would be most useful for agents in communities that don't see a lot of travel to Israel. "It's more geared for agents in [cities such as] Moose Jaw, [Sask.], who don't know Israeli hotels and tours," she said.

However, members of the travel industry in Toronto can benefit from the site in other ways, she told *The CJN*. Sometimes El Al Tourism might have better deals on hotels than the agents, who can book online and still get a commission.

Kutner said El Al will add a fourth non-stop flight from Toronto to Tel Aviv from June 21 to Sept. 5 for the busy summer travel season, reverting to a three-flight-a-week schedule afterward.

Meanwhile, Oded Grofman, Israel Government Tourism Office consul and director for Canada, said Israel may set a new record for tourism in 2010, with 3.2 million visitors expected, including 78,000 Canadian passport-holders.

Seventy-three thousand Canadians visited Israel in 2008, a record year, but that number declined in 2009 to 62,000, owing largely to the economic downturn. Expectations for another record in 2010 are based in part on data accumulated so far. Some 6,000 Canadians visited Israel in March alone, "the best March ever," Grofman said.

Most are part of organized trips that include a full package of air, hotels and tours and as many as 75 per cent are Christians, particularly religious pilgrims, he added.

El Al's new English language website is at http://www.elal.co.il/ELAL/English/States/General.

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Maimonides may have influenced Freud, author says

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

"Everything new must have its roots in what was before," wrote Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis.

But even psychoanalysis itself may have ancient roots, according to psychologist David Weiss, who addressed a group of professionals and laypeople at a May 3 Jewish Health Alliance event at Pine Villa.

Freud's approach closely parallels writings of the 12th-century physician and teacher Maimonides. While Maimonides wouldn't be familiar with some of the terms used by Freud and his followers – such as "unconscious," "intellect" or "psyche" – he probably knew the concepts well, calling them "imagination," "soul" or even "angel."

Young Maimonides

Weiss' recent book, *Maimonides' Cure of Souls: Medieval Precursor of Psychoanalysis*, co-written with Dan Merkur and the late David Bakan, explores Maimonides' belief that "the improvement of moral qualities is brought about by the healing of the soul and its activities."

Maimonides is widely appreciated as a codifier of Jewish law, but his psychological writings are often overlooked.

He believed "illnesses of the soul" took away a person's free choice, causing them to lose their grounding in the rational world. "He was way ahead of his time," Weiss said.

Today, what Maimonides thought of as loss of free choice is called "addiction" or "thought disorder," Weiss added.

Maimonides believed that imagination by itself – without a solid grounding in rationality – could lead to distortion, disturbance or even death.

And for Maimonides as well as for Freud, Weiss hinted, that disturbance was frequently sexual.

Sigmund Freud

"Diving down into secrets" is how Maimonides might have described the process of psychotherapy. The "talking cure," whether on a couch in Vienna or the Royal Court of Saladin in Egypt, can explore a person's innermost being with the goal of restoring control and the ability to make rational choices.

Weiss, a rabbi and Toronto business psychologist who holds degrees from York University, Yeshiva University and Columbia University, says many of Maimonides' beliefs closely foreshadow the Freudian model of psychoanalysis.

Many convergences are unique and specific enough to strongly suggest that Freud was exhuming Maimonides for a new age and audience.

Both Freud and Maimonides associated mental illness with involuntary inhibition, and saw the therapeutic role as helping individuals regain freedom. Both also saw recovering lost understanding as a key to therapy. And Maimonides' parsing of the biblical narrative of Jacob's dream, according to Weiss, radically presages Freud's own emphasis on dream analysis.

Maimonides' views on Jewish law differ from many early thinkers. Rather than taking away free will, said Weiss, he saw Jewish law as a good way to live, with little grounding in the afterlife.

"The primary benefit of doing good deeds is what it will do to you," and the drawback of sin is "what it will do to you as a human being," Weiss said.

To today's Jewish community, and to the world of psychology, Maimonides might emphasize that "Jewish law is an entry requirement," but that character development must exist above merely following Jewish law in order to truly fulfil the individual's soul, Weiss said.

Freud may have hidden his connection with any sort of Jewish teachings to lend credibility to psychoanalysis and prevent it from being regarded as a "Jewish science."

Yet he was at least passingly familiar with some ideas of Maimonides from his upbringing, since his father was a former Chassid. As well, Maimonides' writings were available in German, and influential meetings between Freud and the Chief Rabbi of Geneva, Alexandre Safran, along with scholars such as Franz Brentano, must have at least touched on Maimonides' therapeutic teachings, Weiss noted.

Maimonides' own path into a medical career may have begun in personal tragedy: the death at sea of his merchant younger brother. Out of his own deep depression, he arrived at his decision to study the medical sciences.

"I don't think we can ignore the connection with his brother's death," Weiss said.

Weiss, who will be speaking on Maimonides again at the all-night Tikkun Leil Shavuot at the Miles Nadal JCC on May 18, says the book, which includes writings by his own mentor, the late York University professor David Bakan, represents a promise "to [Bakan] and to the world" to cast new light on the Jewish origins of Freud's theories.

The Jewish Health Alliance (http://jewishhealthalliance.com) was founded about 10 years ago to promote "the idea that Jewish teachings have application in the healing arts," said founding member Annette Poizner. Non-Jewish colleagues are invited to participate and share in spreading Jewish wisdom throughout the healing professions.

Traditional teachings often offer a depth that's sometimes lacking in the modern age, as with Maimonides, who, said Weiss, "didn't separate the notion of a physician for the body and a physician for the psyche."

Each person has physical potential and emotional potential, and he believed that "the physician's task is treating them all," Weiss said.

While today we have separate doctors for mind and body, he added, Maimonides believed he couldn't treat one without the other. "He'd say he's a doctor to heal the soul."

Correction

The article "Holy Blossom cantor to be feted May 11" (*CJN*, May 6) stated incorrectly that Colm Wilkinson and Ofra Harnoy would be performing at the tribute event for Cantor Benjamin Maissner. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Toronto shul to feature award-winning composer

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Award-winning composer Marvin Hamlisch was in the audience when Cantor Alex Stein performed at a cantorial concert in San Diego in 2006.

Marvin Hamlisch, left, and Cantor Alex Stein

They spoke at a reception after the concert, and as Stein – now cantor at Toronto's Adath Israel Congregation – puts it, "we put a partnership together," involving a concert by Hamlisch and three cantors.

The following year, Stein, a native of Sydney, Australia, brought Hamlisch to Calgary for a Broadway-style "Three Cantors" performance with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra at the city's Beth Tzedec Congregation, where Stein was serving at the time.

Since then, they have taken the concert to Sydney and Vancouver. They will return to Vancouver's Orpheum Theatre June 23.

On May 27, Hamlisch will perform at Toronto's Adath Israel with Stein only. Hamlisch was here in 2008 to perform at Beth Tzedec Congregation with Cantor Simon Spiro, but told *The CJN* he isn't making synagogue appearances his new profession.

For the upcoming Toronto Show, *Broadway from the Bimah*, Stein said that "people can look forward to an evening of showtunes and Jewish Broadway music that they would never hear in a synagogue... it's an eclectic night."

Hamlisch, reached by phone in a New York rehearsal room where he was working on a Broadway show, said that when he first heard Stein, he enjoyed his voice and his energy.

As well, he said, he "kind of liked the idea of a concert where three cantors get together and do something that can be a lot of fun, that's not as clouded in mournful and religious overtones, which is sometimes what you think cantors do. There's something nice about having cantors who sing for the joy of it."

Hamlisch – who among other projects is working on a Broadway version of *Queen of the Stardust Ballroom*, which is now "deep in rehearsal" – believes music has the power to make people laugh and cry, and heighten emotions, and that musicians are "the best ambassadors" for a country. He cited as an example conductor Daniel Barenboim, who founded an Israeli-Arab orchestra.

Tickets for *Broadway from the Bimah* are available at 416-635-5340.

MEMORIES OF MAC: From left, Simcha and Rabbi Shawn Zevit, who travelled from Cleveland, Ohio, for Rabbi Zevit's high-school reunion, share a moment on the gym bleachers with Karen and Barry Reinblatt, fellow 1978 graduates of William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute. See *The CJN*'s new blog, Canadian Jewish Shmooze (canadianjewishnews.blogspot.com), for more on the recent event. ***[Frances Kraft photo]***

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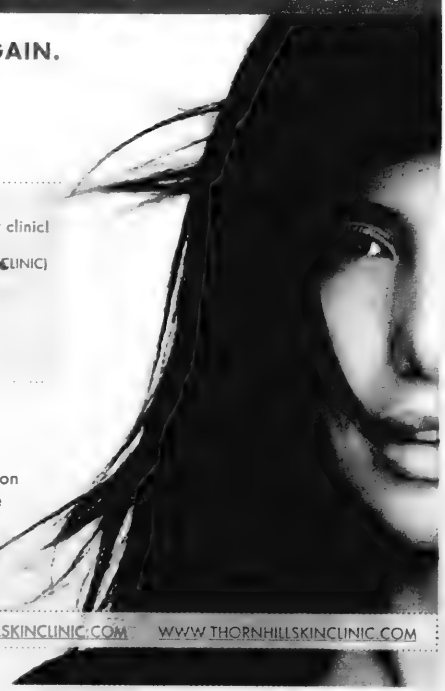

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Camp Moshava marks 75 years with Israel reunion

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

Old friends reunited in Israel last month to celebrate 75 years of Camp Moshava, a Zionist overnight camp with locations throughout North America.

More than 2,000 former campers, staff and their families gathered on Yom Ha'atzmaut at the Naot Kedumin Nature Reserve near the city of Modi'in.

"It was exciting to see people who I haven't seen in years," said Dov Gilor, a volunteer at the reunion and a former head of the Moshava camp in Gelatt, Penn., which closed in 1962.

Bnei Akiva, an Orthodox Zionist youth movement, runs the camps, including the Canadian one in Ennismore, Ont., which celebrated its 50th anniversary at the reunion.

Avraham Weiss, who went to the Canadian location in 1966, said that he ran into people he knew from outside of camp at the reunion, and thanks to the event, learned that they had a Moshava background.

The day consisted of lectures, nature walks, food and inflatable toys for the children.

Despite the many activities available, the real treat was re-connecting with old friends after many years, Gilor said.

"Most of the time, the people who actually were at Moshava were sitting around talking to their friends," he said.

Robbie Sassoon, one of the organizers of the event, works for Moshava on special alumni projects and has been a part of the organization, particularly with the Indian Orchard camp in Pennsylvania, for the past 25 years.

He said although he hadn't lost touch with too many old camp friends, it was especially nice to reinforce the idea of bringing people to Israel.

Weiss agreed, noting that his time at camp brought him into the world of Zionism, which played a major role in his decision to move to Israel.

Until recently, people didn't realize the significant educational influence of Jewish camps, he said, adding that the effect of camp has been shown to be sometimes greater than formal Jewish education.

"There's a lot of education happening," he said. "You go away with a very, very intense experience."

Ilana Weiss, left, who attended the reunion with her mother Toby Weiss, spent two summers on staff at Camp Moshava.

About 1,000 of the participants were alumni, primarily former campers and participants in Moshava's leadership courses. The rest were their children and grandchildren.

Jewish companies also made presentations, including one by Machon Tzomet that demonstrated new technology designed to make it easier to follow some of the rules of Shabbat, such as halachic wheelchairs.

Gilor said he was pleased with the number of participants, especially considering that the event was on Israel's Independence Day, when there are many other celebrations all over the country.

However, Sassoon said there couldn't have been a better day to hold the reunion, since the camp's promotion of a love for Israel is what brought so many of the alumni to Israel.

"It just really shows solidarity with Israel," Gilor said.

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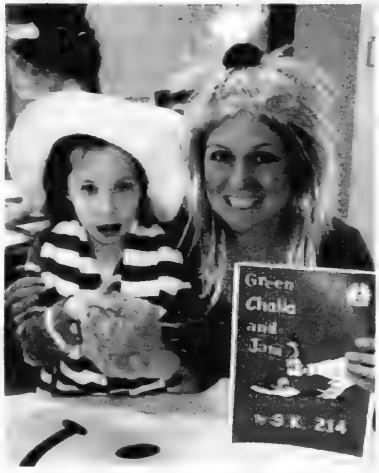
Becky Friedman, a student at the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto's Wallenberg campus, recently returned from Jerusalem, where she placed fourth in the National Bible Contest of the World Zionist Organization, out of thousands of students from Israel and the Diaspora. She was the top competitor among the Diaspora entrants. Alex Maged, a Tanenbaum-CHAT student, and Harry Cape, an independent entrant from Montreal, also took part in the competition in Israel, having qualified in last year's contest sponsored in Canada by the Jewish National Fund of Canada, the Bronfman Jewish Education Centre in Montreal, and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and its Centre for Jewish Education.

Class Acts



GREEN CHALLAH AND JAM: Associated Hebrew Schools' senior kindergarten students enjoyed making and baking their own green challah on Dr. Seuss Day at Associated's Thornhill campus. Teacher, Betty Sucharov, seen with student Ariella Hirsch, even made a new cover for the classic book *Green Eggs and Ham*. The students also enjoyed writing Dr. Seuss-inspired stories and rhymes.

CLEAN-UP TIME: Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School Senior kindergarten and Grade 7/8 students teamed up to clean up a local park. The entire school participated in Mayor David Miller's "20-minute makeover," spreading out to clean up six area parks for 20 minutes. The environment is the current tikkun olam focus at Paul Penna DJDS, which is in the process of becoming certified as an Ontario Eco School.

BIALIK ECO-WALK: As a fun way to further its environmental initiatives, Bialik Hebrew Day School recently held a school-wide Walk to School Day, during which students, parents, and staff arrived at school on foot, bikes, in-line skates and scooters.

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Happy 100th birthday Ruth Lederman. Elly & Paul, Larry, Randi & Jack, Mark, Tracy, Michael and Jessica & Adam wish her good health and long life.

HART/YELLEN

Larry & Barbara Hart
of Toronto and
Penny Yellen
of New Haven,
formerly of Winnipeg,
are thrilled to announce the engagement of their children,
BRADLEY & ELANA
A Spring, 2011 wedding in New York City is planned.
Sadly missed is the bride's father, Barney Yellen.

Mazel tov to Sid & Marg Honest who celebrated their 50th anniversary. Love from the whole family.

Josh Bayer, already 15 on April 23. You have grown into wonderful and caring young man. Happy birthday, Mom, Dad and Rebekah.

Mazel tov Jonathan & Jessica on your engagement! Parents, Abe, Frances Wang, Len, Wendy Preskow. Grandparents, Sam, Rose Potok, Ro, Dave Lubner. Great-granny, Jessie.

Mazel tov to Zachary Cornberg on his fourth birthday. From his parents Stacey & Joel, grandparents Sharon & Ivor Schneider and great-grandparents Annie & Sunny Schatz.

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Leila Speisman, is away on medical leave.

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Please note holiday deadlines for What's New. Deadline for May 27 issue is May 13. Deadline for June 3 issue is May 21. Phone 416-391-1836. Fax 416-391-0829. E-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 13

JEWS IN CHINA

Congregation Darchei Noam presents **Shi Lei** from the historic Jewish community of Kaifeng, China, speaking on the history of the Jewish community there. Doors open 7 p.m. Speaker 7:30. 864 Sheppard Ave. W. aspindel@rogers.com.

AT SHAAREI TEFILLAH

Spring lecture series continues with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. "The Mystical Meaning of the Hebrew Alphabet." New time: 7 p.m. Free. Register at 416-789-0020 or toronto@jewsforjudaism.org.

JEWISH IN JAMAICA

"Growing Up Jewish in Jamaica," Pride of Israel Rosh Chodesh program with **Willie Lindo** at 7 p.m. Musical interlude by **Jack Steinmetz**. Admission is donation for shul's kosher food bank. 59 Lissom Cres.

Saturday, May 15

MINYAN

Toronto Partnership Minyan (South) meets at Habonim, 5 Glen Park (Glencairn & Bathurst). Shiur 9 a.m. Services 9.30 a.m. Kiddush following. tpmsouth@gmail.com.

Sunday, May 16

ALUMABrunch

National Council of Jewish Women, Toronto section, holds their 2nd annual brunch in support of ALUMA – Israel Family Counselling Association Tel Aviv. Women and men welcome. 4700 Bathurst St. 11:00 a.m. $54 and up. RSVP 416-633-5100 or 905-737-0607.

LEMONADE 4 HEART

Amanda's 12th Lemonade Stand and Joshua's 2nd Cookie Counter for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. New location, 33 Post Rd. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Pony rides, Bulldog Fitness games, pizza and more. Meet **Dora** from 11-12:30. **Dan the Music Man** performs. Auction. 416-898-4556, www.lemonade4heart.org.

MIDDLE EAST LECTURE

Beth Isaiah Synagogue presents Richard C. Youngman Memorial Lecture, 7:30 p.m. **Rev. Majed El Shafie**, founder of One Free World International, on the struggle for human rights and religious freedom in the Middle East. Free, all welcome. 47 Surrey St., Guelph. www.guelphsynagogue.ca.

100 YEARS OF JEWISH MUSIC

Kingston Symphony and Cantabile Children's Choir perform at Grant Hall, Queen's University, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Beth Israel. 2:30 p.m. Tickets and info, 613-530-2050 or www.kingstongrand.ca/events/detail/238.

ARCHEOLOGY SECRETS

Educator **Rachel Urowitz** shares her experience as an archeologist in Israel. Artifacts from Second Temple period on display. Beth Sholom Synagogue. Brunch $10. RSVP 416-783-6103 or programs@bethsholom.net

CULTURAL CONCERT

Aviva Chernick performs at Pride of Israel with **Aaron Lightstone**, **Ernie Tollar** and **Adam Campbell**. Silent auction 7 p.m., concert 7:30. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

Monday, May 17

MENTAL HEALTH GROUP

Canadian Mental Health Group for families of those with mental illness. Mondays 6-8 p.m. 10 weeks. No charge. Vaughan Community Health Centre, 9401 Jane St. Suite 206. For info or to register: **Dani**, 1-866-208-5509, ext. 3221.

CHARITY BAKE SALE

Fouth annual pre-Shavuot bake sale, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. COR certified items. Proceeds to Small Wonders. Floral centrepieces and arrangements available for purchase. 34 Alexandra Wood. 416-623-2682, TorontoBakeSale@yahoo.com.

Continued on page 27

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Continued from page 26

BOOK CLUB

Beth Tzedec's Library Book and Film Club. This week is *Friendly Fire* by **A.B. Yehoshua**. Reviewer is **Dr. Harriet Morris**. 1 p.m. dessert, 1:30 p.m. lecture. Non-members: $15 at the door.

RENANIM CONCERT

Renanim Youth Singers present Israel – On Wings of Song – A Choral Concert, which benefits the choir's concert mission to Israel. Special guests, the Toronto Jewish Chorus. 7:30 p.m. 2365 Bayview Ave. Adults $36, students/seniors $25. **Barbara**, 416-398-0289.

Tuesday, May 18

FAMILY SHAVUOT PROGRAM

Pride of Israel, 7:30 p.m. Family Shavuot program led by **Rabbi Sean Gorman**. Read the Ten Commandments under the stars. 8:30 p.m. $5 per family. Includes dairy desserts. 416-226-0111, ext. 10 to register.

SHAVUOT PROGRAM

All are invited to celebrate Shavuot at Shaarei Tefillah. Rabbis **Moshe Stern**, **Avraham Bartfeld**, **Rafi Lipner**, **Michael Skobac** and **Tzvi Heber** lead a night of Torah learning. Beginning at midnight through 5 a.m., every hour a different lecture. Followed by Shacharit and Israeli-style breakfast. 416-787-1631 for information.

OTHER NEWS

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill is looking for people to assist in planting and gardening its new memorial garden. Must be available July 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Short meeting will be held prior to the day. **Joy Levy**, 905-764-0656 ext. 224, jlevy@bellnet.ca.

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

Beth Emeth Club Sameach is accepting new members for the coming year, June 1, 2010 to May 31, 2011. Join by May 31 for $15 per person (for BEBY members), $20 per person (non-Beth Emeth members). After June 1, $18 (BEBY members), $25 (non-members). 416-633-3838 to register.

SPRING CONCERT

Toronto Jewish Folk Choir presents its 84th spring concert at Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park Cres. Honouring **Emil Gartner**. With cellist **Esther Gartner** and chamber ensemble. May 30, 3 p.m. $25, students and seniors $20. Under 12 free. 416-789-5502 for info and tickets (until 5 p.m. May 27). tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

SUPPORT GROUP

Baycrest Holocaust resource program is opening a support group for child survivors of the Holocaust. **Shoshana**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or syaakobi@baycrest.org.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE

Join One Family Fund Canada for a ride through the countryside north of Toronto on June 6. Raising money for victims of terror in Israel. $36 to register, minimum $500 in sponsorship required. Prizes and giveaways. **Noah**, 416-644-4955, noah@onefamilyfund.ca.

BROADWAY MUSIC

Broadway from the Bimah, a concert of Broadway music and show tunes. **Marvin Hamlisch** and **Cantor Alex Stein** perform. May 27, 7:30 p.m. at Adath Israel Synagogue. Starting at $36. 416-635-5340, sheila@adathisrael.com.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215 or visit www.jfandcs.com. Note: registration required for all programs.

Surviving Divorce: Avoiding Financial Disaster: Explore the common financial mistakes made in divorce and learn how to avoid them. For those thinking of divorce, currently in the process of, or living with a finalized divorce. May 18, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green.

Effective Parenting: A four-session group to help parents learn what they can do to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. For parents of children ages 2-11. Starts May 25, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green.

One Family, Two Homes: A three-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. Kids participate in age-appropriate groups. May 27, June 4 and 11. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: A two-session marriage prep group for those who will be married in the next year. May 30 and June 6. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Beth Emeth Synagogue.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC: May 13, 1:30 p.m. "The Rise of the Early Toronto Jewish Community," with **Bill Gladstone**, journalist, writer and publisher. Refreshments. 416-924 6211, ext. 155.

The **Association of Jewish Seniors** general meeting, 9:45 a.m., May 13. Shaarei Shomayim. **David Zimmer**, MPP, Willowdale, discusses "What Your Government Is Up To." Members free, guests $2. **Tammy**, 416-635-2860 ext. 458. Please note that this is the correct date.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama, June 16, departs 10 a.m. Sunday dance, May 16: 6-8:30 p.m. this week only. Line dancing Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Social bridge Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881.

LZA Senior's Cultural Club: meets Tuesday mornings 10 a.m. Join discussion group at the Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

May 18, denture clinic. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Clinic room. Call **Nadya** for appointment, ext. 126.

May 18, lecture. "Arctic Saga," with travel photographer **Robert Shechter**. 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St., 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Explore modern spoken Hebrew using expressions from everyday life. Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 6-29. 7:30-9:30 p.m. $170, students and seniors $100.

Register for Ryerson/Chang courses at Prosserman: Foreign Affairs: A Journey Through the Best of Foreign-Language Cinema, Wednesdays, May 26-June 23; Reverence and Regard: The Many Faces of Women in Hollywood Movies, Wednesdays, June 30-July 28. Member $50, non-member $60; Mah-jong, beginner or intermediate, Wednesdays, June 9-July 28. $60 member, $70 non-member; NIA (fusion fitness), Fridays, June 4-July 23 (Tuesday drop-in classes cancelled). Member $37, non-member $42.

Naomi Greenberg heads Prosserman's new Mind, Body & Soul program. Provides opportunities for health and wellness from a holistic perspective. Ext. 4036, naomig@prossermanjcc.com.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays 8 a.m. and Thursdays 7:15 a.m. Full kosher breakfast follows. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

May 13, 7:30 p.m. Holy Blossom. Stagecraft Company of Holy Blossom Temple presents *Gideon*. Also May 15, 7:30 p.m. at MNjcc. $12 suggested donation at door. Ext. 606, theatre@mnjcc.org.

May 16, 4 and 7:30 p.m. Screening of *Two Lovers*. Al Green Theatre. $15 general admission, $10 ages 18-29 (7:30 screening). Rush seats 15 minutes before each screening. Ext. 606, film@mnjcc.org.

May 17, 7-9:30 p.m. Cooking with chef **Elise Burton**: Shavuot Dairy Extravaganza. MNjcc. Members $35 non-members $40. Ext. 0.

May 18, 9 p.m.-5:30 a.m. All-night learning for Shavuot. Come for an hour or stay the whole night and enjoy different classes: storytelling, Torah, cooking, music, etc. Special programs for kids and teens. Free, all welcome. Ext. 154.

MNjcc summer registration starting soon: May 18 members, May 26 non-members.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

WEIZMANN COMES TO NORTH YORK: Yossi Elran from the Young@Science program at Weizmann Institute of Science recently visited Summit Height Public School. He left students with mathematical concepts to consider. From left are Joan Pollock, program and events co-ordinator for Weizmann Science Canada; Elran, and James Pasternak, York Centre trustee of the Toronto District School Board.

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SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 30

OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

Steeles Memorial Chapel

Sugar, Helen	April 29/10	2 Neptune Dr
Rogow, Ida	April 30/10	784 Centre St
Nagirner, Boris	April 30/10	
Tokayer, Mark	April 30/10	176 Rumblewood
Satov, Louis	May 1/10	3560 Bathurst St
Perlman, Morris	May 1/10	130 Neptune Dr
Steinberg, Luba	May 1/10	7490 Bathurst St
Valinsky, Morris	May 1/10	Private
Freedman, Harry Sam	May 2/10	231 Combe Ave
Scher, Brucha	May 2/10	3560 Bathurst St
Moses, Robert	May 3/10	Quebec
Szydlow, Wolf	May 5/10	561 Glengrove Ave
Feder, Ferma (Freda)	May 4/10	
Levy-Bencheton, Esther	May 5/10	2 Neptune Dr
Chaiton, Charles	May 6/10	40 Bayfield Dr
Epstein, Zena	May 5/10	333 Clark Ave. W
Lyubomirskiy, Yevsey	May 4/10	Private

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Leslie Levy	Apr 26/10	92 Timna Cres
David Lash	Apr 27/10	115 Clifton Ave
Mollie Waterman	Apr 27/10	38 Orchard View Bl
Jean Lea	Apr 29/10	3560 Bathurst St
Philip Goldberg	Apr 29/10	45 Exbury Rd
Mildred Wiesman	Apr 28/10	500 Avenue Rd
Esther Haberman	Apr 26/10	3560 Bathurst St
Lea Wainstein	May 1/10	400 Walmer Rd
Rhoda Schleifer	Apr 30/10	123 Anthony Rd
Gloria Freireich	May 1/10	370 Red Maple St
Sam Gardner	Apr 30/10	4 Forest Laneway
Bunny Borovoy	May 1/10	243 Flamingo Rd
Anna Flaneman	May 1/10	132 Sultana Ave

The unveiling of a monument to honour the memory of our beloved

SAM (SZLAMEK) ORLAN ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 16th, 10:00 am

Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

Apter Friendly Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Sam was a kind & loving soul who is greatly missed.

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of the late

SELMA LEIBOVITZ ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 16th at 11:30 a.m.

Pardes Shalom Cemetery

Dufferin St. N of Major Mackenzie

Shaar Shalom Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late

LUBA GITLE RYWIEC-RIVIETZ ז"ל

will take place

Friday, May 21st at 1:00 p.m.

Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

#34 - Pulnsker Landsmanshaft Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late

EVA BERMACK ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

Bathurst S. of Steeles

Foresters (Court Topaz) Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late

THELMA (TEME) MYERS ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

Roselawn Cemetery

Shaare Tefilah Apter Section

Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of

HELEN ROSS ז"ל

will take place

Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.

Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park

Blue Star Lodge Section

Relatives and friends are welcome to attend

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Coast to Coast

Anti-Semitic crime statistics refuted

By DAVID LAZARUS
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — A May 5 article in the prestigious Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* depicting Montreal's Orthodox community as living in fear in the wake of a supposedly rising number of anti-Semitic incidents and increased gang activity in the Cote des Neiges and Outremont districts bears little resemblance to the reality on the ground, Jewish community officials say.

Late last week, Quebec Jewish Congress president Adam Atlas and Rabbi Reuben Poupko, co-chair of the Jewish community's security co-ordinating committee, strongly refuted suggestions made in the article that Jews are being singled out for targeting, that members of the community "are afraid to leave their homes," or that the Chabad community has recently seen a spike in violent incidents against it.

The *Ha'aretz* article appeared to be based on a front-page story in the April 28 issue of the *Jewish Tribune*, B'nai Brith Canada's Toronto-based weekly house organ newspaper.

The *Tribune* headline read:"Crime wave targeting Jews in Montreal strikes fear in community."

Rabbi Poupko said *Ha'aretz* should have used better sources for its story.

"I would have preferred if *Ha'aretz* had consulted with organizations that are actually based in Quebec, that have credibility in Quebec and know the scene well," Rabbi Poupko said. He added that B'nai Brith has "limited knowledge" of Montreal and "limited credibility" there.

Even Rabbi Mendel Marasow, the executive director of Chabad's Beth Rivkah Academy, who was quoted in the *Tribune* story as saying that "Jews make good targets," told *The CJN* last Friday that the *Tribune* article was "a non-story."

Rabbi Poupko termed the *Ha'aretz* story "a complete and total fabrication of reality," the idea that Jews in the areas were afraid to leave their homes.

"All you need to do is talk to members of the Chabad community," he said. "I see them all the time, and they seem perfectly happy and perfectly comfortable walking down the streets. I would have preferred if *Ha'aretz* had actually spoken to people actually engaged in security, and with the police and with all the communities."

Atlas, in an interview from Israel last Thursday, indicated he might seek a meeting with *Ha'aretz* journalists "to have a conversation with them" about the May 5 article.

Atlas noted that while there was a spike in vandalism and anti-Semitic incidents in Outremont during Quebec's "reasonable accommodation" hearings close to three years ago, and there have been "some disturbing events," such as last March's vandalism at the Visnitz synagogue in Outremont, "in relative terms, the atmosphere is not one of alarm."

Sensational headlines in the *Tribune* and *Ha'aretz* notwithstanding, a closer look at those quoted in the *Tribune* story seems to belie the headlines: Simonetta Barth of the area's police station 26 says that a robbery involving a Jewish victim didn't appear to be anti-Semitic, and relations between the police and Jewish community are depicted as excellent.

According to one highly placed source who would speak only on background, the so-called "crime wave" depicted in the *Tribune* article amounted to "one kid with spray paint who daubed several places.

"As far as we are aware, there have been no acts of violence on anyone," the source said. "There was one guy who threw rocks through four institutions and broke some glass. If this is a crime wave, it's the smallest crime wave in the history of mankind."

The source also suggested that the article "illustrates the danger of having an advocacy body needing to raise money."

Rabbi Poupko said what angered him was "that by [the story] getting into *Ha'aretz*, it has begun to have an impact on how people perceive the Montreal community."

He said even if there had been a rise in street or gang crime in the areas where Orthodox Jews live, "what does that have to do with rocks thrown through windows and graffiti? They're lumping things together that don't belong."

Al Jazeera launches English language service

Compiled by CJN Staff

Tony Burman, managing director of the Al Jazeera English (AJE) satellite news channel, may have a lot to talk about with the Jewish community come November.

The channel – owned by the government of Qatar and based in Doha – became available in Canada last week on Rogers and Videotron cable, as well as Bell TV.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission granted Al Jazeera English the right to be distributed in Canada in November 2009.

Because members of the Jewish community were concerned about whether the network would portray news from the Middle East in a balanced manner, staff from Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada met with Burman last November to discuss AJE and its objectivity as related to the subjects of anti-Semitism, Israel and Judaism.

The Jewish groups had concerns based on material on Al Jazeera's Arabic service, which has been criticized for airing anti-Semitic speakers and sources.

Congress CEO Bernie Farber said his organization, along with B'nai Brith Canada and others from the Jewish community, will meet with Burman and other AJE staff in November – this, after an agreement was reached to establish a review committee on AJE with members of all three organizations – to address any concerns Jewish groups might have after the network has been available in Canada for at least half a year.

"We received a note [on May 5] from Burman indicating that things are getting established… and he looked forward to meeting with us in six months for a review on how we feel about AJE in Canada," Farber said. "So far, he seems to be a man of his word. But we will keep a close eye on it."

In the past, Burman, a former senior executive at CBC News, has called any public perception of a relationship between Al Jazeera and Al Qaeda a "myth" and "nonsense." Al Jazeera English is also available in Israel.

Last May, appearing on TVO's public affairs program *The Agenda*, Burman said Canadians watching his network would discover a broadcaster that was "less western and less parochial" than existing North American broadcasters.

As of May 4, AJE became available to subscribers of Bell TV on channel 516, Rogers in Ontario on channel 176, and Videotron Digital TV on channel 173 in Quebec. The network plans to open a Toronto bureau next month.

Jewish legal group rejects anti-niqab law

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — The association of Jewish jurists has come out strongly against Quebec's proposed legislation that would ban face coverings in provincial public institutions, saying it threatens religious freedom in general.

Bill 94, which is ostensibly aimed at Muslim niqab face coverings for women, "goes against the grain of every position taken by the Canadian Jewish community nationally, and in Quebec, in the past, in that it targets – in fact, if not in name – a specific religious group, namely the Muslim community, with respect to an activity which represents no danger to the rest of society," the Lord Reading Law Society states in its submission to the National Assembly committee that begins public hearings on the bill May 18.

"It is clear to [the society] that this legislation is a reaction by a government in a defensive posture against the outcry of the media," it states, calling the bill "a step backwards to the days before the Quiet Revolution," the modernization that transformed Quebec society in the 1960s.

The proposed law, entitled an Act to Establish Guidelines Governing Accommodation Requests Within the Administration and Certain Institutions, has implications that go well beyond the issue of the niqab, the veil worn by a very small number of Muslim women in the province, according to the society.

It charges that the bill creates a "hierarchy of rights," which would make the equality of men and women more important than religious and other freedoms.

Article 4 states that an accommodation must comply with Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, "in particular as concerns the right to gender equality and the principle of religious neutrality of the state whereby the state shows neither favour nor disfavour towards any particular religion or belief."

"The result of this article is that 'accommodations' will be interpreted in the light of an over-arching principle of equality of men and women," the society states, and the courts will be "hamstrung in their ability to make a reasoned judgment" in individual cases.

"For example, if a woman wishes, for religious reasons, to wear a head covering such as a sheitel (wig) or a hijab [scarf covering the hair and neck], could this now be prohibited because Jewish men do not wear such wigs and Muslim men do not wear hijabs?

"Does this mean that even in the absence of any need for an 'accommodation' by others, that the free exercise of religious rights would not be permitted?"

The society says that even if Muslim women are wearing the niqab or other coverings because of pressure from their communities or husbands, it doesn't mean laws should be passed against it.

"Is it the business of the state to legislate the way in which persons exercise their religious rights, where no harm is caused to the state?" the society asks.

The bill is so sweeping that the society says "many other important religious practices, rituals and customs which would normally not be considered to be unacceptable, may be unintentionally caught by this legislation."

The society notes that the Supreme Court of Canada has on many occasions ruled that rights must be examined on a case-by-case basis and in light of all of the rights protected under the Canadian charter.

The bill "legislates conformity" that is at odds with the constitution's affirmation of Canada's multiculturalism, the society argues.

The Lord Reading Society, founded in 1948, is an association of principally Jewish lawyers, judges, notaries and professors. No sitting judge was party to the brief.

The community's two main lobby groups have been silent so far on Bill 94, which was introduced in March, torn between their traditional defence of a liberal understanding of religious practice and the fact that polls show the bill has the overwhelming support of Quebecers, and possibly concerns about Islamic fundamentalism.

After much deliberation, Quebec Jewish Congress (QJC) decided against making representations to the parliamentary committee.

B'nai Brith Canada Quebec region chair Moise Moghrabi said his organization has been grappling with the bill and has not yet come up with a definitive position.

He predicts that, if passed, the bill will be contested all the way to the Supreme Court.

SHOVE

yourself, your friends, your spouse/significant other or whomever in the you-know-where and get over to the Miles Nadal JCC for a mystical night of learning. For those of you who don't know, Shavuot (Shove-ooh-oh) is the celebration of the Jews receiving the Ten Commandments. You know why we got them? God offered them to a dishonest person, who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not steal, they turned God down. God then offered them to a philanderer who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not cheat, they turned God down too. God then offered them to a workaholic who asked what was involved, and when they found out they could not work on the Sabbath, they turned God down as well. Wanna know what happened next?

-OOH

ooh, ahh, I knew you'd be curious. So here's what happened. Finally, God offered the Ten Commandments to a Jew, who asked how much they'd cost. When God said "nothing" the Jew said, "They cost nothing? Great, I'll take Ten." Aha, so now you know the whole story. Here's a slightly more traditional explanation. Exactly seven weeks after we Jews left Egypt we arrived at Mt. Sinai (you know, on University below College) and were given the Torah, we then became a nation committed to serving God. Shavuot is a Hebrew derivative of "weeks" since we're counting them. We traditionally eat good cheesecake.

-OT

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Hebrew University comes to Toronto

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Creating legal provisions that allow the torture of terror suspects in Israel is a "slippery slope," said Yuval Shany, the Hersch Lauterpacht chair in international law at the law faculty of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Shany was one of five Hebrew University professors to speak at the Adath Israel Congregation last week for the Best of Hebrew U, an event organized by the Toronto chapter of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) as a way to connect Torontonians to the academic work being done at the university.

Yuval Shany, a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, spoke at the Best of Hebrew U event in Toronto.

Shany, the event's keynote speaker, discussed the complexities of fighting a war on terror while maintaining human rights in a democratic society.

"We need human rights in part because we don't trust the majority to adequately protect the rights of the minority," he said. "Perhaps nowhere is the challenge to human rights more apparent than in the war on terror."

Israel "provides the perfect storm" in terms of the balance between terrorism and human rights, Shany said.

"Israel doesn't have a constitution. We do not have a charter [of human rights and freedoms]," he said. "Israel, on the one hand, has relatively weak instruments to protect human rights. On the other hand, it's facing vicious [terrorism]."

Dealing with terrorists in Israel and abroad is a unique challenge, Shany said, explaining that applying the basics of criminal law becomes complicated "when you have people who are willing to blow themselves up. [Courts] find themselves in uncharted [waters]. They have to invent new measures," he said.

This occurred in the late 1980s when Israel adopted a measure that allowed soldiers to apply "physical pressure" on terror suspects in exceptional cases. The rule was struck down in 1999 by the Supreme Court.

"The court was getting complaints… that moderate physical pressure wasn't that moderate," Shany said. "[The court] came to the conclusion that when you allow an exception, the exception becomes the norm."

He added that the court addressed the issue "in a smart way" by using the general defence of necessity under criminal law as a loophole. This means that, while torture is unlawful, those tried for the use of torture can use the defence of necessity.

"Under the new rule… the interrogator has to put their career and liberty on the line… The problem is this does not work," he said. "Not in a single case was an interrogator prosecuted. In the long run, the court was right but the policy was not carried through."

For event co-chair Paula Dodick, the Best of Hebrew U is a way for Torontonians to explore diverse topics through a different perspective.

"The range of topics… appeals to a variety of age groups and members of the community," Dodick said. "It's bringing what the university does [and] its best researchers to Canada."

Miriam Pilc-Levine, the national director of communications and outreach for the CFHU, agrees.

"It's our way of bringing the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to Canada. People don't always have an opportunity to visit Israel," she said, adding that the event used to be annual or semi-annual, but hasn't been run for around three years.

"We wanted to regroup," she said.

Other professors at the event included Ehud Cohen, who discussed the biology of aging, Howard Deitcher, who lectured on children and theological issues, Maren Niehoff, who talked about the Jewish Diaspora 2,000 years ago, and Aner Preminger, who analyzed two Israeli films.

For Preminger, a filmmaker and adjunct professor in the department of communications at Hebrew U, events like the Best of Hebrew U build important international relationships.

"I think… the relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora are important for both. We in Israel need the support of Jews all over the world, and Jews all over the world need us. But it has to be a live relationship," he said. "Events [like this] are feeding these relationships."

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Hillel awards 'all about the students,' winner says

By MICHAEL ISENBERG
Special to the CJN

The best part of the Hillel awards for Danielle Miller wasn't winning.

It was watching her bubbie.

"It was a great thing for my bubbie. It meant a lot to her. As a Holocaust survivor, the most important thing to her is her family, to see me doing something for the Jewish community," said Miller, who will be going into her fifth year at the University of Toronto for drama and English.

"To her, this is what life's about. "

Miller, along with Mayer Elharar, won the student engagement award at Hillel of Greater Toronto's 14th annual awards night, held on May 5 at the Wolfond Centre. The award paid tribute to Hillel members who help students get involved with Jewish life.

For Miller, this meant planning events that interest a wide-range of students, such as a night of improv at Second City.

"A lot of events I didn't plan, but just went to and was there to facilitate meetings. I'm the kind of person that, if there's somebody standing alone, I'll go talk to them," she said.

Zac Kaye, Hillel of Greater Toronto's executive director, sees the awards as a reflection of the Jewish community.

"Our immersive programming, our unique approach to connecting Jewish students of all backgrounds is what we're about," he said at the event, adding that Hillel is inclusive and works hard to cater to all Jewish denominations.

Alan Berdowski, Hillel of Greater Toronto's president, agreed.

"The goal of Hillel is to inspire every Jewish student," Berdowski said.

In describing Hillel's aim, Berdowski spoke specifically to the students in the audience.

"[The Jewish people] may take your contributions [to the community] for granted. You don't. I don't," he said.

Berdowski further emphasized Hillel's role for the Jewish people, stressing the importance of students becoming active leaders or taking on greater projects if already involved.

"We are about stimulating and developing an affiliation for students in the greater Jewish community and in Israel. We must stimulate a free flow of Jewish ideas."

Kaye, meanwhile, provided concrete examples of the work Hillel's done this past year, such as Harvey's Table, an initiative started in November 2009 and funded by Allen and Judy Berg. At Harvey's Table in the Wolfond Centre, students receive kosher meals for $2. Kaye also mentioned Hillel's international programs in Argentina, India and Israel, as well as its efforts to bridge tensions between groups on campus through multi-faith events.

Mayer Elharar won the student engagement award at Hillel's awards night. Beside him is Alona Geysman, a staff member at York University Hillel.

"It's very important to build the relationships. Be friendly. Inform [students]. Inform them of what Hillel's about, about the Jewish community, about Israel," Kaye said.

Other awards given out last week included the newly established outstanding alumnus award, given to Rabbi Adam Cutler from Beth Tzedec Congregation; the outstanding leadership award, given to Margot Bychutsky and Adam Solomon; the Tzedek and social justice award, given to Amy Kaldor; and the York University campus award, given to Brandon Crandall, Paul Transky and Ryan Leszner, the outgoing vice-president (internal) for York University's Hillel.

"[Hillel] is all about the students and what we do," said Leszner, who won the award for the second year in a row.

With files from Cara Stern and Rita Poliakov

Toronto cantor perfects his own cheesecake recipe

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

Cantor Marshall Loomer, who has served Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Congregation for the past nine years, is better known in Toronto's Jewish community for his voice than his baking skills. But, in 1985, about seven years before he began to study nusach and liturgical interpretation, Loomer established a small business called Cheesecake by Marshall, and perfected his own cheesecake recipe.

Working as a salesman at the time, Loomer made a cheesecake for a friend who was catering a Christmas party, and his business took off. "I received 200 orders for cheesecake," he recalls.

Now he only bakes the cakes for Shavuot, the holiday commemorating the giving of the Torah, when it is traditional to eat dairy products. "The Torah gives us spiritual nourishment, and milk gives us nourishment [too]," Loomer explained.

Although he cooks a wide range of foods from standing rib roast to French green beans with honey-garlic almonds, Loomer doesn't bake anything other than cheesecake.

He started making them because he loved to eat them, he admits. "I make the heaviest cheesecake. It's very rich, very delicious."

Loomer prefers "100 per cent solid cream cheese" over lighter alternatives like ricotta or cottage cheese, and favours an "old-fashioned Graham cracker crust" for its flavour.

Although the cantor is conscientious about fitness – he has worked out five times a week for the past three years, and lost 40 pounds – he says he doesn't believe in "not enjoying food."

Loomer said that, as a rule, he watches his fat intake, but when it comes to dessert, he believes in either foregoing it, or indulging in moderation.

A stickler for quality ingredients, Loomer uses pure vanilla extract, not artificial, and sticks with butter, not margarine.

As well, he recommends a German steel or aluminum springform pan. "The cheap ones will rust," he said. "I learned the hard way. And buy one with a Teflon coating."

Loomer uses a basic recipe, with variations to create different types of cheesecake, like mandarin orange-glazed, or chocolate.

Cantor Marshall Loomer enjoys a cup of coffee at shul after services on a weekday morning.
[*Frances Krafi photo*]

But his personal favourite is a plain, sweet cheesecake with a sour cherry topping, a combination he said is "to die for."

CHEESECAKE BY MARSHALL

Crust:
graham cracker crumbs
1/4 c. icing sugar
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 c. melted butter

Using a spring form pan combine graham crumbs, 1/4 cup of icing sugar, 2 tsp. of cinnamon, and 1/4 cup of melted butter.

Using a fork gently combine ingredients. Transfer crumbs into 9-inch spring form pan and pat into the bottom of the pan evenly. Do not press too hard or crust will become solid due to the butter. Now place pan into the freezer while preparing the batter.

Batter:
750 grams Bakers or Philadelphia solid cream cheese
1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. pure vanilla extract
1/4 cup flour
3 eggs

Combine ingredients in a Mixmaster bowl and beat until creamy, scraping sides with a spatula until there are no lumps. Pour mixture into the spring form pan over the crust.

Preheat oven to 325 and place pan in oven for 60 minutes. Leave in oven after baked with door open, allowing cake to cool slowly.

Cracking on top is a natural characteristic of a well-baked cheesecake.

Sour Cherry Topping

2 tbsp. cornstarch
1/4 cup cold water
1 jar sour cherries
1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup corn syrup

Add cornstarch to cold water, and mix until there are no lumps. Add this mixture to the sour cherries, granulated sugar and corn syrup over medium heat in a saucepan until thickened. Allow this mixture to cool and top cheesecake with the cherry mixture.

Allow cake to cool overnight, or 12 hours refrigerated, and enjoy.

Dinner unlocks wildest dreams

By RANDY FINGRUT
Special to The CJN

Eating cheese before bedtime could help you choose the dreams you want to have, says a recent study by the British Cheese Board. Volunteers who took part in the British Cheese Board's "Cheese & Dreams" study ate cheese before they went to sleep, and none reported having nightmares or a poor night's sleep. The board's nutrition scientists explain that tryptophan, an amino acid found in cheese, was shown to reduce stress and induce sleep. Additionally, the research established that different varieties of cheese appeared to cause different kinds of dreams. With thousands of varieties of cheese on the market, and with even more ways to serve them, it seems there is a great deal for us to discover.

Get cozy with an appetizer dip that is light as a cloud. Lemon Feta Dip is a Greek style starter that is creamy and loaded with cheese. Serve it along with fresh crudités, and for that extra touch, include some warm pita bread. Delightfully rich and satisfying, Mediterranean Vegetable and Goat Cheese Pie is an all-in-one main course. The pie is very tasty served warm or at room temperature, and is just the right choice for an out of the ordinary dinner.

LEMON FETA DIP

4 oz. feta cheese, broken into pieces
1/2 cup dry pressed cottage cheese, low fat
1/3 cup plain yogurt, low fat
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
1 garlic clove
1 tbsp. honey
1 tsp. dry oregano
1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper

In food processor, or blender, process all ingredients until smooth.

Crudités

Include your choice of: celery sticks, carrot sticks, red, yellow and/or green pepper slices, broccoli flowerettes, cauliflower flowerettes, asparagus spears, zucchini sticks.

MEDITERANIAN VEGETABLE AND GOAT CHEESE PIE

Pie Shell
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for rolling
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1/4 tsp. salt
1 large egg yolk mixed with 2-5 tbsp. ice water plus extra ice water if needed.
2 tbsp. chives, finely chopped

In food processor, combine flour, butter and salt, pulse until butter is broken down. Add egg mixture and pulse until mixture resembles course crumbs, add more water if necessary. Add chives in with one or two pulses.

Remove dough from processor and place onto a piece of parchment or waxed paper. Shape dough into a disc and wrap. Chill for 30 minutes.

On floured surface, roll dough into a 14-in. circle. Transfer to the bottom of either an 11-in. flan pan with a removable bottom or a 10 in. spring form pan. Press dough up the sides of the pan. (For spring pan: Crimp dough, using thumb and forefinger or a fork, to form a scalloped edge.) Remove excess dough. Using a fork pierce holes throughout the pie shell. In a 400-degree oven, bake pie shell for 20 minutes or until crust is golden brown, piercing again with fork if dough bubbles up. Remove from oven and cool 5 minutes.

Filling
3 large eggs
1 cup plain low fat yogurt
1/2 tsp. salt
4 oz. Mozzerella cheese, grated
10 1/2 oz. goat cheese
1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 small eggplant, peeled and sliced into thin slices
1/2 small zucchini, peeled and sliced into thin slices
1 small red pepper, thinly sliced
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
small bunch of fresh chives, washed and finely chopped
1/4 cup sliced black olives

In bowl, combine eggs, yogurt, 1/4 tsp. salt and half of the Mozzarella cheese. Slice goat cheese and spread over bottom of pie shell. Pour egg mixture over goat cheese and sprinkle remaining Mozzarella cheese on top.

Bake at 400 20 – 30 minutes or until browned. Meanwhile, heat oil in frying pan, when hot, add enough thinly cut vegetables slices to fit comfortably in a single layer. Sauté vegetables and some of the garlic about 4 to 5 minutes, until golden and tender, turn several times.

Drain on paper towels. Repeat with remaining garlic and vegetables, adding more oil if needed. Toss with salt and pepper. Remove pie from pie pan or spring form onto a platter. Arrange vegetables on top of tart. Garnish with chives and black olives. Serve immediately or at room temperature.

Health & Lifestyles

Israel, Canada unite in fight against prostate cancer

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

OTTAWA — Prostate Cancer Canada (PCC) and the Jerusalem-based Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada (IMRIC) signed a partnership agreement last week, joining forces to battle prostate cancer, the most common cancer affecting Canadian men. They plan to work together in fundraising, education and research.

IMRIC, which is part of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is involved in international research collaborations on medical problems ranging from diabetes to HIV/AIDS.

Almost 400 people – among them members of Parliament, senators and six cabinet ministers – attended the May 5 reception hosted by Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University (CFHU) and the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group in association with the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee in celebration of Canadian-Israeli partnerships. CFHU has raised $20 million of a total $50-million commitment for IMRIC and its collaborative research.

"Canadian researchers have tremendous expertise and are doing groundbreaking work in prostate cancer research," Steve Jones, president and CEO of PCC, said in a news release. "We're excited to develop this relationship with IMRIC that will allow us to work together at home and internationally, so that we can improve diagnosis, treatment, and eventually find a cure for men, wherever they live."

One in six Canadian men is diagnosed with prostate cancer, according to the release from CFHU.

CFHU national director Rami Kleinmann told *The CJN*, "We felt our duty should be not only as fund provider, but as a catalyst for advancing the scientific relationship between Canada and Israel."

IMRIC has almost half a dozen major partnerships with Canadian researchers, he said. Among them is a partnership with the University of British Columbia and the Rick Hansen Foundation in the area of spinal cord injuries, and a cancer-related epigenetics project with McGill University.

From left, Dr. Howard Cedar, chair of the Institute for Medical Research Israel-Canada's (IMRIC) department of development biology and cancer research, Nathan Lindenberg, national president of Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University, and Bob Shiell, vice-president of Prostate Cancer Canada (PCC), sign a memorandum of understanding between PCC and IMRIC.

Initiatives planned in conjunction with the new partnership include a countrywide speaker series to raise awareness about prostate cancer, Kleinmann said.

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The Canadian Food Inspection Agency Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising reads as follows:

"In the labelling, packaging and advertising of a food, the Food and Drug Regulations prohibits the use of the word kosher or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or that is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet the requirements of the Kashruth applicable to it.

The terms "kosher style" and "kind of kosher" are not allowed, unless they meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish-style food" or "Jewish cuisine" are not objected to, although the foods may not necessarily meet the requirements of the Kashruth.

Rationale: "Kosher style" is considered to create the impression that the food is kosher, and therefore the food must meet the requirements of the Kashruth. "Jewish style" food may not necessarily create this impression."

The CJN makes no representation as to the kashruth of food products in advertisements.

DONOR AWARENESS: About 450 people attended an April 29 event at 770 Chabad Gate in Thornhill that raised awareness about kidney disease and the need for transplants. By the end of the evening, organized by Chabad institutions in the GTA, 17 people had signed up to become kidney donors with Renewal Toronto, an organization that helps find kidney donors for those in need. So far, the organization has seven people on its recipient list and about 30 potential donors. The event included a speech by Rabbi Ephraim Simon of New Jersey, inset, who donated a kidney about one year ago.

BOWLING CHAMPS: The Toronto chapter of Save a Child's Heart raised $75,000 this year through its second annual Bowl Your Heart Out event. About 150 participants came out to the tournament, held at Playtime Bowl. All funds raised go to Save Child's Heart, a humanitarian organization that helps bring children from developing countries to Israel for free heart surgery. Pictured, from left, is the winning team of Adam Minster, Paul Teitelman, Josh Birman, Rob Tkatch, Michael Herman and Jason Minster.

Becel Ride for Heart set for June 6

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's 23rd annual Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart takes place on on Sunday, June 6.

Cyclists and in-line skaters – more than 13,000 of them – will gather that Sunday morning in downtown Toronto, ready for the ride that saves lives.

It's a once-a-year event, a unique morning when there will be no traffic on the Gardiner Expressway and the Don Valley Parkway. As they move along the Gardiner and the DVP, the participants will not only be having fun but they'll also be riding or skating with a common goal – to raise critical funds for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and end heart disease and stroke in Canada.

Your fundraising and participation in the Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart can mean the difference between life and death for millions of Canadians. The Heart and Stroke Foundation will use the funds to support breakthrough medical advancements, social change and education that will prevent and reduce death and disability from heart disease and stroke.

The Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart is one of Canada's largest cycling fundraisers. In 2009, participants raised more than $3 million. This year, the goal is $3.25 million.

If you join the ride on your bicycle, you can take your choice of several routes. Go 25 or 50 kilometres – it all counts.

If you feeling really ambitious, you can challenge yourself with the 75-kilometre route. Just raise a minimum of $80 in pledges in addition to your registration fee. The 75-kilometre start time is 6:45 a.m. And you can take advantage of an early bird start at 7:15 a.m. for the 25-and-50-kilometre routes if you fundraise a minimum of $80.

If you're an in-line skater, you can complete an eight-16- or 24-kilometre route on the Gardiner, west of Exhibition Place.

For your safety, helmets are mandatory. Knee pads and wrist guards are recommended for in-line skaters.

The registration fee covers the cost of hosting this event. The registration fee includes everything you need for a great ride: traffic-free access to the DVP and the Gardiner; rest stations with food and beverages; a delicious heart-healthy lunch; route marshals for your safety; mechanical support for your bike and an exciting post-ride celebration

When you register early, it will give you plenty of time for fundraising. The easiest way to register, and to collect your pledges, is online. When you register at www.rideforheart.ca, you can set up your own fundraising page to manage your account and reach your goal. You can personalize your page with a photo or story. Then all you have to do is send e-mails to your friends, family and colleagues. They can go to your fundraising page and sponsor you with secure online donations. And here's a fundraising tip – ask your employer to match the money you raise.

All your online sponsors will get an automatic electronic tax receipt. You can register online until June 1, 2010, at midnight.

You can also register by phone, 416-486-RIDE (7433); fax, 416-932-1620; or mail. Send the completed form before May 19, 2010, to: The Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart, P.O. Box 1227, Station K, 2384 Yonge St., Toronto, Ont. M4P 3E4.

Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart has some enthusiastic spokespeople.

A group of researchers come together from across southern Ontario as part of a team called Researchers with Heart. Marco DiBuono, the director of research for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, represents this group. Their goal is to raise $50,000.

The Survivors, heart disease and stroke survivors, will be riding on event day.

The VIP Fundraisers are local leaders and champions of the Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart who through their significant fundraising efforts and outstanding support spread the word about the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Among the fundraisers is Amanda Belzowski, who is almost 13 years old now. She has been selling lemonade each spring all her life to raise funds for the annual Becel Heart&Stroke Ride for Heart. She returns with her Lemonade Stand this year. It will be held on Sunday, May 16, at a new location: 33 Post Rd. in Toronto. Her four-year-old brother, Joshua, will be there as well with his Cookie Counter, to support this cause.

Yoga in Motion raises $200,000

Compiled by CJN Staff

The second annual Yoga in Motion at the Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex raised more than $200,000 for breast cancer research.

More than 400 women and men stretched, danced and sweated on April 25 to raise funds for breast cancer research at the Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute of Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

The day opened with Amber Payie from CHUM 104.5, the morning MC, welcoming guests, including Dr. Maria Shapiro, a Yoga in Motion ambassador and breast cancer survivor who shared her personal story. It inspired the crowd, and it showed how donor support has enabled breast cancer research to advance since Shapiro's diagnosis in 2004.

Then the fitness began! Some of the top fitness instructors in the Greater Toronto Area led four one-hour yoga sessions and four Zumba sessions.

ש'שאר ג'נ'נע

גידי קורן וחברים

סרטים שכדאי

שני סרטים זרים שהשאירו אותי המום ואני ממליץ עליהם בכל לב. ולמרבית שנצערו במדינות שונות ורחוקות זו מזו, שניהם עוסקים בפתרון תעלומות משפ ישנות שארעו לפני עשרות שנים.

הסרט הארגנטינאי *The Secret in Their Eyes* עורר בי סקרנות רבה, כי הוא זכה באוסקר הסרט הזר למרות שעדיין לא עלה אז למסכים בצפון אמריקה, ועד שהוא נוגר על המיבורים הגרמני.

זהו סיפורו של חוקר משטרתי בגמלאות שחוזר לחקור פרשת אונס ורצח שארעה לפני שנים רבות, תוך שהוא מתחבר שוב ליחסיו המיוחדים עם מפקדת היחידה שלו מארתם יגים.

למרות פער הטפה (הסרט דובר ספרדית)- הוא מצליח להצחיק, למרות ולרגש. בסרט הזה-כמו גם בסרט הבא- הקורבן מצליח לנקום בפושע בצורה מיוחדת ומרשלת.

שנביאה לציפה הבאה בלתי רגילה. תשע בסולם קורן.

לסרט השוודי *The Girl With the Dragon Tatoo* יש שם שבדרך כלל מבריח אנשים מהגנים. אז אל תתני לשם הזה להטעות אתכם. זהו סיפורו של עיתונאי חוקר שמתבקש על ידי מיליונר שוודי למצוא את אחייניתו שנעלמה לפני ארבעים שנה. הוא מגייס האקרית סדיסית מלאת טעקומים ונזמים ובעלת התנהגות מוזרה ביותר, שמסוגלת לחדור לכל מחשב שרק נצר כדי לפתור את התעלומה, ובמשך שעתים ורבע אתה יושב על קצה הכסא ולא יכול להסיר ממנה את העיניים. בעצם לארוך הסרט, כשהרקע להתהגותה מתברר יותר ויותר- לא יכול הצופה שלא להתאהב בה.

יש בסרט הזה קטעי אלימות ואביון ברמה שקרוב לודאי עוד לא ראיתם בקולנוע-אבל להפתעתי הרבה-נקמת הקורבן כל כך מושלמת, שהיא יוצרת הנאה מיוחדת ומשחררת שלא חויתי עד כה בסרט.

אחרי זמן רב-הוי סרט שאני מתכנן לראות פעם שניה, כדי לקלוט את כל מה שקורה שם, אחרי שהעלילה כבר יודעה לי. עשר בסולם קורן.

מה יהיה

ישראל רועשת ועושת מהתחדשות שבוייה מאסיבית בפרוייקט הולילנד בירושלים התאפשרה תודות לשיחוד של מיליונים שניתן לעסקני ציבור, ראש עיר, סגנ, מהנדס העיר ועוד שורה ארוכה של יזועים. הדברים מתבססים על עדויות של עד מדינה, כשמיים לים נגלה העיתונות שדברי כראה שקריים, כולל צ'קים מזוייפים. בסיפר של דבר יכתו הדברים אי יימצאו כלא נכתבים אי לא מוכחים בבית המשפט. מה שמפריע לי אישית מאוד מאוד הוא זה שהמשטרה מלליפה באופן סדיר פרטי חקירה, חשדות, כתבות אופי ורקע בצורה שאינה מותרת בשום מדינה דמוקרטית, כאילו אין שום זכויות לחשודים. המציאות שבה הורסים לאנשים את החיים עוד לפני שהגישו נגדם כתב אישום משודרת הרחורים גיגס על ישראל כמדינה משטרה, לא שונה מהמשטרים הכי אפלים בעולם. זה מאוד מעציב אותי-העיתונות התציבה מרשיעים אנשים עוד לפני שמשפט החליט בעניינם.

אבל שישאר בינתים.

"אותי הים"

אחד מספריו האחרונים של עמוס עוז היה ספר שירה שענה לשם "כמו הים" ומספר דרך שיר את קורותיהם של אב, בן, ואהובת הבן. עבורי היה זה ספר מפתיע שגילה עז לא ידוע ביכולותיו של הסופר הלאומי שלנו.

עכשיו מעלה תיאודור הבימה הצגה המבוססת על "אותי הים". לא דבר קל הוא להעביר ספר שירה להצגה בימתית, ואכן, למרות שההצגה זכתה לצירוים מקסימאליים של המבקרים, היא לטעמי לוקה בחסר. דבמאי יתן שניר בחר מן הספר את האלמנטים היותר סנסאציונים כדי להפיג את שעמום הקהל. אבל חמור מזה בעיני- הוא מסיים את ההצגה במונולוג הילד היתום מתוך ספרי הטוב ביותר של עמוס עוז "על אהבה וחושך", שארן לו כל קשר ל"אותי הים". שניר מבקש לחבר את שני הספרים דרך געגועים לאמא שארבה, אבל ההלחמה לא כל כך מתאימה. ולמרות כל זאת-אם מזדמן לכם, ובא לכם לראות משהו שונה, מקורי, נועז, כמו שרק ישראל יודעת לעשות- לכו ל"אותי הים".

And now for something completely different: **HEEBONICS**

ATHLETE WITH MS TO CLIMB FOR THE CURE

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Yonan Mintz would like to be one of Toronto's most eligible bachelors.

"My mom would kill me if I didn't put this. I'm happily single... Maybe that's a good intro," he said, explaining that his brother, a *Toronto Star* columnist, was listed as one of Toronto's 30 most eligible bachelors in the *National Post*.

Mintz, 37, is eligible enough. He eats well, stays healthy and loves sports. He plays baseball, hockey and squash. He mountain bikes, runs, goes to the gym three times a week and, this fall, plans to climb a mountain in Peru.

He also has multiple sclerosis. But that hasn't stopped him yet.

Mintz was diagnosed with MS, a disease of the central nervous system, last year. And in a few months, he'll spend four days climbing Machu Picchu, a mountain in Peru, to raise money for MS research.

MS is a disease that attacks myelin, the protective covering wrapped around nerves in the central nervous system, making it difficult for the brain and spinal cord to communicate. The effects of MS vary from person to person, but can include loss of vision, hearing, memory, balance and mobility.

While Mintz was diagnosed recently, he experienced his first symptoms in 1996, when he went blind in his right eye for six weeks.

"I had an MRI at that time, which was inconclusive," Mintz said. His neurologist gave him two options – to take experimental drugs as a possible preventative measure or to take care of himself and hope for the best.

"I chose plan B, but I did experience other symptoms over the years," Mintz said. "The most major thing was the chronic fatigue, where I'd be physically and mentally debilitated by an exhaustion that had a sense of vertigo to it. I've experienced that on and off."

About a year and a half ago, Mintz started feeling a numbness in his feet. He went back to the neurologist and was officially diagnosed.

"I wasn't surprised. I knew all along that I had it. I had a hunch. I think it was, at the time, it wasn't really earth shattering for me. It was more upsetting for some of my family," he said, adding that the hardest person to tell was his daughter, who will be 14 next month.

One of the most difficult parts of the disease, for Mintz, is the fatigue.

"Imagine being absolutely physically and mentally exhausted, light-headed, dizzy. It just makes all the simple things in life... like getting out of bed and putting your shoes on, pretty challenging. It could last a day to a week," he said.

Yonan Mintz with his daughter, Mattison Preston Mintz.

While Mintz has always seen himself as having a healthy lifestyle, everything changed after the diagnoses.

"The big thing was adjusting my diet. I wanted to take a holistic approach," he said, adding that he decided against taking injections, which is something that most patients with MS are offered.

"I wasn't very enthusiastic about the prospect of having to take daily injections. It's not that I wouldn't do it if I needed to, if I felt I couldn't manage it in a holistic way," he said.

His holistic approach included switching to a vegan diet, though he does eat some poultry and fish.

"I don't eat any processed foods, I don't eat any dairy. It's been cleaner for my system and I felt a difference," he said.

Mintz also takes a variety of vitamins and has taken up yoga and meditation to deal with stress, which can make his symptoms worse.

About a year ago, he heard about the MS Climb, which was started by Ralph Cochrane as a way to raise money and awareness about the disease. Participants can climb various mountains, including Mount Kilimanjaro, in Tanzania.

"I heard about it over the summer, and I knew this was my calling. It was clear. I knew this is what I had to do," Mintz said about the climb, which will start in October.

With the help of his mother, Ellen Litvak, and other family members, Mintz raised about $10,000 for the climb.

"I'm just very happy to support my son in whatever he does," said Litvak, the manager of Mintz's fundraising campaign. "If you talk to anybody, they'll tell you he's extraordinarily exuberant. He loves to take on challenges."

At first, Litvak was nervous about the four-day climb.

"I'm always proud of him, but I was a little bit nervous until I talked to people who had climbed Machu Picchu," she said. "I know that he really works hard at keeping himself in good shape. I think he's going to be very much OK with the climb."

Litvak's biggest concern is the altitude, which can be dangerous while climbing.

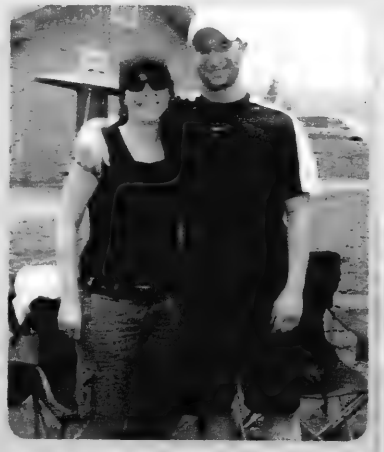
"Interesting enough [the effects of high altitude] actually mimics some of the MS symptoms, in particular fatigue and vertigo," she said.

Mintz isn't worried. Not about the climb or the disease.

"You can live a happy, productive life [with MS]. It doesn't mean you can cease doing the things you love to do... I believe I'm going to be healthy. I get up every day expecting to be healthy," he said.

"I don't resent it. I'm actually grateful for it because it's put me in a position where I can be an... example to others."

For more information about Mintz and the climb, visit www.msclimb.ca.



Yonan Mintz and his mother, Ellen Litvak, helped to raise about $10,000 for MS research.

Yonan Mintz, who was recently diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, will participate in the MS Climb to raise money for research.

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PA reports violation of negotiation terms

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JERUSALEM — Just two days after resuming peace talks with Israel, the Palestinian Authority has reported to the United States what it termed the first violation of negotiation terms, a senior Palestinian official said Monday.

Yasser Abed Rabbo said the construction of 14 housing units for Jewish settlers in an east Jerusalem neighbourhood, as reported by the Israeli Peace Now pressure group, violated the terms of new talks.

"This is the first violation and first breach of the terms to start the indirect negotiations," said Abed Rabbo, the secretary of the Palestine Liberation Organization's executive committee, which on Saturday voted in favour of indirect negotiations under U.S. mediation.

"We will act immediately to stop this, because we will not agree that negotiations will be used as a cover for settlement activities," he said.

He added: "The PA is following this situation on the ground with the U.S.A."

A senior Israeli official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that 14 homes in the Ras el-Amud neighbourhood of east Jerusalem were being built privately and that the government had no authority in the matter.

Jerusalem Mayor Nir Barkat, meanwhile, vowed to continue "planning and construction throughout the city for all its residents."

Barkat's comment follows a U.S. State Department announcement on Sunday that Israel had undertaken not to build in east Jerusalem's Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood for two years.

"We expect the Israeli government will react to the public demand of both the Arab and Jewish sectors and enable the construction of housing for the young population that is leaving the city because of a shortage of affordable housing," the mayor said in a statement.

"We trust that the prime minister will not allow a freeze in Jerusalem, not in words and not in actions."

An Israeli decision in March to allow the construction of 1,600 new homes in Ramat Shlomo triggered a severe crisis between Jerusalem and Washington, which led to a delay in the start of the indirect talks.

Cabinet secretary Zvi Hauser on Monday acknowledged it would take a couple of years before construction begins on the Ramat Shlomo project, but added that projects will be built in other east Jerusalem neighbourhoods where construction bids already have been issued.

The U.S. State Department announced on Sunday that the first round of indirect peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority has been completed, saying that both Israel and the Palestinians had taken steps to create an atmosphere conducive to successful talks.

> ***'Both Israel and the Palestinians will be held accountable for actions that undermine trust'***

State Department spokesperson Philip Crowley said in a statement that U.S. special envoy George Mitchell has left the Middle East, after concluding that the talks were "serious and wide-ranging."

Crowley said Israel had pledged not to build in the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood of east Jerusalem for two years and that PA President Mahmoud Abbas vowed that he would work against incitement of any sort.

Mitchell told the parties that progress is important so they can move to direct negotiations, resulting in a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The State Department statement also said that both Israel and the Palestinians would be held "accountable" for actions that "undermine trust" during the course of the proximity talks.

Mitchell will return to the region next week to continue the talks.

Sources close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to the American announcement on Sunday, confirming that the housing project intended for the Ramat Shlomo neighbourhood would not be built in the coming two years. The sources added that even when the Ramat Shlomo crisis first erupted, when the housing project was announced just as U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden was visiting Israel, Israel told the U.S. administration that the project was only in very initial stages and construction would not begin for at least two years.

"Prime Minister Netanyahu even announced this publicly after Biden's visit," the sources said. "Furthermore, the prime minister emphasized from the beginning that the planning and construction in Jerusalem will continue as always, just as it was during every one of Israel's last 43 administrations, and there has never been any Israeli pledge on this matter."

The sources also said that the Israel promised the U.S. administration to discuss all the core issues during the course of the proximity talks and to take confidence-building steps as gestures toward the Palestinians. On the other hand, sources said, the U.S. has promised Israel that the core issues, especially the most sensitive ones such as the fate of Jerusalem, would be resolved only after proximity talks progress to direct talks.

Earlier on Sunday, the PA responded to U.S. and Israeli calls for eventual direct peace negotiations by reiterating that it would engage only in proximity talks until Israel halted all settlement construction.

Netanyahu told the cabinet on Sunday that Israel expected the upcoming indirect negotiations to lead to direct talks, declaring: "It is impossible to make peace at a distance."

But Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat told Voice of Palestine radio in response: "If he [Netanyahu] announces a complete halt to settlement building, there will be direct talks."

Israel accepted into OECD

By BARAK RAVID

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JERUSALEM — The 31 members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development on Monday unanimously voted in favour of accepting Israel as a member of the group, a senior Jerusalem source said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to convene a special press conference to discuss Israel's admittance into the Paris-based international economic group.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and OECD Secretary General Angel Gurría *[Israel Sun photo]*

Israeli officials have said acceptance would be an important stamp of approval for the country's economy, boosting its credit rating and strengthening ties with foreign investors.

Three OECD members – Switzerland, Ireland and Norway – had previously expressed reservations about Israel's membership. They have focused on the settlements, which Israel does not treat as a separate economic entity. All new members require the approval of all 31 members.

Foreign Ministry officials earlier said that Palestinians had intensified their efforts to keep Israel out of the organization in recent days, saying that Israel infringes on Palestinians' human rights and violates OECD values.

Israel says Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salem Fayyad called many of the leaders of OECD countries over the past day to argue against Israel's acceptance. One of the Palestinian arguments is that Israel provided false financial data by not separating out data related to the settlements.

Israel had launched a campaign of its own to bolster support for its membership. Netanyahu spoke to several other world leaders on the matter trying to bolster support for Israel's application.

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Jerusalem Foundation dedicates 'Canada Club'

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — The Morasha neighbourhood of Jerusalem was abuzz on the evening of May 3, when Jerusalem Foundation donors and board members from around the world and passersby gathered to check out the newly opened Canada Club.

The club is at the Morasha Community Center, just outside the Old City. The new multi-faceted social, games, and sports facility was dedicated as part of the Jerusalem Foundation's annual international meeting. "It was a real highlight of our program," says director of the foundation's Canada desk, Steve Solomon.

The gathering brought together more than 70 board leaders and donors from Canada, the United States, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, South Africa, France and the United Kingdom in Jerusalem for three days. They discussed strategy issues and dedicated projects developed over the past year.

Canada Club is the brainchild of Torontonian Lewis Mitz, who co-founded it along with his wife, Wendy Posluns, Senator Arthur Eggleton, Camille Bacchus and Julia Koschitzky, president of the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada. Koschitzky will soon celebrate the opening of the Koschitzky Young Adult Centre at the Morasha Community Center, which also houses the Musrara School of Photography, Media and New Music and the Machol Shalem Dance Studio.

Mitz says he came up with the idea for Canada Club after the mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, delivered a talk about the current challenges facing the city in Toronto last November.

"Two things that he said astounded me – first, how many young people are leaving Jerusalem after they finish university, and second, the great number of Israeli youth who have never been to Jerusalem," Mitz said. "I wanted to create a fun place for youth and young adults to come and hang out – a social club, a sports facility, a meeting place."

In addition to hitting the foundation's three "C's": culture, coexistence, and community, Mitz wants the Canada Club to hit five "E's": excitement, enjoyment, entertainment, encouragement and economy. "These are all part of the thought process that went into the idea," he said.

Mitz, who has served as a mentor in kids' programs for the last 30 years, understands the importance of a fun and safe place for them to go. "If kids have a spark in life outside of their parents, in any kind of mentorship form, it can be a life-changing thing," he said. "And this could be a life-changing thing."

Lewis Mitz, centre, and Julia Koschitzky watch as a rabbi (unidentified) attaches the mezuzah to the door.

Very quickly, Mitz was able to gather $36,000 (US) from the founding donors,enough to commence the first part of the Canada Club project: a coffee shop/snack bar in the community centre lobby.

The next project on the roster is a games room, which will include air hockey, foosball and table hockey games, imported from Canada. "Of course, hockey is the focus," Mitz said.

"This is one of the funkier, more exciting projects we have currently underway," Solomon said. He added that it's unusual for a donor to come to the foundation with an idea like the Canada Club. Usually the foundation determines projects and then seeks funding for them.

"This is the first time I'm aware that an idea was completely initiated by a donor that was then incorporated into our organizational plan," he said

The Jerusalem Foundation intends to raise funds to sponsor programs and activities at the new club. Meanwhile, Mitz has already determined upcoming club projects, for which he intends to elicit partnership with the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada. The first priority will be furniture for the centre, two beach volleyball courts, a tennis court and a floor ball court.

The club has already created a momentum of its own. Solomon said that he recently got a call from a local cinema school that wants to screen movies at the club. The centre will also host bands and a temporary gallery, featuring different artists on a monthly rotation.

"Our hope is that the Canada Club will be a spark for a fire that will catch wind and go," Mitz said. "This site is the beginning of something special in Jerusalem."

Yeshiva student murdered in Ukraine

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KIEV — Ukrainian authorities have found the body of a 25-year-old yeshiva student who was reported missing more than three weeks ago. It's not yet clear if local authorities are treating the murder as an anti-Semitic incident.

Aryeh Leib Misinzov's body was found mutilated and dumped in a Kiev neighbourhood late last Friday night. Chabad officials identified him as the young man who has been missing since April 20, the anniversary of Adolf Hitler's birthday.

Kiev police believe Misinzov was kidnapped and murdered, and that his assailants mutilated his body soon after. One early report said the body had been cut into 10 pieces.

Local authorities have asked to delay his funeral pending further investigation, but Chabad has rejected a police request to delay it and demanded that Misinzov's body be turned over to his family for a proper Jewish burial.

Misinzov may have been involved in organized crime, according to reports.

With files from JTA

Congress briefed on Palestinian glorification of terror

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

As U.S. diplomats attempt to bring Israelis and Palestinians together for proximity peace talks, Palestinian society is being deluged with a message of war, martyrdom and killing Jews, said Itamar Marcus, director of Palestinian Media Watch (PMW).

In recent months, PMW has recorded 26 fresh incidents of Palestinian glorification of terrorism, said Marcus, who was in Washington, D.C., last week to brief Congress about the agency's findings.

Marcus presented the house foreign affairs subcommittee on terrorism, nonproliferation and trade, chaired by California Democrat Brad Sherman, with a report on the phenomenon.

Titled *From Terrorists to Role Models: The Palestinian Authority's Institutionalization of Incitement*, the report makes clear "terror glorification by the PA" continues and has been largely "ignored by the world for many years," Marcus said.

The report cites hundreds of instances "that illustrate the depth and breadth of the problem... It is a very significant problem because a child sees terror glorification everywhere he goes, that a Palestinian hero is one who kills Jews."

Itamar Marcus

"A Palestinian child can walk to school along a street named after the terrorist Abu Jihad, who planned a bus hijacking that killed 37, spend the day learning in a school named after Hamas founder Ahmad Yassin, in the afternoon play football in a tournament named after suicide terrorist Abdel Baset Odeh, who killed 31, and end his day at a youth centre named after terrorist Abu Iyad, responsible for the killing of the 11 Olympic athletes in Munich... Honouring terrorists envelops and plays a significant part in defining the Palestinian world," the report states.

Naming places and events after terrorists is an "ongoing Palestinian Authority policy," with the PA honouring those responsible for the most murderous attacks. "Two elementary schools, a kindergarten, a computer centre, summer camps, football tournaments, a community centre, a sports team, a public square, a street, an election course, an adult education course, a university club, a dance troupe, a military unit, a dormitory in a youth centre, a TV series, a TV quiz team and a graduation ceremony" were all named for Dalal Mughrabi, whose bus attack was the single deadliest terrorist incident targeting Israelis, the report says.

"Our message is that as peace negotiations are renewed, if there is a chance for peace, the peace process needs to be accompanied by an education process," Marcus said. "Terror glorification... is one of the primary problems that will prevent peace."

Marcus said PMW hopes that members of the U.S. Congress will call on their administration to press the Palestinians to end incitement. "The United States pushes Israel for far less serious issues," he said.

PMW is an independent NGO with seven Arabic-speaking employees who monitor Palestinian cultural institutions, including television, three daily newspapers and Hamas TV. Marcus said budgetary restrictions prevent the agency from fully monitoring Palestinian radio stations.

For a copy of the report, visit www.palwatch.org.

'Lady J' was integral to U.K. Chief Rabbinate

By PAUL SHAVIV
Special to The CJN

Obituary

Universally known as "Lady J," Lady Amelie Jakobovits – the widow of former British chief rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits – passed away in London on Erev Shabbat, May 7, after a short illness. She was 81.

A major personality in her own right, she was born Amelie Munk, in Germany, into a prominent European rabbinic family.

As a child, she and her family fled the Nazis, hiding in a pit on a farm before successfully escaping to Switzerland. In later years, she would hold audiences of young people riveted as she told of using sawdust, earth and water to make symbolic matzah to celebrate Pesach during the war.

Married as a teenager to Immanuel Jakobovits, she was his consummate rebbetzin as his career progressed from London to Dublin to New York, and then in 1967 back to London, when he became Britain's Chief Rabbi.

There, her originally shy personality found its more extrovert dimension, and became an integral part of the Chief Rabbinate as Rabbi, then Sir, and finally Lord Jakobovits transformed his office into a national institution.

As the moral and religious influence of the chief rabbi rose into prominence in British life, she hosted thinkers, politicians, clergymen, journalists and statesmen in the famous Hamilton Terrace residence. She could be friendly to all, always recognizing the good in others, while meticulous in her personal, very Orthodox observance.

Amelie Jakobovits

Yet she also had the gift of personal chesed and was a one-person powerhouse of good deeds.

If you were Jewish and in hospital anywhere in central London, there was a good chance Lady J would appear at your bedside on a Friday afternoon with two small hand-baked challot, a jar of chicken soup and words of encouragement. If your family had suffered any sort of trauma or tragedy, anywhere in London, religious or not, you could answer the door and find Lady J there with food, medical supplies, clothing or whatever else was needed.

Every charity concerned with the needy, the suffering or the distressed could count on her patronage – and count on her to make a few phone calls to a circle of potential benefactors. Few could resist her requests.

She was also meticulous in calling – often to people she had never met – to congratulate them on a particular achievement, or an impressive interview or article, or to thank them for some gesture of support for the chief rabbi.

Despite having her own six children and almost 100 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she would never miss calling to congratulate others on a simchah, or to wish a refuah shleimah – a speedy recovery – to the sick.

Lady J was a dynamic, entertaining and sought-after speaker. She loved to inspire and to tell, on the one hand, the story of her experiences as a young girl in the war and on the other, her experiences as a guest of the royal family at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle, including the meticulous arrangements made to accommodate the religious requirements of the chief rabbi and rebbetzin.

On the couple's first visit to Windsor Castle as overnight guests – a considerable distinction – the royal servants, unpacking the rabbinical luggage, identified the chief rabbi's tallit as a "holy blanket" and spread it reverently over his bed.

When her beloved "Mano" passed away in 1999, she devoted herself to her family and to helping others.

Sharp, no-nonsense, good humoured, energetic and caring, she was *persona grata* in every section of the community, bringing a good measure of continental flair and character into the otherwise dusty corridors of Anglo-Jewry.

Obama nominates Jewish woman for high court

JTA

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Barack Obama has nominated Elena Kagan to the U.S. Supreme Court, which would bring the number of Jewish justices to three.

Kagan, 50, is currently the U.S. solicitor general and a former dean of Harvard Law School.

Kagan, a New York City native, would join Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg as Jewish justices. She also would raise the total of women on the court to three, with Ginsburg and Obama's choice to fill his first vacancy, last year, with Sonia Sotomayor, also a New Yorker.

Elena Kagan as dean of Harvard Law School

Kagan likely won't face Republican opposition in U.S. Senate confirmation hearings. A number of leading conservatives have endorsed her as a moderate.

As dean of Harvard Law, Kagan sought to redress what she perceived as an ideological imbalance by hiring conservative professors.

Jewish groups that have surveyed the likely picks – Obama reportedly was down to four – have been enthusiastic about the prospect of a Kagan candidacy.

Kagan would replace John Paul Stevens, a liberal stalwart who is retiring at 90.

Israel Briefs

Peres emphasizes security needs

President Shimon Peres told visiting U.S. envoy George Mitchell last Friday that Jerusalem was committed to reaching a Middle East settlement that would see the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state beside Israel, but that security must be a central focus of the talks. Mitchell arrived in the region earlier in the week for the launch of the first peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, albeit indirect ones, in more than 18 months. During their meeting, Peres told Mitchell that Israel placed security at the top of the agenda for the upcoming talks. Considering the increase in rocket fire following Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, this was of utmost importance, Peres said.

Axelrod: Leave Jerusalem for last

A top adviser to U.S. President Barack Obama said talks on Jerusalem should be left for last. "The president agrees that Jerusalem as an issue can't be the first issue for negotiations," David Axelrod told a small group of journalists working for Jewish media. Jerusalem should "probably be the last" issue negotiated, Axelrod said May 4, echoing the position of Israel's government, which is that the issue is too sensitive to discuss before other issues, including borders, are settled. Axelrod spoke after Obama hosted Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace laureate and Holocaust memoirist, for lunch. Wiesel had published an advertisement in the *New York Times* obliquely criticizing the Obama administration for pressuring Israel to stop building in eastern Jerusalem. Axelrod said Obama's lunch invitation to Wiesel predated the ad. Disagreements over Jerusalem in March had precipitated two months of U.S.-Israel tensions, which Wiesel declared were now over.

Livni urges joining political forces

Opposition leader MK Tzipi Livni, head of the Kadima party, last week called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to combine the forces of "the two large Zionist parties in Israel" – Kadima and Likud – to reach a peace deal with the Palestinians and bring about a social shift. "The prime minister is the one preventing the change," Livni told *Ha'aretz*. She blasted Netanyahu for "paying off" the haredim so he could avoid making a decision on the peace process. She said he's also evading a decision on social issues.

Israel deports Spanish clown

Israel's security service deported a renowned Spanish clown. Ivan Prado, director of the International Clown Festival in Galicia, arrived in Israel late last month with plans to organize a clown festival in Ramallah. The Shin Bet questioned Prado, as well as the Spanish national of Arab descent with whom he was travelling, for six hours before placing them on a return flight. Prado was accused of having ties to Palestinian terror groups. Since his return to Spain, Prado has launched a media campaign denouncing Israel and comparing the situation of Palestinians in the West Bank with Jews in Poland.

New envoy jeered

Israel's first ambassador in New Zealand in eight years was jeered by a group of pro-Palestinian supporters when he arrived to present his credentials at Government House last week. Shemi Tzur is the first resident ambassador in Wellington since 2002, when Israel withdrew its envoy because of financial restraints, leaving relations in the hands of its senior diplomat in Australia. The Wellington Palestine Group, which accuses Israel of crimes against the Palestinians, protested when Tzur arrived to present his credentials to Gov. Gen. Anand Satyanand. New Zealand froze diplomatic relations in 2004 when two Israelis were jailed for obtaining false New Zealand passports. Israel's then-foreign minister Silvan Shalom formally apologized for the men's activities in 2005, a move then-prime minister Helen Clark said was tacit recognition they were spies. Israel didn't confirm the pair as agents of its Mossad spy service.

– files from JTA

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

STAGECRAFT PRESENTS PADDY CHAYEFSKY PLAY *GIDEON*

The Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre and Stagecraft Company of Holy Blossom Temple present *Gideon*, **Paddy Chayefsky**'s "droll and poignant play" about a simple man who runs smack into the overwhelming and all-consuming love that is the Angel of the Lord.

The Stagecraft Company is giving two performances. The first is at Holy Blossom Temple, 1950 Bathurst St., Thursday, May 13, 7:30 p.m. The second is at the Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave., Saturday, May 15, 7:30 p.m. $12 minimum donation at the door. 416-924-6211, ext. 606. www.mnjcc.org

• • •

Film Society Screening: Toronto Jewish Film Society presents *Two Lovers*, director **James Gray**'s 2008 film with **Joaquin Phoenix**, **Gwyneth Paltrow** and **Isabella Rosellini**. Guest speaker: *Eye Weekly* film critic **Adam Nayman**. $15; rush seats on sale 15 minutes before each screening. Al Green Theatre, Miles Nadal JCC. Sunday, May 16, 4 and 7:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 606. www.mnjcc.org

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Upcoming Concerts

• Pride of Israel presents Songs from the Jewish Soul, a concert with vocalist **Aviva Chernick** and musicians **Aaron Lightstone**, **Ernie Tollar** and **Adam Campbell**. Pride of Israel, 59 Lissom Cres. at Bathurst. Sunday, May 16, silent auction 6:45 p.m., concert 7:30 p.m. $25, $30, $35 at the door. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

• **Toronto Renanim Youth Singers** perform a concert with the newly formed **Toronto Jewish Chorus** to raise funds for Israel – On Wings of Song, a planned concert mission tour to Israel in December. $36, $25. Crescent School Theatre, 2365 Bayview Ave. Monday, May 17, 7:30 p.m. www.renanimchoirs.com, 416-398-0289

• The **Associates of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra** present Five Small Concerts, featuring masterworks, small and large, from 19th-century giants. $18, $15, $10. Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor St. W. Monday, May 17, 7:30 p.m. 416-485-2717

• The **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir** celebrates the memory of conductor **Emil Gartner** on the 50th anniversary of his death at the choir's 84th spring concert. Special guest is cellist **Esther Gartner**, daughter of **Emil** and **Fagel Gartner**. $25, $20; children free. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park Cres. Sunday May 30, 3 p.m. www.winchevskycentre.org, 416-789-5502

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Names in the News: Fresh from his 2008 hit play *Damages*, *Globe and Mail* writer **Michael Posner** has won a second slot in the forthcoming Toronto Fringe Festival, June 30 to July 10. His new play is a one-man, one-act comedy, *Factcheck*. It's about a young magazine fact-checker trying to deal on the telephone with a nagging mother, an absent colleague, a harassing managing editor and a couple of prima donna writers, while at the same time checking eight stories of diverse subject matter. The central character plays all the parts. Posner is co-producing the play with **John Karastamatis**, and comedy writer **Briane Nasimok** has been named as director.

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Names in the News II: Michael Sussman, who moved from Toronto to Jerusalem five years ago, has written and recorded a song about kidnapped Israeli soldier **Gilad Schalit**. *We Want You Home Now* has received significant airplay in Israel. The song is on iTunes and may be downloaded for 99 cents, with proceeds going to a foundation working to free Schalit. Sussman, who is completing a master's thesis in Middle Eastern studies in Herzliya, Israel, has performed the song for Israeli politicians and the Chief Rabbi of Israel, and plans to re-record it in Los Angeles at the end of May. www.myspace.com/michaelsussman.

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Names in the News III: Film rights to **Samuel Segev**'s book *Alone in Damascus*, about the Israeli spy **Eli Cohen**, have been acquired by **Eric Eisner**'s L+E Pictures, operated by the son of former Disney bigwig **Michael Eisner**. Israel-American **Lior Geller** has been named as scriptwriter. Segev is a former *Ma'ariv* correspondent and university professor, and current Middle East correspondent for the *Winnipeg Free Press*.

• • •

Names in the News IV: Jonathan Papernick reads from *There Is No Other*, his impressive new book of short stories at a book launch. The Boston-based author, formerly of Toronto, has been compared with **Nathan Englander** and **Bernard Malamud**. Dora Keogh Irish Pub, 141 Danforth Ave. May 18, 7 p.m.

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At the Galleries

• *Fragments*, an exhibition of photographs by **Jason Schwartz**, offers portraits of survivors commissioned by the Florida Holocaust Museum in 2001. On view throughout May as part of Contact 2010 at the Jacobs Gallery, Miles Nadal JCC, 750 Spadina Ave.

• Marcia Rafelman Fine Arts annual group exhibition opens Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16, 12 to 5 p.m. Artists include **Barbara Amos**, **Tamara Bahry-Paterson**, **Bill Boyko**, **Barbara Cole**, **Rachelle Kearns**, **Michael Levin**, **Linda Rutenberg** and **Arnold Zageris**. 10 Clarendon Ave. 416-920-4468. www.mrfinearts.com

• The Beth Tzedec Reuben and Helene Dennis Museum presents two diverse exhibitions in celebration of **Theodor Herzl** to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth. Both exhibitions – *Herzl, The Pursuit of the Zionist Vision: Up Close and Personal* and *The Herzl Collection of David Matlow* – provide biographic information and illuminate Herzl's original vision for the Jewish homeland through text, imagery and some 150 items of Herzl memorabilia. Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst St. Opens May 12, continues to Nov. 28. 416-781-3514, ext. 232.

• The Israeli Artists Group of Toronto presents their second annual art show. 23 artists, free admission. J. E. H./ Thoreau Macdonald House, 121 Centre Street, Thornhill. Opens Thursday, May 13, 6 to 9 p.m. Continues to May 16. www.israeliartistsgroup.com

Eye on Arts is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com.

Doc on ex-cons wins filmmaker Genie Award

By SHERRY SMITHER
Special to The CJN

Alan Zweig's was surprised his film *A Hard Name* won a Genie Award last month for best feature-length documentary.

The documentary was a departure for the Toronto filmmaker, whose previous films, a trilogy on self-discovery, *Vinyl*, *I Curmudgeon* and *Lovable*, focus, respectively, on record collecting, crustiness and lovability.

A Hard Name, on the other hand, focuses on ex-convicts.

"I read in an article that when 'lifers' get to their 80s and get sick, U.S. prisons release them," Zweig says. "Since they were old men, prison officials weren't worried they were going out to hurt somebody and they'd release them, so they wouldn't die in prison."

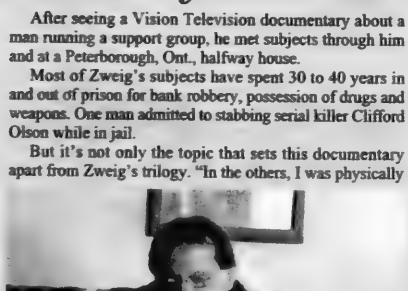
At the same time, he saw an interview with an ex-con who had been on America's Ten Most Wanted list. "He was 80 years old, a dangerous criminal that was out of prison and in a rocking chair – the contrast of those things intrigued me."

After Zweig received funding for the film, he ran into a snag when he started looking for subjects. "I couldn't find people that fit the bill or that would talk to me if they did. I found younger ex-cons, so it was talk to them or not make the film," he says.

After seeing a Vision Television documentary about a man running a support group, he met subjects through him and at a Peterborough, Ont., halfway house.

Most of Zweig's subjects have spent 30 to 40 years in and out of prison for bank robbery, possession of drugs and weapons. One man admitted to stabbing serial killer Clifford Olson while in jail.

But it's not only the topic that sets this documentary apart from Zweig's trilogy. "In the others, I was physically in them, and in this one, I'm not," he says. In his self-discovery films, he appears on camera looking into a mirror as he reflects on life.



One of the subjects featured on Primitive Entertainment's *A Hard Name*.

"In *A Hard Name*, I put myself in as a character in the background," says Zweig, whose voice can be heard as he interviews and converses with ex-cons.

"When I watch a film, if there's no voice or off-camera character, when something is said, I want it answered and commented on. If not, I start to feel like it's empty and cold, like the person is just saying things to me and nobody is answering for me in the audience."

Although *A Hard Name* was a finalist for the Special Jury Prize for Canadian features at last year's Hot Docs film festival, as well as being voted a top 10 audience favourite at the festival, Zweig says he's been criticized in the media for talking too much and not allowing his subjects to speak more.

But as the subjects converse with Zweig, they open up and tell him their childhood stories of abuse and about their adult struggles outside prison walls.

"Many ex-cons were surprised by intimate details fellow subjects told me about their childhoods and about things that might have made them seem weak – it's almost like breaking prison code," he says.

A broadcast of *A Hard Name* is planned for TVO this summer. The DVD is available at www.primitive.net.

Amsterdam is a beautiful Tower of Babel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

AMSTERDAM — Potentially hazardous volcanic ash from Iceland wreaked havoc on international aviation last month, grounding air traffic to and from Europe for several days. As a result, many travellers were stranded in European cities.

With a no-fly edict in force, I was "stuck" in Amsterdam. But I was not saddened by the news. What better a place to be marooned than the Netherland's cosmopolitan capital?

Due to these unforeseen events, I was given the golden opportunity to spend four extra days in this beautiful, sedate, compact city of romantic canals, exquisite architecture, atmospheric neighbourhoods and superb museums.

Whether I walked or used Amsterdam's fast and efficient transportation system of streetcars and buses, I had no trouble accessing these sights. Alternatively, I rented a bike to get around.

Being an ardent cyclist, I invariably resorted to pedal power, which, as I discovered, is probably the most enjoyable and carefree way of exploring this smaller, gentler, nicer, more intimate version of Paris.

Dedicated bicycle lanes, situated between roads and sidewalks, enable cyclists to reach destinations safely and quickly. And since Amsterdam's terrain is flat, bike riders need not work up a sweat. Amsterdam's bike friendly culture is not only environmentally sensible but fun as well.

I set out to explore Amsterdam from my base at the Savoy Hotel, which is in the funky Pijp district. There you will find the colourful Albert Cuyp outdoor market – where food, household goods and clothes are sold – and a dizzying array of cafés and restaurants.

I began with a 75-minute canal tour offered by the Blue Boat Company. Amsterdam's latticework of 17th-century concentric canals – the Herengracht, the Prinsengracht, the Keizergracht and the Singelgracht – are visually graceful and add immense charm and character to a busy city.

The boat passed under a succession of bridges and past striking gabled buildings and a number of houseboats.

By all accounts, there are 2,500 houseboats in Amsterdam, nearly all of which are permanently moored. I visited one such vessel, a former freighter that was converted into a houseboat and then a museum. Wandering through a deckhouse, a galley and a living room, I was surprised by their cosy dimensions.

The stolid buildings in Amsterdam, particularly those near the canals, are inspired by a mélange of styles – Renaissance, Gothic, rococo and neoclassical – and leave a visitor impressed.

The oldest existing building, I was told, dates back to 1590. Most of the rest, featuring flourishes and mouldings on their façades, were constructed from the 17th century onward, when Holland was a superpower with overseas colonies.

Virtually all the buildings are equipped with hoisting hooks on their roofs. Without these devices, furniture could not be moved by pulley up steep and narrow staircases.

In a word, Amsterdam's neighbourhoods are quaint and worldly.

The district around the Herengracht and Prinsengracht is especially appealing. There are canal-side cafés, antique shops, art galleries and boutiques to while away your time.

The Jordaan, once a drab working-class neighbourhood and today a haunt of university students and middle-class professionals, has been gentrified and is now considered one of the city's most desirable quarters.

Chinatown, close to the University of Amsterdam, is a reflection of Amsterdam's ethnic diversity.

Its foreign-born residents hail from nearly every conceivable corner of the globe, from Indonesia and Israel to Suriname and Morocco. Amsterdam is a Tower of Babel, a melting pot par excellence.

Chinatown, with its profusion of groceries and restaurants and its imposing yellow and red Buddhist temple, is adjacent to the red-light district, known in Dutch as De Wallen.

If only out of curiosity and titillation, practically every visitor to Amsterdam, including grandmotherly types with blue tinted coiffed hair, strolls through this fabled neighbourhood. What they see are its unique window bordellos, sex shops and cinemas and licensed "coffee shops," where cannabis is smoked and "space cakes" are consumed at leisure.

Dam Square, about a kilometre from the central railway station, is Amsterdam's throbbing core, teeming with glossy restaurants, tacky souvenir shops and hotels. Leidesplein and Rembrandtplein, both a short tram ride away, are at the centre of its lively nightlife.

Kiosks dispensing herring sandwiches, Holland's most popular fast food, are ubiquitous.

Amsterdam's prewar Jewish quarter, centred around the Jodenbreestraat and Waterlooplein, is a pale image of its former self, having been transformed by bland urban renewal projects.

Yet the Portuguese Synagogue and the Jewish Historical Museum, both of which have been refurbished, offer keen insights into the Netherland's venerable Jewish community. Sephardi Jews were admitted into Holland following the Inquisition, but Dutch Jewry was almost decimated during the German occupation and the Holocaust, an event that is amplified at Anne Frank House.

The Dutch Resistance Museum has a permanent exhibit about this dark period. The Diamant Museum, in part, recalls the prewar epoch when Amsterdam was the diamond-cutting capital and that industry in the Netherlands was all but controlled by Dutch Jews.

The city's art museums, notably the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum, are grand repositories of Dutch masters ranging from Rembrandt to Hals. These famous painters were active during the Golden Age in the 17th century, when Amsterdam was one of the wealthiest cities in the world and the Dutch East India Company was synonymous with colonial expansion.

The Van Loon Museum, the former residence of the company's co-founder, Willem van Loon, attests to the opulent lifestyle that prominent Dutch merchant families enjoyed when the Netherlands possessed a far-flung empire.

The world's oldest botanical garden, the Hortus Botanicus, was established in 1638 as a medicinal herb garden. It is an oasis of 4,000 plant species from all continents. Its butterfly house and tropical greenhouse are of special interest. The Vondelpark, Amsterdam's largest municipal park and a haven of tranquility, is also well worth a visit.

The pleasant town of Delft, the birthplace of the iconic painter Johannes Vermeer, is renowned for its Delft porcelain. It, too, is worthy of a day trip from Amsterdam.

For further information, click on Information@Holland.com. The "I Amsterdam" card provides access to Amsterdam's public transit system and 40 free and 50 discounted offers on major tourist attractions and restaurants. Bike rentals are available at MacBike.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has daily direct flights to Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport from Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. In addition, KLM has five flights a week from Calgary. For a fee of $25, you can use Pearson Airport's KLM Crown Lounge.

Dutch architecture is alluring.
[Sheldon Kirshner photo]

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TRAVEL TALK

By BILL GLADSTONE

FOR LOVERS OF DANCE, THEATRE & MUSIC: ISRAEL FESTIVAL OPENS MAY 25

The 49th annual Israel Festival, which opens May 25 and runs to June 11, presents artists from many countries performing in many venues in Jerusalem as well as Tel Aviv, Holon, Modi'in, Dimona and Haifa. Many dance performances are scheduled, including one by the Chinese Shen Wei Dance Arts to open the festival.

As for the stage, Shakespeare is a central theme of this year's festival: productions of *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* and other works are in rehearsal, as are a variety of other theatrical offerings. Classical music, jazz, opera and other types of music are also included in the festival. www.israel-festival.org.il

* * *

JEWISH MAGIC: A new exhibition at the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem reveals the magical and mysterious world of Jewish incantations, spells and curses. *Angels & Demons, Jewish Magic through the Ages* explores the practise of magic in Jewish tradition from ancient times to the present through archeology, folklore and superstition.

The artifacts include amulets, khamsas, jewelry, manuscripts and books of spells. Among the more extraordinary items are a child's tunic-shirt from the Bar Kochba period (132-135 CE), and an amuletic textile from Iran bearing a variety of images and symbols and the names of Haman's 10 sons; all evil directed at the owner of the textile was supposed to be deflected onto these sons of the notorious villain from the Book of Esther. The exhibition opened last week and remains on view through May 2011. www.blmj.org. Three of the artifacts are on display on this page.

* * *

RARE MISHNEH TORAH: The Israel Museum in Jerusalem has received the long-term loan of an extraordinary 15th-century illuminated manuscript – a handwritten copy of the Mishneh Torah by the great medieval rabbinical authority, Maimonides. On extended loan from Judy and Michael Steinhardt of New York, the manuscript has undergone full restoration and is to be displayed in the new Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life, in conjunction with the opening of the Museum's renewed campus, as of July 26.

Created in Italy about 1460, this beautifully illustrated Hebrew text includes the final eight books of the Mishneh Torah, the monumental and first systematic codification of Jewish law. The manuscript features six large painted panels decorated in precious pigments and gold leaf, as well as 41 smaller illustrations with gold lettering adorning the opening words of each chapter. These detailed illustrations are executed in the style of northern Italian Renaissance miniature painting.

* * *

TOURISM BOOM: Travel to Israel reached an all-time high in March. Some 313,000 tourists from around the world arrived in March, a 56 per cent increase over March 2009. That figure includes 5,906 Canadians, 24 per cent more than in March 2009. "We are thrilled to see this continued increase of travel to Israel in the first quarter of 2010," said tourism consul Oded Grofman, director of the Israel Government Tourist Office for Canada. Travel to Israel in the first quarter of 2010 increased 54 per cent over the same period last year.

* * *

ISRAEL NOTES

• The second Jerusalem Festival of Light transforms ancient sites and buildings around the Old City of Jerusalem into a magnificent light show, art and music spectacular, June 9 to 16.

• Dancer-choreographer Mikhail Baryshnikov performs in Israel with Ana Laguna, June 26, 28 and 29. The performances take place at the Suzanne Dellal Center, Tel Aviv, and at the Herzliya Center for the Performing Arts. Musicians Elvis Costello and Rod Stewart also plan to perform in Israel on their respective summer world tours, Costello in Caesarea on June 30, Stewart in Tel Aviv on July 1. The concerts follow performances by Metallica and Bob Dylan earlier this year.

• SunAir offers several personal guided flight-seeing tours over various regions of Israel. The tours include a 20-minute flight over Masada, Ein Gedi oasis and the Dead Sea; a 50-minute flight over Mount Sodom, the crater and fields at Neot Hakikar and Kikar Sodom; and a 70-minute flight around the entire Dead Sea region and Jerusalem. Tandem skydives, scuba-diving excursions and other adventure opportunities are also available. www.deadseadivers.com

• A collection of portraits by Andy Warhol has been donated to the Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv for an upcoming exhibit. Subjects include Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, George Gershwin, Franz Kafka and Golda Meir.

• A new Design Museum opened recently in Holon. Its first exhibit features about 100 examples of contemporary international design, ranging from ordinary household items to life-enhancing technologies. www.dmh.org.il/default.aspx

• A rare 1,400-year-old wine press was discovered recently during excavations near Nahal Soreq between Beit Shemesh and Ashdod. The massive 21-by-54-foot octagonal wine press is one of the largest presses ever to be discovered in Israel, and is believed to be from the Byzantine period. The size of the wine press provides evidence that the quantity of wine produced was exceptionally large and meant for export to Egypt or Europe.

• Tel Aviv is planning to launch a bicycle share program next year. Modelled after similar programs in several European cities, the system will allow tourists to pick up a bicycle at one of 100 rental stations around the city and drop it off near their destination.

The new Design Museum in Holon

Mishner Torah at the Israel Museum

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Arts & Travel

Israeli novelist documents a 'surreal' era

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

"I needed to write about this surreal period," said Israeli novelist Assaf Gavron with a sense of urgency in his voice. "Suicide bombs were going off virtually every day. I just had to write about it."

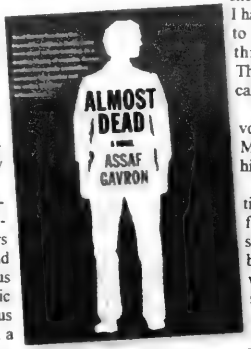
Gavron's novel, *Almost Dead*, published in Canada by HarperCollins, is set in Israel during the height of the second Palestinian uprising in 2002 and 2003, when Palestinian suicide bombers terrorized many Israelis.

Assaf Gavron

The central character, Eitan Enoch, nicknamed Croc, is a 30-something Tel Aviv yuppie who survives a terrorist attack on the bus he takes to work each morning. Two days later, when the bus he is on is attacked again, Croc escapes death yet again.

Sitting in a Jerusalem cafe about a week later, Croc is rocked by another bomb attack. Once more, he survives.

After the Israeli media embraces him as a symbol of Israeli resistance to the bombings, Palestinian terrorists go after Croc. As Croc ducks and feints, Fahmi, a young Palestinian suicide bomb maker, lies on the edge of death in a hospital somewhere in Israel.



A very contemporary Israeli novel, *Almost Dead* has been described as a black comedy with the pace of a thriller.

To the best of his knowledge, it is the first Israeli novel to deal exclusively with that deadly era.

Gavron, 41, was a resident of Tel Aviv when Palestinian suicide bombers were running amok around Israel. Despite the obvious dangers, he relied on public transportation, taking a bus to work. He let his wife, a television news producer, use their car because her office was much farther away from their home.

At the time, Gavron designed kids' games for mobile phones. He worked for a high-tech company in the centre of Tel Aviv, which had been hit by bombers repeatedly.

"I was a little like Croc," he said in an interview here to promote his novel, which was published originally in Hebrew and has since been published in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. "I tried to be cool about it. But it did get to me. I looked around, suspecting people. It was crazy and weird. That's why I had to write about it."

Miraculously, Gavron, a translator and writer whose short stories have been anthologized, was never personally involved in a terrorist incident. Nor did he know anyone who had ever been caught up in a bombing.

But on an existential level, he was deeply affected by the terror sowed by Palestinian bombers.

Gavron describes Croc as a somewhat confused guy trying to make sense of the world in chaotic and uncertain times. Fahmi, he said, is a like lot Croc.

Almost Dead, therefore, is about the ways the Arab-Israeli conflict intrudes into the everyday lives of Israelis and Palestinians alike.

Despite its topicality, *Almost Dead* garnered only mixed reviews in Israel, said Gavron, the author of four previous novels.

"Many Israelis have problems with this topic," he said. "

It was a difficult period because Arabs came into our cities and disrupted our lives. It was not soldier against soldier and army against army. People just don't want to remember it. But this was the book I wanted to write."

Even Gavron's editor was wary. "She didn't want to touch my book. She said she didn't like it and asked if I had something else for her to read, which is the worst thing an editor can say. There was something political here."

Gavron, a liberal who has voted for the left-of-centre Meretz party, describes himself as pro-peace.

But he is less than optimistic about the chances for peace. "I don't see a solution. Most people on both sides don't really want to go for it. The second intifadah depressed and disillusioned many Israelis."

Gavron, whose parents made aliyah from Britain in the early 1960s, currently lives in Berlin, the recipient of a one- year fellowship. He plans to return to Tel Aviv next February.

Before Berlin, he and his wife lived in London. More than a decade ago, he studied new media at the Vancouver Film School.

At present, Gavron is working on his latest novel. "It's about Jewish settlers living in illegal outposts in the West Bank. It's a comedy."

Gavron regards settlements as an obstacle to peace, but he thinks that settlers are among the last idealists left in Israel. "I've spent a lot of time with them, and their ideological passion is palpable."

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Author melds fact and fiction in new novel

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It was a time of murder and corruption, of wealth and extravagance, of poetry and fine wine.

And to Guy Gavriel Kay, it was irresistible.

Kay, the multi-award-winning author of 11 novels, lived with the idea for his latest book, *Under Heaven* (Viking Canada), set in the Tang dynasty of eighth-century China, for some seven years.

"The starting point is figuring out the time and place that I want to spend the next two or three years researching and writing about," said Kay, who is known for merging fantasy with history.

At first, Kay was interested in writing about the Silk Road, a trade route from Europe to Asia, but eventually became sidetracked while living in France.

"In 2003, 2004, I made a decision to go back to the South of France… and I would research and begin writing this book inspired by the Silk Road… and I was hijacked. I was abducted by the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and history of Provence [France]," he said, adding that he was inspired to write *Ysabel*, a book set in present-day France. *Ysabel*, released in 2007, won a World Fantasy Award

"I went back [to the idea of the East], because I always knew I was going to go back. The difference was that in the intervening three years, the ideas shifted a little bit for me… to being a book centred on the Far East itself, in the Tang Dynasty."

Kay's latest book follows Shen Tai, the son of a famous general who spends two years at the site of a historical battle, burying the dead from both sides as a tribute to his deceased father. As a reward for his services, he is given 250 prize horses, an unthinkable number, by the empire's former enemies, and must journey back to the imperial capital of Kitai.

Guy Gavriel Kay

While the book is fictional and has elements of fantasy, such as wailing ghosts or seductive fox-women, the story is immersed in the culture of the Tang Empire and the characters are loosely based on real people.

"I'll spend easily over a year [researching]," Kay said.

This research included reading anywhere from 75 to 100 books and articles, as well as speaking to academics specializing in that era.

"Out of the reading and research and correspondences, I end up emerging with the central themes I'd like to explore about that time and place," Kay said.

"I need to know why I'm writing the book, and in order to pay the mortgage isn't quite enough. I need to know what I'd like to convey to present-day readership. Then the narrative, the actual line of the plot, emerges, usually last of all."

When developing characters, Kay is careful to take the time needed to create a depth that others can relate to.

"I think all of us write the books that we'd enjoy reading… An engaging novel is anchored around… interesting things happening to interesting people," he said.

"The perspective of characters involves letting the book give you room to develop figures that will engage the reader. That the reader will come to care about."

While Kay admits there's no formula to writing the perfect character, he's found that the key is a sense of empathy.

"One of the central aspects of being able to do that is having the time to let [the characters] grow on you," he said.

When writing a novel, Kay's aim is to give a voice to both his female and male characters, something that can be difficult when dealing with the eighth century.

"One of the things that's always engaged me is the attempt to explore the female characters as well as the males and to give the women in the books room to develop and have some impact on events that unfold," he said.

"That's a challenge because I'm working with periods of history where women are constrained in what they were allowed to do," he said.

And he doesn't fail. *Under Heaven*'s plot includes strong female characters who are nowhere as timid and subservient as they would like others to think and use their control over men to gain power.

While Kay's novel is shaped by its female characters, it can also said to be shaped by eighth-century poetry.

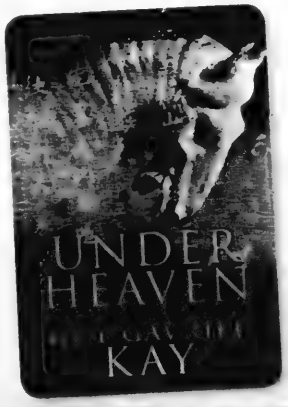
"As a writer, my first published work was poetry. I've always been reading it," he said.

While doing his research, Kay was intrigued by the role poetry played in the Tang Dynasty.

"What's really interesting was this was a culture that deeply valued the skill of expressing your thoughts in poetry," he said. It was part of being a cultured, influential man, and sometime woman, that you could write competent poetry."

In *Under Heaven*, Kay weaves poems, several of which he wrote himself, into the narrative.

"It's fair to say that [poems from eighth-century China] are some of the greatest writing anyone has ever done anywhere," he said.



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Venus Williams ousts Peer in WTA event in Rome

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ROME — Former world tennis number 1 Venus Williams handily defeated Israeli Shahar Peer in straight sets to reach the last eight of the 2010 Internazionali BNL D'Italia, a major WTA event in Rome.

Williams was slated to face off against her sister, Serena, in the quarter-finals.

Peer, who reached the semifinals of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in Stuttgart, Germany, the week before, fell 6-3, 6-4 to Williams while giving up seven aces.

Prior to her defeat, Israel's most accomplished tennis player was impressive as she tuned up for the French Open.

Peer was masterful in easy straight-sets victory over Italian challenger Corinna Dentoni, 6-2, 6-1, to advance to the second round of the $2-million (US) tournament.

Peer, currently ranked 21st in the world, needed a little more than an hour to dispatch Dentoni, who is 184th. Peer then dispatched Polonia Herzog of Slovenia, whom she defeated in both of their previous meetings, setting up the showdown with Williams.

Shahar Peer

In Stuttgart, meanwhile, Peer lost to Belgium's Justine Henin in the semifinal of the Porsche Grand Prix. Henin, the eventual tournament winner, ousted the Israeli in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, on Peer's 23rd birthday.

While Peer fell just short of the German tournament title, Israel's Dudi Sela took home 4,300 euros by winning the Rhodes Challenger in Rhodes, Greecce.

He defeated Rainer Schuettler of Germany 6-3, 7-6. It was a measure of revenge for Sela, who lost to the German in the semifinals in Athens the week before.

Israeli woman boxer retains title

© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

TEL AVIV — In an event billed as Israeli boxing's most celebrated showcase, hometown girl Hagar Finer didn't fail to meet expectations.

Before a nationally televised audience and thousands of cheering spectators at Nokia Arena in Tel Aviv, Finer retained her WIBF bantamweight crown April 30 by handily defeating challenger Agnese Boza with a fifth-round knockout.

Finer credited the crowd with providing a home-field advantage that simply overwhelmed her Latvian opponent.

"I hope the Israeli people will get to know her even more," said Ra'anan Tal, Finer's trainer and manager. "We want to defend the title here in Israel because the refereeing abroad is hostile against us.

"We need to support boxing. In Israel we have sports besides soccer, and Hagar's achievements should not be for naught. We need the Israeli people to pump money into the sport."

The evening had all the trappings of a major fight. Before the bout, Finer was greeted with a rousing ovation from an audience that included some of Israel's most recognizable faces from the entertainment and sports world.

Her victory may prove to be a breakthrough moment for women's boxing in Israel. Though the sport remains in its infancy, boxing organizers can take comfort in the fact that they have found a charismatic, marketable ambassador in Finer.

Both fighters began the match hesitantly, but the bout gained momentum in the second round. Finer landed a number of crosses that kept Boza, who was at a distinct disadvantage against her taller opponent, on the defensive. Finer lifted her arms in the air triumphantly at the bell, and justifiably so.

The Israeli solidified her control of the bout in the third round. Boza, who replaced Finer's original adversary, American Stephanie Dobbs, was victimized by the champion's devastating right hand.

As time expired in the fifth round, Finer sent Boza to the canvas with a powerful right blow. Although Boza got back on her feet, the referee declared the bout over, as he ruled that the Latvian could not sustain the continue pummelling.

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TEENS FOR A DAY

Six teams of CHAT alumni recently returned to their former stomping grounds for a taste of the good old days. Participating in a one-day basketball tournament, organized in part by hoops coach Aubrey Zimmerman, they reminisced and got back in touch with their old school. On the court, "99 Problems" defeated the "Legends" to capture bragging rights in the "Settle the Score" tournament. The winning team is, from left, Daniel Cantkier, Ari Sargon, Aaron Hershtal, Sammy Redlick, Robbie Bossin and David Safer. Absent is David Ulmer.

Book bank mitzvah project

By LAURA STRICKER
CJN Staff

When Emma Friedman celebrated her bat mitzvah in April, she wanted to give something back to the community in the form of a mitzvah project.

Emma, 13, an avid reader and writer, set her sights on the Children's Book Bank in Regent Park in Toronto. The Book Bank, which was established in 2008, accepts donations of new and gently used books for children aged two to 12 who are from low-income families.

Emma Friedman

To date, Emma has collected approximately 1,600 books.

"[One day] my dad and I were reading the paper and he noticed an article about the book bank. That's how we decided to take part in this project," she said.

Emma set to work quickly, soliciting donations from her school, Robbins Hebrew Academy, Bathurst campus, as well as Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, Toronto Heschel School and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. Her synagogue, Beth Tzedec Congregation, also took part, sending out a flier Emma created for the project with their newsletter.

When asked why she wanted to donate to Children's Book Bank, Emma mentioned her love of reading and the importance of every child having access to books.

"This is a charity I really feel for, and it's something I want to stick with," she said. "[The] small things are so important, but a lot of us take them for granted... While I was collecting books, I looked at so many memories – all children [should] have these memories.

"I'm very happy with the amount [of books] that we've collected, and I'm even happier that books are still coming in."

Kim Beatty, founder and executive director of the Children's Book Bank, said she is grateful for the contribution Emma is making.

"It's an extraordinary act of commitment and generosity on [Emma's] part that we appreciate enormously. It's also a wonderful behaviour for role modelling for other children," Beatty said, hailing Emma as an "ambassador for her generation."

To make a donation to Emma's book collection project, e-mail her father, Michael Friedman, at michael.friedman@rogers.com. Children's books and monetary donations can also be dropped off directly at the Children's Book Bank, at 350 Berkeley St., Toronto.

For more information on the Children's Book Bank, visit www.childrensbookbank.com.

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Heat BBQ. Toss meat with 2 tbsp balsamic salad dressing; let stand 10 min. In the meantime, mix together remaining dressing, BBQ sauce and mustard. Thread meat onto 8 skewers. Grill 6 min. or until meat is done, turning after 3 min. and brushing generously with BBQ sauce mixture.

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About Life

Dear Ella,

My son Aaron's bar mitzvah is still a couple of years away, but I'm starting to think about it now. Aaron's father and I are divorced, and I don't know how that's going to affect Aaron's bar mitzvah.

Do we each have our own celebration? Do we have one together? Do we split everything down the middle? I have no idea where to start. Aaron's dad and I tolerate each other and communicate for the sake of our two sons, but the divorce left us both very bitter, and we certainly don't share any kind of friendly feelings. Financially, I'm not in the same bracket as Aaron's dad, and I can't afford to split an elaborate affair. Can you provide any kind of guidelines on how to handle this?

Bar Mitzvah Battle

Dear Bar Mitzvah Battle

Aaron's bar mitzvah is a very important day, and one he will remember for his entire life. With that said, both parents must bend over backward to make this day very special, and everything else must take a back seat. If the two of you can't be clear on that, then decide early and have separate celebrations.

Ideally, it would be special for Aaron to have all his family and friends together to celebrate his religious rite of passage. This will take much give and take from both of you, and complete co-operation and compromise. There are so many components involved: aliyot, invitation wording, cost, seating plans, number of guests, candlelighting, speeches, etc. All decisions should be put in writing, so there are no misunderstandings. Under no circumstances can Aaron be put in the middle. That's not to say that he shouldn't be involved in planning his bar mitzvah. He may have some very specific thoughts.

As long as the two of you continue to put your son's feelings ahead of your own, you should be able to get through this with class and maybe even have some fun! As for cost, split everything down the middle and budget according to what's affordable for both parents. A bar mitzvah can be very meaningful and tasteful without all the hype you often see these days. This is Aaron's day, a day he will have prepared and studied for. He'll be nervous enough. Make sure he's not nervous about either of you.

Readers may submit their questions to Ella at The CJN, *e-mail: ella@cjnews.com. But Ella is not a professional counsellor. She brings to the questions posed by readers her unique brand of earthly wisdom. Her advice is not a replacement for medical, legal or any other advice. For serious problems, consult a professional.*

Being a mensch and good karma

Karma is an idea that exists in many cultures and simply put it means that for every action you take, there will be a reaction in the future.

So with karma, we are responsible for all of our actions, our choices, words that we say and even what we think. You cannot hide from karma. There's no escaping it. And as the saying goes, "What goes around, comes around."

Life Coach Corner

By JUDY SIBLIN-LIBRACH

Now before you stop me and say karma isn't a Jewish concept, there is a Jewish view on karma that is talked about by Tzvi Freeman in an article called *Do Jews Believe in Karma?* He maintains that "karma is the idea that everything is within the system and so everything bounces back eventually. You can play around with the system and even manipulate it, but you can't escape it."

But he also says, that "divine providence (*hashgacha*) means that we can reach beyond the system. We can plead with the Creator of the system or do tshuvah (repent) and transform our selves and even change our past. Freeman continues, "Yes, karma envelops us and all that exists. But there's an escape hatch through tshuvah, through Torah and good deeds."

But that is the caveat. The person has to be prepared to repent and put out love, kindness and generosity of spirit, and become a mensch in order to have the negative karma reversed.

You can spot a mensch a mile away. They do good simply because it's in their heart to do so. As Guy Kawasaki writes in his book, *The Art of the Start*: "Mensch is the Yiddish term for a person who is ethical, decent and admirable. It is the highest form of praise one can receive from people whose opinions matter."

Kawasaki adds: "Menschs do not put personal self-interest above doing what is right. Menschs are not only looking out for number 1. Menschs admit when they are in the wrong, and they acknowledge talent and skills in others, even if it exceeds their own. Menschs are friendly and good people who wish others well."

Kawasaki goes on to say, "You can spot menschs by their sincere desire to help others." And he asks people if they want to move into menschdom to follow these three easy steps.

"1. Do something nice for someone you don't like. Start small, so it doesn't hurt too much.

"2. Do something really nice for someone you like. But, don't tell them. Never let them know.

"3. Do something nice for someone you don't know. Be sure you do it sincerely to help them and not to position yourself in their good graces."

Good karma is easily achieved by good people. There is a lovely book to that end called *Instant Karma*, by Barbara Ann Kipfer. The book is full of simple suggestions to enlighten your life. Some of my favourites are: "Give your best self to the world; soften your most stubborn opinions; lighten up – you will live longer; everything is possible; the way we choose to see the world creates the world we see; don't jump to conclusions; let go of unrealistic expectations; practise silence of the heart by loving and by avoiding selfishness, hatred, jealousy and greed; don't blame anyone, including yourself, for life's disappointments; let go of minor annoyances before they become major conflicts; when you like someone, tell them; and start every day a little happier."

Judy Siblin-Librach is an Adler-trained coach. Website: www.findingyourbliss.com; e-mail: judyelle@ican.net.

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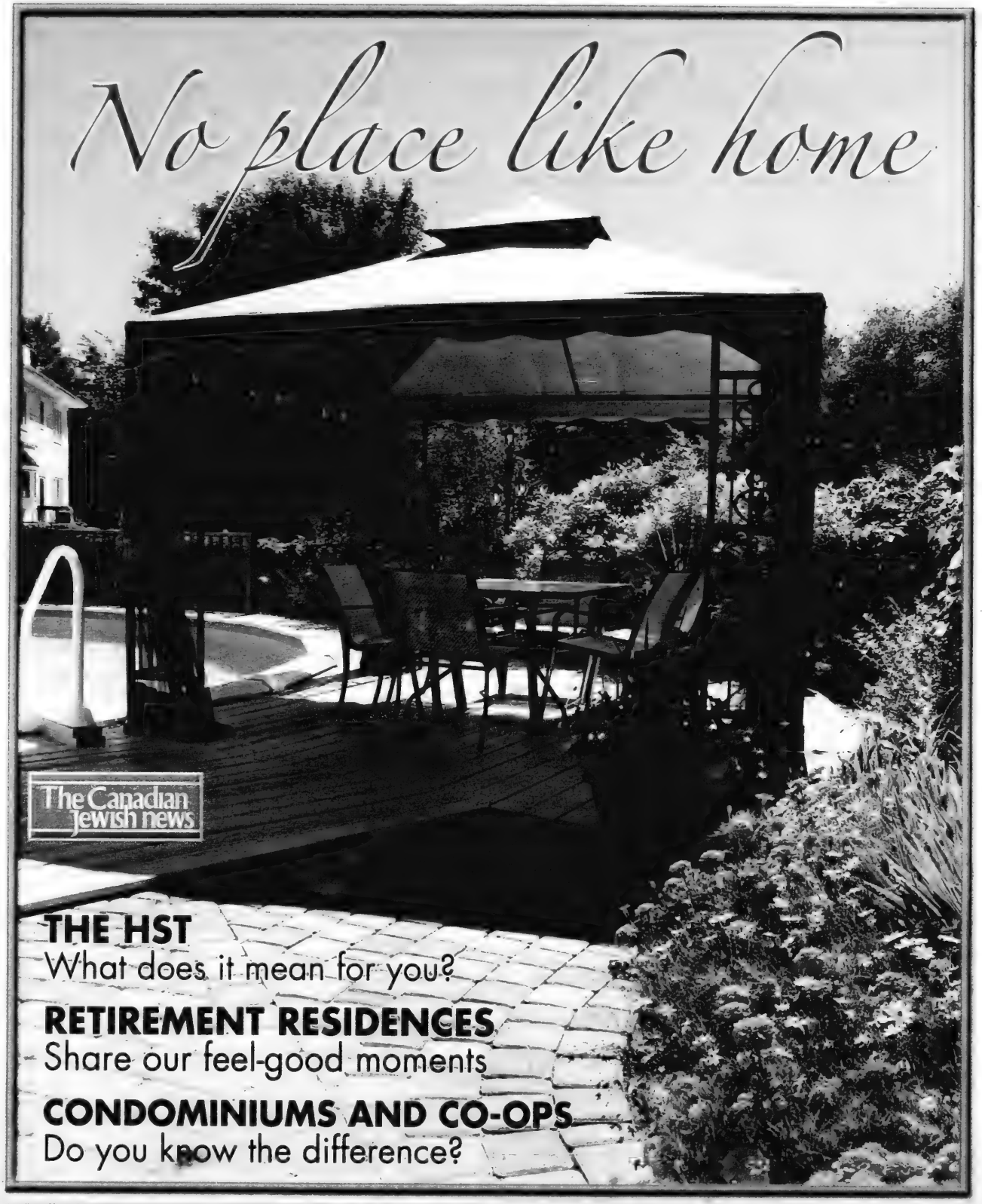
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Do you know the difference?

The HST: what homeowners need to know

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

It's coming for you. For renters and owners, for sellers and buyers. For renovators and mechanics, for electricians and landlords. Some call it a saviour for Canadian businesses, others insist it's just another tax hike. Either way, come July 1, the governments of Ontario and British Columbia will introduce the harmonized sales tax (HST).

What is it?

The HST will combine the provincial and federal taxes into a single, blended sales tax. In Ontario, it will amount to 13 per cent on many goods and services – eight per cent for the provincial portion and five per cent for the federal portion, now known as the GST – while in British Columbia, it will be a 12 per cent tax.

Why?

According to the government of Ontario's website, businesses are paying about $4.5 billion in embedded taxes because of the provincial sales tax, which is applied to the production, distribution and retail level of all businesses, making it a tax on a tax on a tax. The HST will eliminate this by providing a credit for sales tax.

For example, if an electrician has to pay HST on electrical outlets, he or she will get a tax credit for the provincial tax paid. The Ontario and B.C. governments hope that this will make businesses in their provinces more competitive and therefore create more jobs and opportunities.

The HST has already been implemented in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick. In Nova Scotia the provincial portion of the HST will increase from eight per cent to 10 per cent on July 1, making the total HST 15 per cent.

Stephen Dupuis

What about me?

According to Matthew Thornton, manager of government relations for the Ontario Real Estate Association, homeowners will be hit hardest by the new tax reform.

"The HST is certainly a bad thing for homeowners in particular," Thornton said. "These are the people who will be bearing the brunt of the tax. It'll make not only buying, but owning a home difficult."

This, said Thornton, is because homeowners will now have to pay the provincial portion of the HST on a multitude of goods and services that weren't subject to provincial sales tax before. These include lawyer fees, realtor fees, home renovation labour, and home heating, electricity and natural gas fees.

To offset these additional fees, the government of Ontario will be providing transition rebate cheques. Couples and single parents making less than $160,000 will receive a rebate of $1,000 over three payments and single people making less than $80,000 will receive $300.

What if I want to buy a house or condominium?

The HST will only apply to the price of new houses or condominiums, which means that the price of existing houses won't be affected.

Still, this doesn't mean potential buyers of existing homes are off the hook, said Cameron Muir, chief economist of the British Columbia Real Estate Association.

"The HST is going to have an impact on home transactions," he said. "[Buyers] are going to have to pay [more] on home appraisals and real estate commissions."

Condo maintenance service fees will also be affected by the HST.

Buyers of new houses won't have to pay HST for homes costing up to $400,000 in Ontario, where the government will be providing a rebate of up to $24,000 for those buying newly built homes. HST will be charged for houses costing more than $400,000. This means that, if a new house costs $500,000, the buyer will be paying HST on $100,000 of that amount.

In B.C., buyers of new houses won't have to pay HST on houses priced up to $525,000, Muir said.

The HST is being charged on new homes bought after June 18, 2009, in Ontario and Nov. 18, 2009, in B.C. that will be transferred after June 2010. If buyers purchased these houses before June 18 in Ontario and Nov. 18 in B.C., they would have been exempt from the tax reform, even if they move in after June of this year.

Continued on page B4

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By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Goods and services affected by the HST in Ontario include:
Electricity
Gasoline
Heating fuel
Internet access fees
Personal services (such as hairstyling)
Professional services (such as legal, accounting, real estate fees and commissions)
Tobacco

Goods and services that won't be charged the provincial portion of the HST include:
Food and beverages sold for $4 or less
Print newspapers
Children's clothing and footwear
Diapers
Feminine hygiene products
Books

Goods and services exempt from HST include:
Basic groceries
Prescription drugs
Some medical devices
Municipal public transit
Health and education services
Legal aid
Child care
Tutoring
Music lessons
Residential rates

For more information about the HST in Ontario and a comprehensive list of goods and services affected by HST, visit www.rev.gov.on.ca.

Rent not affected by HST

Continued from page B2

Stephen Dupuis, president and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association, doesn't think the HST is the end of the world for builders and developers.

"I hesitate to say that it won't be a terrible thing, but it won't be a massive transition," he said, adding that this is because builders had to make a similar transition when the GST was introduced in 1991.

"We've been there, done that."

Still, the HST will affect renovators, Dupuis said.

"Renovations have no rebates at all. Basically, renovators will now have to add eight per cent on every bill."

Consumers may have already seen this increase. Starting May 1, the HST has been charged on goods and services that will be used after July 1, such as gym memberships, airline tickets and contracts for services such as landscaping.

What about renters?

Rent won't be affected by HST, said Thornton, adding that Ontario recently announced that the government will be limiting allowable rental increases for this year. While this is good news for renters, it may be bad news for landlords, who will be paying HST on services such as building or rental unit maintenance.

"Landlords are going to incur additional HST, but if they can't pass it on to tenants, it's certainly an issue," Thornton said.

Don't get hung up on the math

The bottom line

Dupuis doesn't deny that the math behind the new tax reform can be confusing.

"What I tell everybody trying to understand all of this is not to make yourself crazy trying to follow the math. Go right down to the bottom line, the asking price. That way, you can compare X to Y," he said. "Don't get hung up on embedded tax."

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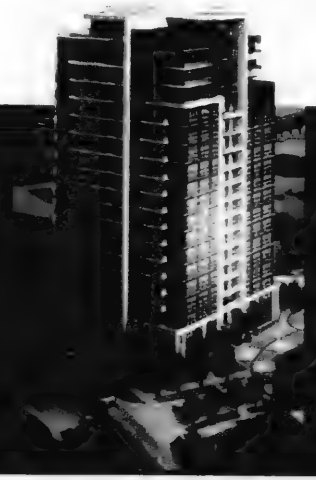

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Housing prices and listings soar this spring

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

A record number of "for sale" signs have been popping up on front lawns this spring as homeowners race to beat new mortgage regulations and the Harmonized Sales Tax.

According to the Canadian Real Estate Association, there were almost 100,000 new residential listings this March, a 20 per cent increase from the last record, set in March 2008.

CREA statistics also showed that house prices have increased this year, with the national average price of homes sold in March at $340,920, the second highest national average price on record.

Gregory Klump, CREA's chief economist, attributes this to the economy.

"In late 2008, early 2009, we were heading into a period of great economic uncertainty. Buyers moved to the sidelines, sellers were faced with fewer offers and many of those that did make offers, [made] low ball offers... Sales activity all but dropped off the face of the earth... Anyone who wasn't forced to sell their home didn't," Klump said. "As the economy recovered, buyers came back in droves."

Average house takes 60 days to sell

Buyers in Ontario and British Columbia may be trying to avoid the HST, which comes into effect July 1 and combines the provincial and federal sales tax.

"Sellers who had moved to the sidelines began to put their home back on the market. That particularly was the story in recent months of people looking to trade up before...the HST in Ontario and BC," Klump said.

Jeffrey Wagman, a realtor from Forest Hill Realty in Toronto, hasn't seen an increase in activity specifically because of the HST.

"[The HST] is not applicable to the price of an existing home, only on new homes. I haven't seen a major increase in that at all," he said.

The HST will only affect homes priced over $400,000 in Ontario and $525,000 in British Columbia, since buyers will be getting rebates that cover the PST.

According to Klump, new mortgage regulations may be another reason that listings have skyrocketed this year.

In February, the federal government announced these regulations, which came into affect in April. The most significant of these, according to Klump, was that buyers now have to qualify for a five-year mortgage rate, although they'll be able to choose a lower variable rate once they qualify

"People who were looking to finance with a shorter term [mortgage] had to quality at the five-year advertised rate," Klump said, adding that, before April, buyers could qualify with a three-year rate. "The department of finance changed the rules because that way it provides them comfort that, when the mortgage comes due, [buyers] can afford to pay it off."

For Wagman, spring is always a busy season, regardless of tax and mortgage reform.

"Typically people always wait until the weather gets nice and the grass starts to show before listing their homes," he said.

Wagman has seen fewer bidding wars as the number of houses to choose from increases.

"The bidding wars have definitely subsided, however they do still happen and they happen primarily if the house is in a really good location and priced in a popular house range," he said.

"Basically, because more listings have come up and the talk about more listings coming in the media... people sort of start to draw back. [They think], 'If more's coming, we don't have to worry.' There's no panic to buy because there's no shortage coming."

This has left some sellers nervous as they wait for houses to sell. According to Wagman, a house usually takes an average of 60 days to sell.

"[People think] if the house doesn't sell in the first week, there's a problem, and that's really unfair to the house and to the market itself," he said.

Klump sees the market decreasing later in the year as the HST comes into affect, interest rates on mortgages increase and buyers get used to the new mortgage regulations.

Wagman is also anticipating fewer listings in the summer, but he doesn't see this as a problem.

"Things do typically slow down in the summer, but that's normal... most people are out of the city, buyers are taking a little break, there's usually not a lot of listings," he said, adding that the summer and winter is a good time for buyers because there's less competition.

"When people put their houses in the market in the summer, they're usually more eager to sell," he said.

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No more shovels when you have a heated driveway

By JENNIFER LIBMAN
Special to The CJN

If there is one thing Canadians dread about winter it's shovelling their driveways. "People don't want to clean their driveways, or pay for shovelling," says Symcha Broot of Innovative Heated Driveways and Snow Melting Products. "But they need something or else they'll be stuck home all winter. Now, there's no more worrying about being snowed in."

Innovative Heated Driveways and Snow Melting Products (416-319-6240, info@drivewaysnowmelting.ca), which has been in Toronto for five years, inserts energy efficient snow melting cables directly into concrete, asphalt or mortar driveways that melt snow as soon as it lands.

"People can choose to have full coverage of their driveways, or just tire tracks. We can also accommodate unusually shaped driveways."

In addition to heated driveways, customers can also purchase heating mats that are placed on uncovered patios, walkways or stairs. "Homeowners and guests will no longer have to worry about navigating their way up icy stairs. This will save many accidents.

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Broot said that his company also takes care of roofs and gutters. "Ice and snow accumulating on your roof or inside your gutters can create costly water damage to your home or business. [Our] de-icing systems are equipped with a thermostat, sensor and de-icing cable to ensure that as ice and snow melt, there is a free pathway for water to drain properly."

Driveways start at around $10,000 and the cost of operating the system falls between $5.40 and $10.80 per snow fall, with most snowfalls ranging between three and six hours.

Financing is available, he said, and driveways can be installed during the spring and summer, so people can prepare for winter ahead of time.

For more information visit www.drivewaysnowmelting.ca.

It is an appliance emporium

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

One of the most thrilling ways to transform a home, whether you are a new or a longtime home-owner, is to purchase new appliances.

No matter the scale of your renovation, you will instantly feel renewed with the addition of a new stove, washer, dryer and even a new microwave! When looking to purchase such items, look no further than Caplan's Appliances (416-767-1655, www.caplans.ca).

Now in its third generation of family owners, Caplan's has come a long way since being founded by Herb Caplan in the 1930s. Today, the one-time downtown radio shop has become a high-end kitchen and laundry appliance emporium, serving customers in the GTA and beyond, with quality brands such as Miele KitchenAid, JennAir, Bosch, Dacor, Sub Zero, Wolf, GE Monogram, GE Café and Samsung. First passed on to Herb's son, Martin, and daughter-in-law, Fran, Caplan's is now managed by Herb's grandson, Robert.

Over the years, Caplan's has expanded into an impressive showroom that resembles three stores in one. The Caplan's original appliance store has been recently renovated with designer showrooms that feature all the top brands from Bosch and Dacor to KitchenAid and Wolf. As well, there is a large outlet area with new goods, manufacturers' overstock, end-of-line items and former floor models. Finally, there is a 3,000-square-foot gallery dedicated to Miele Appliances with a working kitchen, where delicious food is prepared by an on-site chef who also shares professional tips and recipes.

Caplan has a warm, friendly and no-pressure sales environment. Questions are not only welcomed but also encouraged.

"It is always helpful when a customer comes prepared with measurements, floor plans, colours, etc., especially if they are looking to renovate or remodel a large space, but if they don't have those details available as yet, our knowledgeable staff can certainly assist in helping customers find the right product," says Robert Caplan.

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Toronto's condominums outnumber city's co-ops by far

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

David Eichorn, the broker of record at David Eichorn Realty Ltd. (416-787-1712), says condominiums and co-ops, co-operatively owned apartments, share many common traits, but prospective-buyers should be aware of the differences in the ownership and financing.

Condominium owners own their units, but not the common areas of their buildings. These common elements such as the lobby and swimming pool, are owned by the condominium corporation, which also owns the land and manages the building, he says, noting that often the day-to-day management such as cleaning and concierge services, are contracted out to a property management company.

Co-op owners don't own their individual units, but rather own shares in the corporation that owns building, which he says is one of the big differences that affects sales of the units. "When you try to sell a condo unit, there are no restrictions as long as the parties abide by the rules and regulations of the condominium corporation."

However, the sale of a co-op unit requires the approval of the co-op owners. "The entire corporation has to vote you in."

According to Eichorn, financing and availability of units are the other two major differences between co-ops and condominiums. "The conventional financial institutions will not finance co-ops, so it's difficult to get a mortgage."

Often the purchase of a co-operative unit entails a larger down payment, he adds.

He says co-ops are usually older apartment buildings found in central or downtown Toronto, however, there are very few units in comparison to the number of condominiums.

David Eichorn

Indeed, the Toronto real estate board reports that of the 10,000 homes sold in March only 22 were co-op units.

Eichorn says in contrast to Toronto, New York City has more co-op housing than condominiums.

He stresses that price is another key difference between condos and co-operatives, pointing out that the latter are generally less expensive, but as investment tools they don't rise in value at the same rate as other housing stock.

Eichorn, who handles condominium resales, says a condition of a purchase offer, which is standard practice, is the provision by the seller of a status certificate, which can be reviewed by the buyer's lawyer.

The status certificate gives an update of the maintenance fees and taxes and the status of the reserve fund, and it will indicate whether or not the seller is in default of common expenses, he says.

"A portion of the maintenance fees are allocated to the reserve fund to make sure that there are adequate funds to pay for repairs of the common elements. If the fund gets depleted, all the unit owners undergo a special assessment to increase the reserve fund."

He says that the status certificate shows the anticipated costs of major repairs along with any outstanding litigation against the building. "If there is any human rights litigation, all the unit owners are responsible for the legal costs."

Many older buildings include utility costs in the monthly maintenance fees, he says.

"Newer buildings have separate meters for hydro and gas."

Eichorn has been a real estate broker since 1987 and founded his own company in 1994.

The company, which specializes in central Toronto, handles sales of new homes as well as resales, he says. "We provide a full array of services that includes introducing the clients to mortgage brokers who are more flexible than the major financial institutions.

"We also provide information about the renovation of older homes, by connecting our clients to home renovators and inspectors," he says.

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Advertising Feature

Residence or restaurant? To Constantia's happy family, it's both.

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That's easier said than done when your "customers" are true food connoisseurs in their own right. "Most people fancy themselves experts on home cooking," laughs Oziel. "But our residents really *are*. They know the kitchen like the back of their hand, and they know how home cooking should taste. When I prepare a meal, I'm not just cooking for a crowd...I'm cooking for a dining room full of head chefs!"

In other words, multiply the task of satisfying both your mother and your mother-in-law by 150.

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The reality, however, is that Oziel is his own harshest critic. "Perfectionism is ingrained in the chef's personality," he says. "Whether you're cooking for 10 or 150, it has to be perfect or you're not happy. That's why some chefs — not me, of course," he winks — "are known to be "moody" at times."

Shabbat dinner with all your favourites

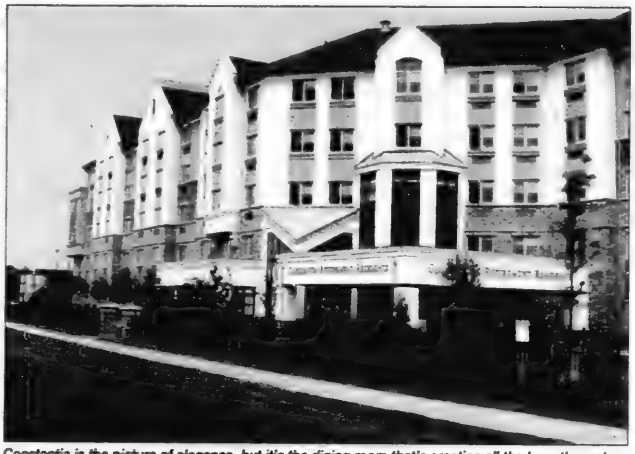
Recognizing the pivotal role played by food in facilitating the transition from home to retirement residence, Constantia recently hired Oziel with a view to taking their already-haymishe cuisine to a new level. To translate pressrelease-speak into plain English, that means putting the *home* back in home cooking.

Nowhere is this better exemplified that in Constantia's weekly Shabbat dinner. On any given Friday, this might include matzah ball chicken soup, gefilte fish, tzimmes, roast chicken, beef brisket — you name it, Constantia's table has it, made from scratch, just like Mother's.

In addition to the mouthwatering daily dining and weekly Shabbat extravaganzas, residents enjoy traditional specialty foods for the holidays. Latkes and souvganyot for Chanukah — kugel and matzah brown at Pesach — if it's in your culinary consciousness, it's on Constantia's menu.

Since Oziel's arrival, every meal at Constantia has become an event — a festive occasion eagerly anticipated by residents. Bookend the pleasure of each meal with the *forspeis* of anticipation and the afterglow that only home cooking can provide, and you're connecting the day's dots in the tastiest possible way.

For Oziel, satisfying his discerning clientele isn't just a job, it's a labour of love. "Cooking is my passion," he exudes. "The feedback I get is something money can't buy." That feedback, he says, is sometimes direct, sometimes indirect. "It makes my day when residents tell me how much they love a particular dish, but when they fill up the dining room before the food is even served — and linger on long afterwards — that speaks volumes too."



Constantia is the picture of elegance, but it's the dining room that's creating all the buzz these days

Looking every bit the gourmet in his starched chef's hat, Oziel has a résumé to match, with stints at the Windsor Arms Hotel and a number of other prestigious dining establishments. But after serving the who's who of Toronto's high society for two decades, Constantia "feels like home", he says. "I now have the most knowledgeable and appreciative clientele in Toronto," he beams. "It's any chef's dream."

Regardless of where you're from, Oziel has your gustatory bases covered with a repertoire that knows no geographic boundaries. From borscht to blintzes, cabbage rolls to kreplach, fricassee to stuffed peppers — you'll eat it here in good health.

Being of Moroccan origin, Oziel has a flair for traditional Middle Eastern dishes such as couscous and falafel. Like most of his specialties, their popularity among Constantia's residents is off the charts.

But the lunch and supper offerings aren't the only fare that whet appetites at Constantia. Here, even breakfast is an event. If you need any incentive to get out of bed, Oziel's heavenly morning spreads are it.

How big an incentive?

Big enough to cause 8 a.m. "traffic jams" in the dining area, says Marketing Manager Jennifer Brinder. "Our residents deserve more than making do with a "basic breakfast," she smiles. "It can be simple if you like, but it can also be elaborate." Echoes General Manager Lynne Colman, "You can go an entire week without eating the same breakfast twice." Residents with fond memories of hotel-style service in Miami and other vacations destinations will experience virtually the same dining ambience and variety at Constantia. "It's like having your own private chef," says Colman.

Even for dessert, gourmet-restaurant refinement and largesse prevail. Seasonal fresh fruit is used extensively, not only in compotes but also in such delectables as apple and peach pies baked in house. This bounty also finds its way into seasonal events such as Constantia's ever-popular strawberry social. "Dessert is not an afterthought," says Brinder. "We serve our residents as if they were guests in our own home — because they *are*."

With summer fast approaching, Constantians are already gearing up for the BBQ season and the opportunity to enjoy many of their favourite foods hot off the grill — either in the dining room or, weather and space permitting, on the elegant patio.

Home isn't really "home" without home cooking

Compiling your retirement residence wish list? At Constantia, it goes something like this:

- Exquisite accommodations? Check.
- State-of-the-art amenities? Check.
- First-class recreational and exercise programs? Check.
- Caring, attentive staff? Check.
- Holiday observance? Check.
- Food that tastes like you've never left home, prepared by a chef so good you'd give him the keys to your kitchen? Check, check, exclamation point.

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Retirement homes places of solace, friendship

Whenever a resident moves into a retirement home, they bring with them their own history, culture and personality. The result is a rich mosaic, and there are inevitably many heart-warming stories to share.

A sampling of retirement homes have shared some of these stories:

At **Constantia Retirement Residence**, a case of mistaken mail delivery has a happy ending.

Who hasn't, at one time or another, received a letter addressed to someone else? Although this can be a hassle, at Constantia Retirement Residence sometimes the wrong address is the right one.

Consider the case of residents Rose Caplin and Dorothy Bellack. One day Rose received a letter addressed to Dorothy and returned it to the front desk. Dorothy had been expecting the letter for some time and wanted to know who returned it so she could thank them personally.

Rose and Dorothy met and a friendship developed that endures to this day. They now enjoy socializing together, having tea, playing Rummy Q and going on outings.

* * *

Dr. David Shaul, who lives at **Dunfield Retirement Residence**, says "I did some research before settling on the Dunfield. For me it wasn't just about living longer, but about living well. I was looking for an active and stimulating environment that gives me the same kind of choice and variety I've enjoyed throughout my life. I think I've found that in the Dunfield. This is a retirement lifestyle I can look forward to."

* * *

The staff at **Amica at Thornhill** often encounter feel good moments. Following are two such stories:

Amica once had a client whose daughter came to them in tears, saying she was worried for her mother living alone in a huge home. Her zest for life was gone and she felt isolated and lonely. However, the thought of changing her lifestyle and moving to a retirement community was too farfetched for her. As a courtesy to her daughter, she did visit Amica, but left feeling overwhelmed.

The option of a trial stay was suggested, and within two days into the trial stay, her daughter said it had been a long time since she had seen her mother so happy.

Another client came to Amica in rough shape. Out of the hospital with a hip replacement, she came to Amica at Thornhill in a wheelchair. Armed with the motivation to get better, but lacking the strength, she knew she would walk again but didn't know when this would happen.

The Wellness and Vitality team immediately got started on strengthening her body and mind and preparing her for a life of mobility, activity and health. With a program specifically developed with her needs and abilities in mind, she made strides above and beyond anyone's expectations. Today this resident is one of Amica at Thornhill's most dynamic, actively participating on various committees and boards within the Jewish community.

* * *

Grand, uplifting and inspiring are not necessarily the first words you'd associate with a retirement residence, unless you're Eva Davies and your new home motivated you to give art lessons to your fellow residents.

"I didn't plan for it or expect it. I just found **Delmanor Northtown** uplifting from the outset, and one thing led to another," says Davies.

Her background in visual arts started right out of high school with her first job illustrating Captain Marvel comics. She has since had one-person art shows in Canada and the United States.

None of her students had any art experience. With the support of staff and Eva's encouragement, the course was up and running. One of her students — fellow resident Elvie — became such an apt pupil that her enthusiasm became a full-blown passion. In just two months she's turned her one-bedroom suite into a mini art gallery. She and the other students recently hosted a very successful "Young at Art" show.

* * *

By definition, respite care is a response to an unwelcome condition or event. In one particularly poignant case, **L'chaim Retirement Home**'s founder Judy Cohen welcomed a new resident under particularly difficult circumstances. Hard-pressed to cope with his wife's cancer — the prognosis for which was not favourable — this gentleman came to L'chaim under duress far harsher than any malady of his own could have occasioned.

An elderly couple enjoying their retirement

But miracles do happen — and in this case, one did. His wife survived and joined him at L'chaim, where they now live and continue to enjoy the pleasure of each other's company. "How's that for a second honeymoon?" says Cohen. "Forget about winning the lottery...this is what life is all about."

* * *

Margaret Darte, one of **Hazelton Place**'s longstanding residents, is 90 per cent blind. Margaret, though, has ears like a hawk and a heart as big as an elephant's. She often answers questions from visitors or calms upset residents.

Her history has given her the strength and character so appreciated by so many. Having lost a daughter who was tragically killed, she helped develop the Bereaved Families group and returned to school for her master's degree at age 55.

* * *

At **Forest Hill Retirement Home**, a staff member said, my favourite feel good moment is when someone comes in who is apprehensive or uncertain about retirement living then they get integrated within our community and discover the warmth and compassion that exudes.

A resident said that " I was apprehensive about the idea of moving into retirement living but the warmth and compassion that surrounds me at Forest Hill Place has allowed me to feel at home."

* * *

Our favourite feel good moment was when two residents who met at **Terrace Gardens** and fell in love, approached the executive director, Yoav Bohbot, to ask if he would be able to help them plan their wedding to be held at the residence. Our staff at Terrace Gardens was honoured to help them find a rabbi and assist in planning their day.

* * *

The moment I was introduced to **Thorne Mill on Steeles Senior Residence** the social environment was very appealing and made me realize what I had been missing. Can you imagine, I was given a personalized house warming party for my friends and family and what a memorable evening it was. The most precious moment was seeing my longtime childhood friend Sara and knowing that she too lives at Thorne Mill on Steeles. Great memories to come.

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Condo in the heart of Jewish Toronto

By JENNIFER LIBMAN
Special to The CJN

The Deloraine Residences (416-783-4431) on Bathurst Street between Wilson and Lawrence avenues, is the ideal location right in the heart of Jewish life, says construction manager Eli Ronen.

The 23-unit building offers 13 different floor plans. The units range in size from 900 square feet to more than 1,600 square feet and are available with one, two or three bedrooms. There are also a number of two-story penthouse suites.

Owners of these residences will live luxuriously, with nine-foot ceilings, optional hardwood floors throughout the living areas and stone flooring at the suites' entrance, he said.

Deloraine residences

Kitchens can be customized with choices of cabinetry, stone counters and backsplash and are equipped with a double stainless sink, with an optional second sink available. Units include a frost-free refrigerator with water and ice dispensers, a self-cleaning oven with an optional gas connection to the stove, as well as a built-in dishwasher. All appliances are stainless steel.

Ronen said owners can design their bathrooms with choices of ceramic tiling for the floor and surrounding of the shower and bathtub. There is a custom vanity with under-counter sink, an integrated medicine cabinet mirror and lighting fixture as well as the option for a Jacuzzi tub.

Residents will also enjoy the other amenities in the building, including storage lockers, a party room and a fitness centre. The building is equipped with two elevators, one of which is a Shabbat elevator. Each unit includes a parking spot.

The building is just minutes from a wide variety of shopping and dining options, including restaurants and shops on Avenue Road, as well as in Lawrence Plaza and Yorkdale Shopping Centre. Residents are also close by to a number of schools and synagogues, as well as Jewish stores. It's located right on a TTC bus route and close to Wilson station.

The units will be ready for move-in this summer, and some are still available starting from $460,000.

'Tis the season of bathroom and kitchen renovation

By RANDI BERGMAN
Special to The CJN

'Tis the season of renovation, and to help you on your search for renovators, plumbers, showrooms and parts, we've rounded up three of Toronto's most trusted sources.

On your search for plumbing, alterations, installations or even complete bathroom and kitchen renovations, look no further than Lampert Plumbing (416-787-4921, www.lampertrenovations.com).

Lampert is a one-stop shop. Started by Joseph Lampert, an iron and metal worker who immigrated to Canada from Russia, and his son, Hyman, the company began in plumbing and heating but split into two different endeavours when the two disagreed over the longevity of the copper pipe.

Hyman started his own company in the 1940s fresh off of serving in the air force in World War II, and after years of improvements and shifts, that company has become Lampert Plumbing Systems Inc., Lampert Renovations Ltd. and Lampert Bath Liners Plus. It's operated by Joseph's grandchildren and Hy's sons, Arthur and Lawrence Lampert.

Specializing in all manners of kitchen and bathroom renovation as well as plumbing repairs, Lampert is one of only two companies in Toronto that offer bathtub and wall acrylic lining systems.

"Not only can we rough in the plumbing for your bathroom, we can also put up the walls, tile, or put up acrylic," says Arthur Lampert.

Continued on page B15

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No Place Like Home

Sophie's Landing: waterside club living in Orillia

By JENNIFER M. MACLEOD
Special to the CJN

What if you could have it all? French Village living on the shores of Lake Simcoe. A cottage retreat within an exclusive, secure community. Your own personal marina, less than two hours from Toronto. Recreational activities for the younger crowd, along with quiet trails and privacy. Wouldn't you jump at the opportunity?

Catering to the baby boomer crowd of working professionals seeking either a weekend retreat or a future retirement paradise, Signature Carleton president Eric Kerzner calls Sophie's Landing, his company's newest resort community, ideal for a "cottage or four-season getaway."

"There's nothing else like it." You know that's true when you visit the community and find yourself speaking not to a slick professional agent but to a potential future neighbour.

"We use actual purchasers who live there," in the sales centre, Kerzner says. Who better to share the many advantages of this exciting new development?

With fishing, boating, rollerblading, biking, waterfront and social activities close at hand to this community of high-end fully-detached bungalows, you may be tempted to make Sophie's Landing your "stay-cation" hot spot.

But should you choose to go further afield, you'll easily find everything you need just minutes from the gates of Sophie's Landing. With 20,000 permanent residents – swelling to 50,000 in the summer – the city of Orillia offers a range of big-box stores, as well as 24-hour grocery shopping, golf courses, restaurants and, of course, its idyllic waterfront.

"It's a boaters' paradise," says Kerzner. "It's just west of The Narrows, where Lake Simcoe meets Lake Couchiching."

As part of the Trent-Severn Waterway, boaters could even travel down the St. Lawrence River as far as Florida, if they desired. "We're the only gated waterfront community in Ontario."

"People can use it as a cottage or a chalet and they don't have to maintain anything. It's all done for you." With a maintenance-free lifestyle, Sophie's Landing is perfect for those who still have career committments back in in the city.

"It's also very secure, because it's gated," says Kerzner. "It's ideal for snowbirds who leave it for six months. They don't have to worry about it."

A boomer himself, Kerzner named the development after his youngest child, daughter Sophie. Sophie's Landing consists of two phases: Phase 1, which is completely built and occupied already, and Phase 2, which is nearly 85 per cent sold, and 75 per cent built.

A few lots are still available, but Kerzner believes they'll go fast. "We saved our best units for last."

The community's 84 custom bungalows all boast high-end architecture and premium touches, such as standard nine-foot ceilings, steep rooflines and choices of Muskoka or French country design finishes. "We don't want all the houses to look the same."

Starting at $369,000, Kerzner says, "this is a high-end community… the houses that come standard do not need to be upgraded at all."

Optional upgrades have been very popular, however, which Kerzner credits to Signature Carleton's extremely fair pricing structure.

Each of the twelve base models can be customized to a purchaser's needs, although they do include many wonderful touches, such as the standard attached garage and private drive for one or two cars.

"Most of the customizing we do doesn't cost anything," says Kerzner. "Moving walls and stuff like that costs us next to nothing." When something more extensive is requested, such as upgrading the kitchen to hardwood or finishing the basement, Signature Carleton will do it for an unheard-of "cost plus 20 per cent" formula. "It's really affordable to customize… our buyers love the opportunity to personalize their homes."

Kerzner says most buyers are choosing to build an optional spacious loft, and even expand the second floor, for one simple reason: "People get a lot of visitors up there," he says. "There's so much to do."

Sophie's Landing

"Orillia is a dream for tourism," Kerzner adds. With summertime festivals, wintertime skiing and Casino Rama five minutes away, you'll never be bored. And when you want to stay closer to home, two fireside lounges, saltwater pools, a kids' playroom, waterside patio, or the rooftop terrace with remote-control miniature boats offer plenty of options.

"There's nothing missing," he says.

Based in Toronto, Signature Carleton has a 30-year track record building quality hotels, resorts, lifestyle communities as well as custom homes within the GTA. "Comparing [Sophie's Landing to buying] a house would not be a fair comparison… people understand that it's really the lifestyle they're buying."

In other words, there really is a place that you can have it all.

For more information or to make an appointment to view the community first-hand, visit SophiesLanding.ca or contact Kerzner directly at 416-624-3742.

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Social supports revitalize neighbourhood

By STEPHEN SWEET
Special to The CJN

In an area with a bad reputation, one set of properties is slowly starting to change attitudes around.

The San Romanoway revitalization program is an initiative that looks to increase safety as well as provide cultural and social enrichment programs for adults and children, has made a difference in one community.

The properties just north of Finch Avenue West and east of Jane Street were targeted by a study that broke down some of the area's most significant problems.

"Looking at the survey, there was a definite need to look at social issues that were causing such ill within the neighbourhood," said Stephnie Payne, the program's associate director.

"We looked and decided that there needed to be some social support programs in here to give residents a sense of belonging and a sense of ownership."

Beginning modestly with a recreation centre in the basement of one building, the program continued to grow, thanks to government grants and hard work.

"We've got various supports in place," Payne said. "We have an in-house social worker that does individual, group, and domestic violence counselling.

"We also have an active senior program with 68 seniors weekly, as well as a breakfast and after-school program for the children, including a four-food-group meal prepared in-house for dinner."

Getting the younger generations to find alternative sources of entertainment and stay out of trouble is an integral part of the program's social aspect.

"We have a youth program that is driven and led by youths," Payne said. "It gets the kids engaged in activities and staying out of the stairwells or from participating in anti-social behaviour.

"They're provided a space where they've got a recording studio, as well as a lounge with a television and Xbox."

As of right now, there are no vacancies at 25 San Romanoway, an absolute rarity in this area.

"What we do has to make business sense, and in the case of this project, it does," said Robert Weiman, vice-president of corporate development for Greenwin Property Management, the company that is in charge of the building.

Greenwin's San Romanoway

"There is very little turnover in this building, and with no vacancy, we don't have to reduce our rents for our building in order to fill it."

According to Weiman, normal vacancy rates usually hover around six per cent, but in that area, it can be much higher. This positive situation is a benefit for both the property managers and clients alike.

"The building is able to run with lower operating costs," Weiman said. "When that happens, it makes for a greater return on the investment for the owner, and as a result, ownership value goes up."

Weiman believes that this in turn has helped to lead to a sense of pride for those who reside at 25 San Romanoway, as they take advantage of the programs available to them while living at such a desirable location.

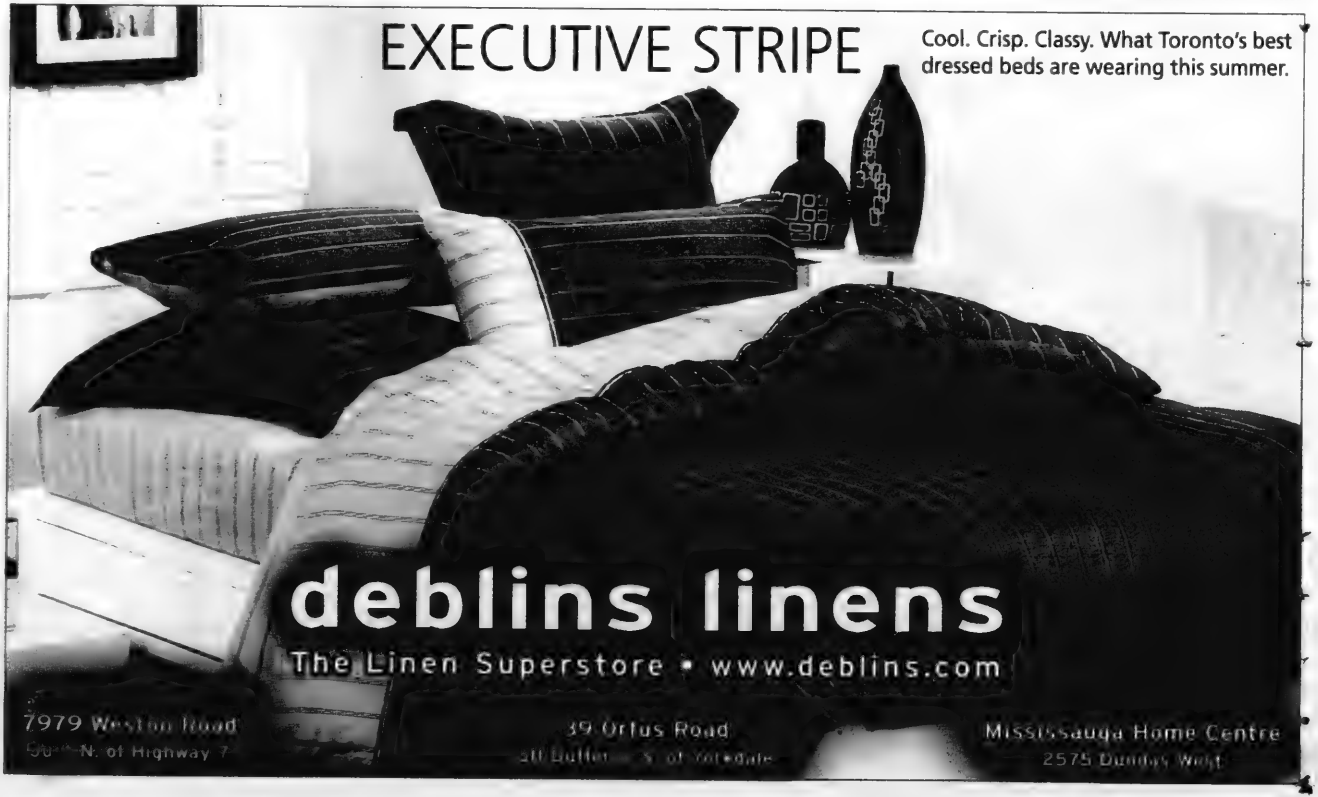
"It's really interesting to go there and see it or walk through the building," Weiman said. "You see the cleanliness of the building. There's no graffiti, no vandalism."

That acts as a major reason why the building is the lone one in that area to have gained certification status from the Fair Rental Policy Organization, having passed several necessary hurdles of quality living in order to do so.

Things have improved greatly in the San Romanoway area.

"The issue of gang-related violence, we don't see it here anymore," Payne said. "We don't see drugs being dealt openly like we did before.

"People are not scared anymore."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The Fountains 'sets a new standard in condo living'

There is much to fall in love with in the city of Vaughan, the city above Toronto.

Mere minutes from downtown Toronto, communities north of Steeles Avenue, including Vaughan, have enjoyed a tremendous boom in recent years.

With an abundance of green spaces, a variety of local entertainment and leisure options, a myriad of stores, boutiques, restaurants, bars and cafés, and a variety of single family residential developments and cutting-edge condominium projects, Vaughan and its neighbourhoods, such as Thornhill, are considered among the best places to live, work and play anywhere in the GTA.

"The 905 is a dynamic, vibrant part of the Greater Toronto Area," says Shawn Richardson of Liberty Development, an award-winning condominium developer specializing in residential and mixed-use master planned communities in Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Thornhill and other GTA neighbourhoods.

Among Liberty's most successful projects are the celebrated Markham Centre and Liberty Square; the highly successful World on Yonge mixed use development; and the Thornhill City Centre, a condominium community on Bathurst Street just south of the 407 Highway.

"Thornhill City Centre is one of the 905's most ambitious residential developments, on one of its best locations," says Shawn Richardson. "Just north of the Promenade Centre and the dynamic new commercial developments along Centre Street, Thornhill City Centre is a multi-phased 25-acre residential development that includes the city of Vaughan's first urban park – a five-acre green space called Thornhill Green.

The Fountains at Thornhill City Centre

"Surrounding the park is a residential community that boasts 61 elegant townhomes and approximately 1,300 suites in six condominium buildings. That number, however, is set to rise with the release of our next residential opportunity, an 18-storey contemporary condo tower called The Fountains at Thornhill City Centre."

Designed by architect Cliff Korman of Kirkor Architects, The Fountains will offer well-designed, livable and elegantly appointed suites that range in size from 565 square feet to 1,200 square feet. Each suite will feature designer-inspired standard finishes, including laminate flooring throughout the living and dining areas, nine-foot ceiling heights and expansive balconies. All units offer a custom gourmet kitchen that includes granite slab countertops, stainless steel appliances, and European designed cabinetry. The master ensuites will boast marble countertops, deep soaker tubs and contemporary white fixtures.

Amenities at The Fountains will include a state-of-the-art fitness facility featuring a fully equipped training gym, an indoor pool and whirlpool, his and her change rooms, and sauna. Other features and amenities include a media screening room, billiards room, party room and an indoor golf simulator.

The Fountains at Thornhill City Centre is located just minutes from public transit via VIVA, York Region Transit and the TTC. With convenient access to public transit, getting around the region will be easy, while The Fountains' proximity to highways 407, 400 and the 404 will make it easy to get just about anywhere in the GTA.

"From our unsurpassed location, high-level finishes and our dynamic lifestyle features, The Fountains sets a new standard in condo living – not just for the 905, but for the GTA, too," says Richardson. "We think The Fountains will make quite a splash in today's condo market."

For more information about The Fountains, call 905-731-8302. The presentation centre is at at 7890 Bathurst St. www.thefountaincondos.com.

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Continued from page B11

As well, Lampert supplies and installs plumbing products, such as toilets, sinks and faucets, which are all sold with a two-year in-home warranty. Similarly, renovations are completed with a two-year in-home warranty. "We offer complete service from design through to completion with our own staff – we do not use sub-contractors," says Lampert.

"Customers come to us under a degree of stress – their ceiling is leaking or their toilet isn't working – it's our job to ease their stress and help solve their problem. Lawrence and I have to be accountable – it's our family name that's been on the door for over 70 years."

Marlin Mirror (905-475-2400, www.marlinmirror.com/contact2.htm) is another of Toronto's must trusted family-run renovation companies, specializing in mirrors, including custom glass showers and enclosures, as well as mirrored walls and doors. Marlin has come a long way since its humble beginnings in the Thornhill garage of Jaime and Linda Schatzky in 1975. The two were joined by their son, Tom, in 1990, who brought new and innovative ideas to the

A Lampert kitchen

company . "The grandchildren of some of our first clients are now coming to us," says Linda Schatzky.

Tom Schatzky cites the many benefits of renovating with glass. "Frameless glass shower doors and enclosures are the finishing touch, the pièce de résistance to any bathroom, which will help you maintain an open feel to your bathroom while creating the shower of your dreams," he says.

"Bathtub and shower doors are the practical and affordable alternative to shower curtains. Whether a single stall door or a tub door, there are a number of glass styles with a variety of decorative frame finishes to fit any décor and budget. All our doors are available for pick up by contractors or those do-it-yourselfers out there, or you can have one of experienced technicians install it.

"Frameless glass showers have become a large part of our business, but glass dividers/partitions and glass railings have become extremely popular as well," says Schatzky.

If you are searching for plumbing fixtures and bath products, visit Taps at one of its two GTA locations (416-785-0224 in Toronto, 905-569-1262 in Mississauga, www.tapsbath.com). With more than 10,000 different products representing more than 200 manufacturers from around the globe, including Kohler, American Standard, Dornbracht, Franke, Hansgrohe, Grohe, Maax and Blanco, there's no better place to shop than Taps Bath Centre.

While you're visiting, check out the well-stocked Bath Boutique. You'll find towel bars and hardware to co-ordinate with faucet designs and finishes. Towels in a rainbow of colours are plentiful, along with towel warmers, mirrors and an exotic array of lotions and scents. Finishing touches are a Taps specialty.

While you navigate through the endless and stunning selection offered, the Taps' knowledgeable creative consultants will help you with any concerns you may have, as well as informing you of all the newest and latest products, such as this tip: most old toilets take a 13-litre flush. A few years ago six lpf (litres per flush) toilets were introduced to save thousands of litres of water each year. With the new 4.8 lpf high-efficiency toilets, one can be a true water conservationist. Some municipalities, including the City of Toronto and Peel region, offer a $60 to $75 rebate for replacing each old toilet with a new water-conserving model.

In its 26th year of business, Taps has become the largest dealer in Canada for many supplies, which allows for a cost savings to be passed on to the customer. Whatever your budget, you'll discover an endless selection of ideas to wash, pamper and invigorate.

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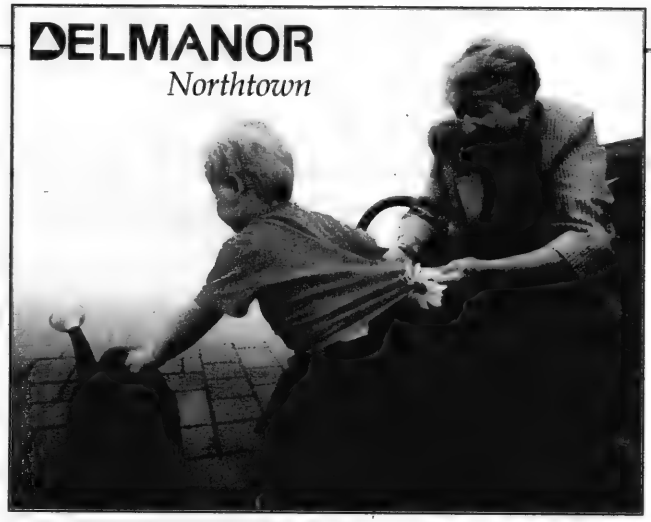

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TRIDEL

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Condo complex combines urban living with nature

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Terry Lustig isn't building a condo complex. She's building a community.

Lustig, the development and marketing manager of Gramercy Park, a new 512-unit condominium complex, sees the development as an important change to the Wilson Heights area of Downsview.

"It's really the first new development happening in the area," Lustig said. "It's going to be a really nice community. I think we're paving the way for new development in the area. We're setting the bar as a new place to live."

Construction for Phase 1 of Gramercy Park, which is located on Wilson Avenue near the Yorkdale Shopping Centre, will start next month. The first phase will have 265 units and should be finished by late 2011. Construction for Phase 2, called Union Square, should start late this year and be completed by fall of 2012.

For Lustig, the complex's area, which is close to the Wilson subway on the Spadina line and to the highway, is ideal. Especially for those buying their first condo.

"We call ourselves the best value on the subway. For a young couple starting out, this is a great place to start," she said. "You have the convenience of the subway, immediate amenities in the area. Also, you've got really easy access to the highway... You can be almost anywhere in the GTA in under 20 minutes."

The condos themselves come in different packages. The complex's most popular plan is their one bedroom plus den.

The Trillium, another plan, is larger, at 1,382 square feet and a 677 square-foot terrace.

Buyers can also get the Sage plan, which has a ground floor patio and direct access from the street. Condo prices range from $190,000 to $500,000.

"Because it's not downtown, we're able to offer [the suites] at a much more affordable price than downtown condos," Lustig said.

"We just think it's a great package. It's real value. The suites are finished nicely, they come with six appliances, we have nice flooring."

Each suite will have granite counters in the kitchen, laminate European flooring and parking.

The complex itself was inspired by a similar space in New York, which is described on Gramercy Park's website as a "tranquil green space designed and built for the exclusive enjoyment of the privileged few."

In an effort to combine urban life with this concept, the building includes a park, which will be half-an-acre large.

"The private park has wonderful outdoor amenities," Lustig said. The park will include shaded walkways and park benches.

The building will also have the Gramercy Club. The club will have a lobby with 24-hour concierge service, an indoor swimming pool, a fitness centre, yoga room, party facilities, home theatre and a private dining room and kitchen.

"We even have a pet spa," Lustig said. "There are lots of people who have a single cat or small dog and we didn't want them to be excluded."

For more information about Gramercy Park, visit www.gramercypark.ca or call 416-703-2202.

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Newlyweds choose housing that suits needs

By ELAINE COHEN
Special to The CJN

Choosing living quarters is more complicated for today's young couples because of the two-career setup. In former years, the groom's choice took priority because the couple depended on the groom's financial future. Therefore, if he were to pursue studies out-of-town or accept a job in the outskirts of town, his spouse followed his path without complaint.

Few wives worked full-time until their children started school. Government subsidized daycare was non-existent and often it didn't pay to hire someone to take care of the children. Furthermore, society accepted the fact a woman's place was in the home. Now the situation for women has improved and her place in the family structure has been elevated to the extent a groom must take his bride's career needs into consideration before making decisions on living quarters. Being near her career venue is equally important.

Couples pursuing studies on a budget

Many bright young brides and grooms are pursuing graduate degrees leading to professions that include many years of study and training before they build their respective practices. However, by the time they are in their mid or late 20s, they decide it's time to get married and so they proceed to rent modest premises. Although it's possible to spend a lot of time in libraries and to work on space-saving laptops, many couples prefer to study in the privacy of their respective dwellings. Problems arise when they are confined to tiny apartments without personal desk, drawer and shelf space for texts, related reference materials and digital gizmos. Therefore, it's important to take space allocation into consideration before signing a lengthy lease.

Renting a home or apartment

Renting premises with an extra room and garden space is a viable solution for couples who marry after they are entrenched in careers but unsure of plans for the future. If they do start their family, they won't have to move immediately. Similarly, if their work venue changes, they can sublet and vacate the premises without having to worry about selling it. Furthermore, by continuing to work, they will be able to build up their bank account to buy a home once their family increases.

Buying a first home

Finding an appropriate first home begins with a price range and a brief list of desirable neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, there are many other factors, the couple needs to consider before investing in what could be their best asset. The couple should try to figure out their mutual priorities to narrow down their search. Here are some pointers to consider.

Location: Is it near work, school, synagogue, shopping, family, friends, green space, recreation and health facilities and other young families.

Safety: Is the neighborhood safe and do you feel comfortable and welcome in that locale?

Financial: Can you afford the taxes, down-payment, mortgage, maintenance, repairs and emergencies that inevitably occur?

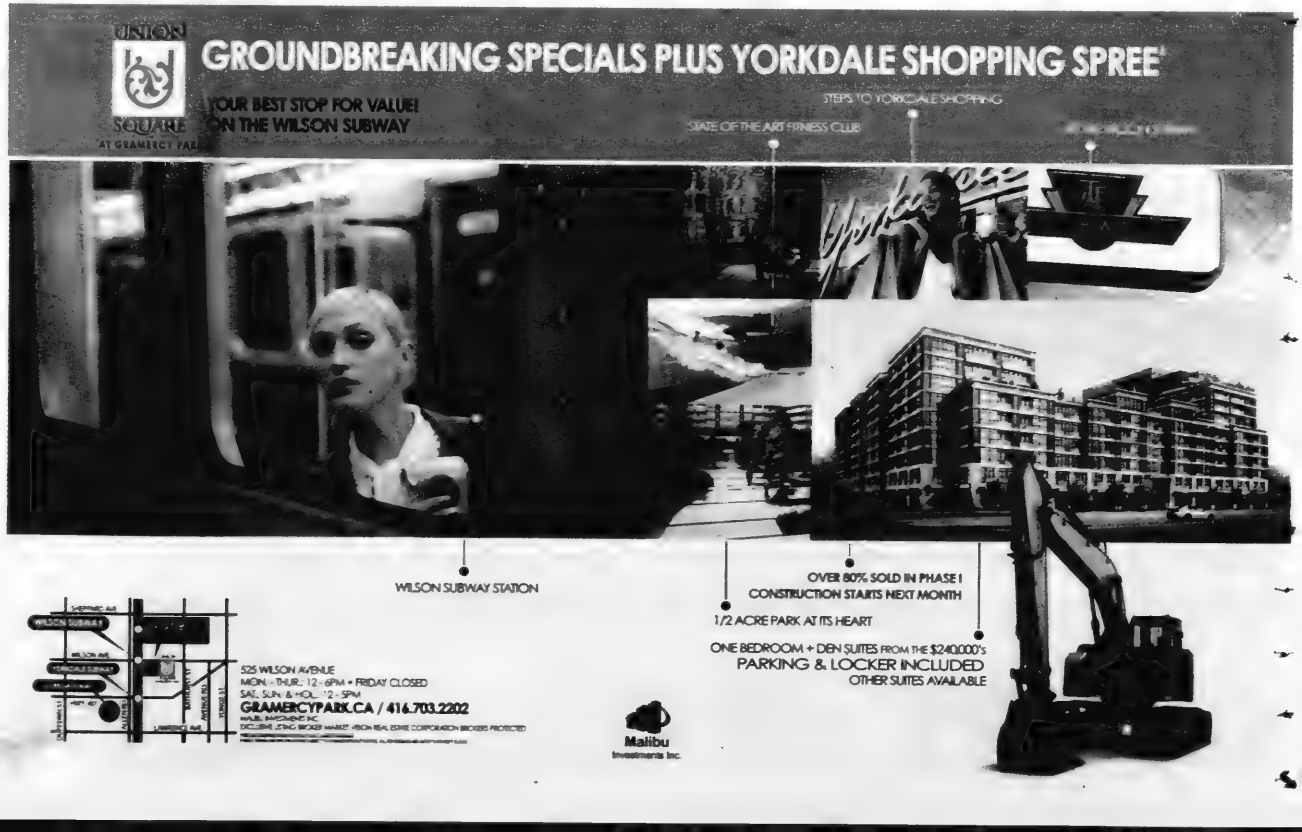
Upkeep: Can you afford the utilities, that is heating, air conditioning, electricity, and water taxes? Are you able to undertake simple repairs and maintenance duties yourselves or do you have to engage outside help? Do you intend to mow the lawn, weed the garden and cut bushes? Would you consider clearing snow during the long winter months? Are you handy doing chores that require tinkering with plaster, paint, brushes, electric drills, hammers, pliers and screwdrivers? Can you repair a dripping tap or toilet flusher? If not, remember to factor how much it will cost to pay respective service people to do the job.

Are you buying a starter home as an investment hoping to build equity to upgrade in the future?

Have you consulted an accountant, lawyer or real estate professional about using your RRSP toward the purchase of your first home? Can you afford the mortgage and upkeep? Would you be in financial straits if one or both of you lost your job?

Check it out: Before agreeing to purchase a home, check it out. Hire an objective, reputable engineer and housing inspector to check the plumbing, wiring and all the structural components in every part of the home and on the entire property.

Condos may not include the same costs as a house but they do entail association fees.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Wigston Green Estates offers luxury and privacy

Welcome home to Wigston Green Estates by Broadway Homes, a luxurious and exclusive enclave of estate residences within the prestigious community of Thornhill in the vicinity of Bathurst Street and Highway 7.

With only 17 home sites, Wigston Green Estates offers future homeowners a rare opportunity to enjoy luxury in a fantastic location. Each home site consists of 60- or 80-foot lots offering privacy and a canvas to satisfy even the most sophisticated landscaping vision.

Enjoy luxury in a fantastic location

The spectacular home plans reflect old world charm and architecture with distinctive stone and stucco exteriors, front porticos with copper roofs, balconies, covered terraces and triple car (some underground) garages.

The interiors are best described as lavish. The imposing front doors lead gracefully into a double-height foyer, further enhanced by the 10-foot main floor ceilings and extended-height passage doors. Elegance and character abound with staircases leading from the basement to the second or even third floor loft, not to mention the additional convenience of secondary service staircases and elevators, depending on model type.

Each residence features a formal dining room and living room; an open-concept great room with a fireplace and a library/office with traditional waffle ceiling.

The professional chef-inspired kitchens are sure to impress with massive islands, breakfast bars, gas-ready stovetops and built-in wall ovens and microwaves, as per plan. Homeowners will have the opportunity to customize and personalize their kitchens so it truly becomes the heart of their homes.

The second level of the home boasts nine-foot ceilings. The master retreats are breathtaking while the remaining three or four bedrooms each have private baths, as per model selected.

The success of Wigston Green Estates lies in the key elements of quality, attention to detail, design and service. The magnificent estate setting is a testament to the team of creative minds working together to develop architecturally significant homes that truly reflect the elements of style, personality and tradition.

The success of Broadway Homes is that their homes are built not only as lasting investments but are the collaboration of creative minds working together to develop superior homes that truly reflect their clients' style and personality. Every home they build is crafted with premium materials, premium workmanship and premium service.

Wigston Green Estates is scheduled to open the summer of 2010. To pre-register and receive priority information on the release of this spectacular site, email contact information to Michelle.L@remingtonhomes.com.

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Baby furniture is an investment in your child

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

If you're expecting a baby, it's time to prepare for his or her arrival. Buying the necessary furniture, gear and accessories can seem overwhelming, especially for new mothers, but if you turn to the experts for help, the task won't be such a challenge.

It's important to realize that baby furniture is an investment for you and your child. You are going to want to purchase pieces that will be sturdy, long lasting and stylish. Because the nursery is where you and your baby will be spending a great deal of time, the room should be a place designed in a practical and pleasing manner.

When you start looking for baby furniture, you will find a large variety of choices. Dear-Born Baby and Kiddiesworld of Furniture, two reputable providers of baby-related items in the GTA, are popular among customers for their vast selections. Both stores offer thousands of baby products with a goal to give parents an exceptional retail experience.

Budget, style, comfort and safety are among the important factors that parents should consider while on their shopping mission. Jerry White, owner of Kiddiesworld of Furniture (www.kiddiesworld.ca, 905-624-9092), says his 13,000 square-foot Mississauga store has over 90 cribs in the showroom along with matching bedding, more than six brands of strollers, an extensive supply of car seats, highchairs and gliders that would fit any customer's criteria.

When White opened Kiddiesworld in 1980, he says he felt there was a need for a specialty store that could give the clientele a level of personal service they couldn't get elsewhere. He says his staff are very knowledgeable and can answer any questions – whether it's the differences in car seats for both infants or toddlers, regulations for cribs, or how to fold and unfold strollers. "There is a lot for a parent to know and you want to shop where experience counts."

White says strollers are among his store's best sellers. Stroller and car seat combinations are in high demand, especially when the car seat is mandatory for the first six months. He says another "hot" item is the crib to bed convertible, which can be used for the first two 1/2 to three years as a crib and then converted into a double bed.

Continued on page B21

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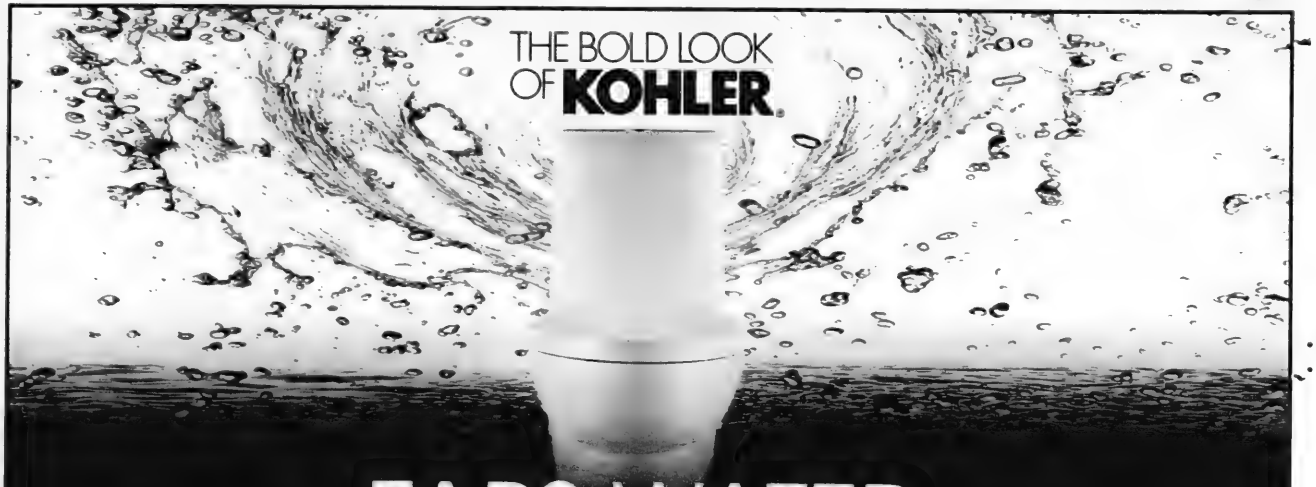

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Rent-a-Son keeps it in the family

By CARA EDELL
Special to The CJN

When Dustin Kroft, president of Rent-a-Son, started his business 10 years ago, he would drive around the city in the company vehicle, amazed at the random people who laughed, waved, or even rolled down their windows to ask: 'What is Rent-a-Son?'

The answer, he says, is quite simple: Rent-a-Son provides an affordable hourly service to home and business owners who need help with organizing, moving, house cleaning, gardening or yard work and other manual labour jobs.

Back in June 2000, Kroft and three of his friends decided to do something "positive and enterprising" during their university summer break. After one long, hot day of gardening for a friend's mother, Kroft says he discovered his calling. "It was then that the idea of providing sons for anyone who needed some physical work done around the house was born. Shortly after came the name Rent-a-Son."

Kroft says he began hiring students to perform the work that a son would usually be asked to do.

"Whether it was cutting the grass, cleaning out the garage, painting or helping with the family move, we wanted to provide homeowners with hard-working personable staff that felt like family."

He says a lot of the 'sons' enjoy the chores they do "because they get to work with their hands and because it is a nice escape from the mundane nine to five desk job." One of Rent-a-Son's "specialties" is their internal or in-house moving service, where movers can help arrange furniture,

organize storage lockers and units, lift heavy items, pack or unpack items and do small deliveries in their minivan.

Equally as popular is Rent-a-Son's labour service, which can range from cleaning brass pots to ripping out carpet to carrying and installing drywall. The 'sons' will even assist customers with their gardening and yard needs, including planting, weeding, trimming hedges, digging and laying patio stones. Kroft says spring is their busiest season, as "people are always excited about getting the exterior of their homes ready for the nice weather."

Over the past decade, Rent-a-Son has grown into a supplier of various labour and maintenance services to homeowners and businesses across the GTA and now throughout London, Ontario. Ranging in size from 25 to 45 'sons' at any given time, the team has helped over 4,000 clients in the past seven years. Kroft attributes the company's success to the positive and diligent experiences that the 'sons' offer customers, and says they "truly are the muscle behind this business."

Since Rent-a-Son's conception, Kroft says one thing has remained constant: "great staff who make you feel comfortable in your own home." He says every 'son' is screened and hand picked by the company, insured, personable and almost always available for next-day service. All of the 'sons' are trained to ensure they are familiar with the tasks they may be asked to complete, as the company does not outsource or sub-contract work out to anyone.

Although a prerequisite for potential new employees is physical agility and strength, Kroft says he focuses on the attitude and demeanour of his candidates. "We do not bring any tools or equipment with us to the jobs — just our hands and a willingness to tackle every one of your requests with determination and care." He says the feedback from clients is very positive, with many comments touching on the personalities of the 'sons.' Customers tend to grow attached to the 'sons' they hire after spending a day with them around the house.

Kroft says Rent-a-Son's goal is to provide "unsurpassed service in all aspects at affordable rates." An hour of work costs $50, two hours costs $75 and three hours costs $88.50. Every additional hour is $29.50. Rent-a-Son offers custom pricing to regular (weekly or biweekly) customers, higher volume customers and temporary labour clients.

For more information on Rent-a-Son, visit their website at www.rentason.ca or call 416-913-9021 or 1-866-999-2766.

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Continued from page B18

When buying a crib, he says, safety should never be compromised. "You shouldn't buy a crib that includes a mattress. You get what you pay for, and if you're paying nothing for a mattress it's not what you want for your child. Don't skimp on the crib, the car seat or the stroller. These items are used and abused for a long time by the children and you don't want to have to replace them."

A safe crib can be priced anywhere from $399 to $999, with the main differences being style-related and whether or not it converts to a bed for longer use. Buying quality is a worthwhile investment, he says, as one set can take your child from infancy to university. If cost is a concern, Kiddiesworld has a clearance section with "ends of lines" and "one only" products including cribs, beds, dressers and gliders.

Also known for their quality baby furniture and gear is Dear-Born Baby (905-881-3334) located in Thornhill. Established over 30 years ago by owner Cathy Scott, the retail store carries specialty and brand names in cribs, dressers, beds, linens, strollers and car seats. Their online site (www.dearbornbaby.com) gives customers the option to shop from home, with the confidence of knowing that Dear-Born Baby services what they sell. The store ships across North America, providing all the must-have items for today's savvy parents.

Dear-Born Baby is the place to find all the best products to make parenting convenient, rewarding and enjoyable, says Lindsay Stephenson, the store's marketing director. "Not only will you find everything you need for your baby, our specialty services include professional car seat installations, stroller tune-ups and repairs, furniture touch-ups, rentals and more. We pride ourselves on being a full-service baby store."

Stephenson says that families today are looking for nursery furniture that has "longevity, durability as well as great design." Like Kiddiesworld, Dear-Born Baby sells the convertible crib and models with modern features – clean lines and darker finishes, such as espresso, that match the home's interior. She says the modular stroller is also popular for its multi functions - the bassinet and car seat adapter for when the baby is a newborn and a stroller seat for when the child is bigger.

Dear-Born showroom

Since Dear-Born Baby is committed to educating customers on products that are right for their individual needs, the company has created an online blog (www.dearbornbaby.blogspot.com) that is constantly updated with product reviews, announcements and tips for new parents. The store's baby registry is yet another helpful service, making gift giving easy, Stephenson says.

Owner Cathy Scott says helping her customers plan "the most exciting next step in their lives" is what makes her job rewarding. "It can be a rollercoaster of emotions for parents and you are there on this exciting ride. We then get to be there when their precious baby is born and watch these little ones grow from infancy onward. It will always bring a smile and warm our hearts."

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Retailers carry middle and high-end bedding

By BARBARA SILVERSTEIN
Special to The CJN

Bath n' Bedtime (416-781-8600), located in the Lawrence Plaza at Bathurst and Lawrence, offers one-stop shopping for all one's linen needs, says San Rajsky, owner of this popular linen store since 2006.

The store sells an array of bedding, bathroom accessories and tables linens at a variety of price points, she says. "We carry all kinds of quality from middle to higher end with fabulous prices.

"Our prices are usually 20 per cent less than department and big-box stores."

Rajsky invites people to see the large display of fashion bedding. "We have beautifully coloured sheets, pillowcases, comforters, duvet covers, throw pillows and throw blankets. We also carry mattress covers."

Throw blankets are meant to be decorative, she explains. "They go at the end of the bed to co-ordinate with the bedding."

Rajsky says people come to the store to get decorating ideas. "We have at least 20 beds that are made up with our latest collections and they look gorgeous.

She says the bedding brands that Bath n' Bedtime carries include Revelle, Nygard and Westex. "We look for quality products rather than brand names, because a brand name does not necessarily mean better quality."

So many sheets now focus on thread count, but the number can be "misleading," she says. The higher thread count may not be an indicator of higher quality.

"The only way to tell quality is to open up a package of sheets, stick your hand inside and feel the quality for yourself. Some people like softness, while others like a crisp sheet."

People have different needs in bedding, Rajsky says. Some people look for a blend of polyester and cotton, which requires minimal care. Others look in terms of colour and pattern.

She says people often come in with wallpaper and paint chips, which Bath n' Bedtime staff match up with linens. "We have people come in and ask for specific staff members. Many of them have worked here for years.

"People have worked with them before, and they were happy with the service and their knowledge… I like to say that they're the experts."

Rajsky says she maintains close contact with Canadian distribution centres so that the store can do special orders and replenish sizes or colours that may be out of stock at the store when possible. The store also does custom work, she adds. "Anything we normally carry we can have made in custom styles and sizes."

Rajsky says the store offers high-quality towels. "We sell loads of towels in Egyptian and Turkish cotton in a rainbow of colours. We have more than 50-feet of wall space from floor to ceiling of towels in all sizes and colours.

"We have fancy embellished towels, which are usually the decorative towels you find in bathrooms and powder rooms."

The store also offers monogram services, which, she says make lovely gifts for housewarmings or for newlyweds.

Bath n' Bedtime also sells bathroom accessories, from shower curtains and soap dispensers to tissue box covers and wastepaper basket sets. Many of these accessories are co-ordinated with matching shower curtains.

The store is also the place to buy tablecloths, Rajsky says. "At Passover, the bigger the better. We carry tablecloths that are 200 inches long. That's huge."

For the summer, bright vinyl tablecloths are "great for outdoors," she says.

Rajsky recommends tablecloths with polyester for easy care. "The more polyester, the less ironing is required. We have some tablecloths that don't require any ironing at all. That's what easy care means.

"Easy care is usually stain resistant. If the tablecloth is high in polyester, the stains come right out."

Rajsky says the store is seeing a new generation of customers who come in with their parents. "Some of the people who bought their linen from us when they were newly married are bringing in their adult children to shop at the store now."

David Saini, of David's Fine Linens (416-590-7311) in Bayview Village, invites his customers to visit the newest location of David's Fine Linens (905-264-7778), a clearance centre that recently opened in Woodbridge (8099 Weston Rd. near Highway 7).

David's Fine Linens is known for its high-end domestic and imported linen. A lot of the bedding comes from Italy and France, says Saini. "This exclusive linen is either cotton, silk or MicroModal. All are the most luxurious fabrics.

"MicroModal is softer than silk and breathes 50 per cent more than cotton and linen."

Saini explains that what makes this Italian-made fabric so soft is its wood cellulose fibres, which come from beech trees.

But MicroModal is expensive, he adds. A sheet set – which includes a fitted bottom sheet, an upper sheet and pillow case— can set you back $1,000 and a duvet cover and sham cost an additional $1,000. "Our store is not about price, it's about quality."

MicroModal sheet and duvet sets tend to be monochromatic, in muted colours such as ivory, white, taupe and pesto, he says. "This sheet is machine washable and it doesn't wrinkle.

"It's one of the most high-end sheets. Once you sleep in that sheet and you experience it, you won't want anything else. The sheets are used by royalty and celebrities."

For people who want a more colourful palette, Saini recommends cotton bedding from France.

Bedding from Bath & Bedtime

He notes that a high thread count is not necessarily an indication of high quality because it's all about the quality of the yarn. "The better the yarn, the better the quality of the fabric.

"All our European linen is woven and sewn in Europe."

David's Fine Linens also sells luxurious Canadian-made down duvets, as well as an exclusive European duvet line made of pure eiderdown, from eider ducks in Iceland and Canada.

While the store sells high-end domestic brands of towels, Saini recommends a line of cotton towels made in Portugal. "They're very soft and luxurious. They last a long time and feel different than regular towels."

The towels come in 60 colours and can be monogrammed. "We can do custom orders," he says.

The store sells high-end table linens as well. Many of the tablecloths are imported from Italy and France, but there are many domestic brands as well. "We have table coverings in all sizes for up to 24-place settings."

Saini says table linen fabrics include damask, cotton and linen. A popular and practical item is a line of colourful French coated cotton tablecloths that are water resistant.

David's Fine Linens, now in operation for 33 years, provides customers with an interior design service, says Saini. "We offer very good help. Our professionally trained interior designers do home visits for people who are buying their linen from us."

The new clearance centre will have the same high-end quality as the Bayview store, but the selection may not be as extensive, he says. " We are looking forward to serving our customers at this new location."

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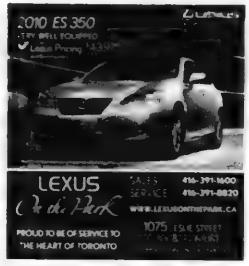

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Yarden Vintage celebrates Israel's fine wines.

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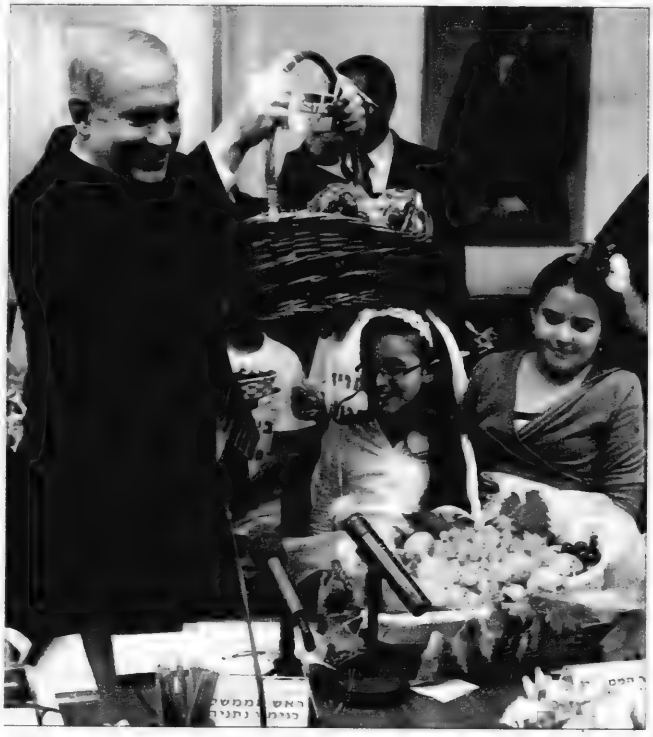

First fruits for the cabinet

At the start of the cabinet meeting in Jerusalem this week, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a basket of grapes given to him by a group of children on the eve of Shavout, the festival of first fruits. *[Flash90 photo]*

CJN wins awards

The Ontario Community Newspaper Association last week conferred two awards upon *The Canadian Jewish News*. In the better newspaper competition for 2009, *The CJN* received a first-place designation for editorial writing for newspapers with a circulation over 10,000 and a third-place designation for local retail layout.

Federations urge Israel to withdraw conversion bill

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

North American Jewish federations, including those in Canada, are joining rabbis representing the majority of North American Jews in calling on the government of Israel to withdraw a proposed conversion bill that they term "dangerous" and inconsistent with democracy.

In a letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, spokespeople for the mainstream Jewish organizations say they have "profound misgivings about the proposed conversion law."

While they applaud the intent of the bill to ease the conversion of the thousands of Russian immigrants, the letter writers believe the bill will fail to do this. In addition, it "will dangerously alter the Law of Return by consolidating conversion power in the hands of the Chief Rabbinate in ways that would be disastrous for the unity of the Jewish People," the letter states.

"By legislatively granting the power of conversion to the Chief Rabbinate exclusively, this bill explicitly connects conversion to a single religious stream. It does not recognize conversion via the streams that represent 85 per cent of Diaspora Jewry. This message is inconsistent with the democratic ideals on which the State of Israel was founded. Furthermore, it will undoubtedly alienate many North American Jews from Israel, widening an already precarious and growing rift that should concern us all."

The letter was signed by representatives of the Jewish Federations of North America as well as officers of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, the Rabbinical Assembly, the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Union for Reform Judaism.

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Russia, Syria conclude arms agreement – please see page 35

The News in Brief

Canada

Ex-soldier Sentenced

GUELPH, Ont. — An 83-year-old native of Germany who was a German soldier in World War II has been sentenced to six months in jail for scrawling anti-Semitic graffiti in various locations around Guelph, Ont. Judge Norman Douglas sentenced Max Mahr May 10 on charges of wilful promotion of hatred against an identifiable group. He was arrested and charged last September for hateful remarks against Jews found in private and public locations around Guelph. Court heard about 19 instances of graffiti that urged the killing of Jews. Mahr pleaded guilty in March. He was also sentenced to two years' probation and 40 hours of community service. The judge rejected Crown and defence suggestions that, as a former Hitler Youth member, he was a product of his time and should serve his sentence in the community. Canadian Jewish Congress strongly supported the sentence.

Wilma Kwinter, 74

TORONTO — Wilma Kwinter, wife of longtime York Centre MPP and former Liberal cabinet minister Monte Kwinter, died May 11 of cancer at age 74. She was described by her family as the "driving force" behind the political career of her husband, an MPP since 1985.

World

Memorial Unveiled

ATHENS — A memorial to Greek victims of the Holocaust was unveiled May 10 by government and Jewish officials in Athens. The mayor along with the president of the Athens Jewish community and head of the Central Board of Jews in Greece, unveiled attended the event. Athens is the last European capital and Greek city to erect a memorial to its Shoah victims. About 65,000 Greek Jews died in Auschwitz from 1941 to 1944. About 5,000 Jews live in Greece today.

Artist 'Owns' Golem

PRAGUE — A Prague court has recognized an artist's right to the image he designed of the Golem. The court last week acknowledged the right of the daughter of the late sculptor Jaroslav Horejc, who created an image of a burly clay giant for the Czech film *The Emperor's Baker/ The Baker's Emperor*, to the image of the character. According to legend, the Prague Golem was created by Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, chief rabbi of Prague in the 16th century, to defend the Prague ghetto from pogroms. Horejc's image was the first time the Golem was shown as a giant, inhuman figure and not a human figure.

Burger King To Close

JERUSALEM — Burger King will shut its Israel stores this summer. The 55 fast food outlets will be renovated and reopened as Israeli Burger Ranch restaurants, Orgad Holdings, which owns franchise rights to Burger King in Israel and owns the Burger Ranch chain, said last week. Burger Ranch operates 52 outlets in Israel. Burger King joins Starbucks, Wendy's and Dunkin' Donuts as U.S. franchises that failed in Israel. Israelis seem to prefer an Israeli-style burger to Burger King's U.S.-style Whopper, Orgad said. Burger Ranch, originally from South Africa, opened in Israel in the '70s. McDonald's came in 1993.

Stanford Gets $12M For Jewish Studies

SAN FRANCISCO — The Jim Joseph Foundation will give Stanford University $12 million to renew its Jewish education studies department.

Sam Wineburg

The funding for the California university's School of Education will create a doctoral concentration in education and Jewish studies, and establish and endow a Jim Joseph professorship in education and Jewish studies.

The gift is the largest in the history of Stanford's School of Education. Stanford had offered a concentration in Jewish education from 1992 to 2002.

The school and the foundation say the grant will allow Stanford to join New York University as one of only two research universities in the United States offering a doctoral program in Jewish education.

Stanford will admit two students per year for the first three years of the program. One student will be added per year afterward to reach a total of seven.

The gift "[leverages] Stanford's depth and breadth in Jewish studies and our previous experience in the field of Jewish education," said education professor Sam Wineburg, who led Stanford's effort to renew the concentration.

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Kofflers give $20 million to namesake arts centre

JTA

One of Canada's leading Jewish philanthropic families has made one of the largest gifts ever to Toronto's Jewish community with a donation of $20 million for a revitalized arts centre.

The gift from the Koffler family, which was pledged several years ago, will go toward a new design and expanded facilities at their namesake Koffler Centre of the Arts.

The donation will fund a state-of-the-art facility that will include exhibition galleries; dance, music, visual and digital arts studios; performance and presentation spaces; and a bookstore, cafe and museum-standard gallery, according to a news release from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Philanthropists Murray and Marvelle Koffler established the centre in 1977. It offers some 65 classes a year in music, dance and visual arts for children and adults, and hosts visiting artists.

"We're delighted to follow up with the funds… and to encourage others to join us to build a state-of-the-art facility," Murray Koffler told *The CJN* last Thursday.

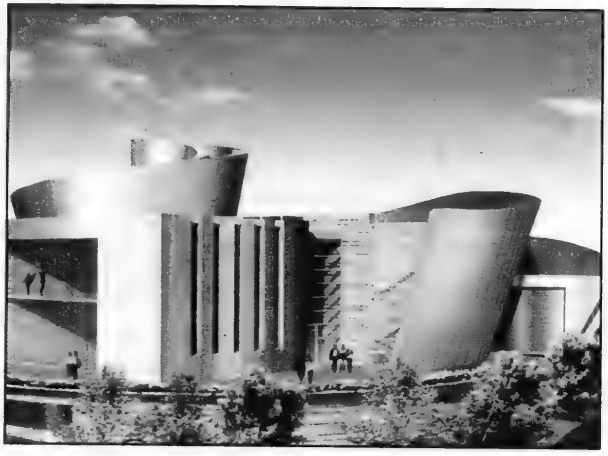
In addition to almost doubling the amount of space in the former facility, to 40,000 square feet, the new Koffler Centre will be "an eye-opener architecturally," Koffler said.

"It will be an exquisite piece of architecture… I think we will take our place amongst the major facilities in Toronto – the ROM, the AGO – to really give Toronto a magnificent renewed cultural facility – not only for the Jewish community, but it will be very attractive to the whole Toronto community."

The centre is situated on the 27.5-acre Sherman Campus, which also includes a Jewish community centre, the Holocaust Education Center, a sports complex and most of Toronto's Jewish communal services. The campus, on the site of the former Bathurst Jewish Community Centre, is under redevelopment as part of the Tomorrow Campaign.

"We are deeply grateful for this generous gift for the Koffler Centre of the Arts – a place that will be home to the finest in Jewish and world culture here in Toronto, as part of UJA's Sherman Campus development," Alan Winer, chair of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, said in a statement.

With files from Frances Kraft



Artist's rendition of the new Koffler Centre

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Greater Toronto Area

Existential repercussions

From the editor's desk...

In this space last week, I brought readers' attention to the extremely negative reaction by some students at Brandeis University to the invitation extended to Israel's Ambassador Michael Oren to address the university's graduating class.

In last week's edition, the paper also carried a story about the attempt to prevent Canadian author Margaret Atwood from accepting a prestigious Israeli literary prize. To her great credit and praise, Atwood, as well as South Asian author Amitov Ghosh, refused to surrender to the anti-Israel bullying.

The key common thread binding both stories together, of course, is the fact that they represent two different aspects of the international campaign to delegitimize the Jewish state.

The phrase, the delegitimization of Israel – despite its clunky, academic, complicated-sounding nature – is spoken now a great deal among supporters of the Jewish state. It needs to be. It is an armaments-laden warship intending maximum harm cruising steadily toward Israel from a clouded blood-red horizon.

Israel's enemies, in the main, have correctly concluded that they cannot defeat the Jewish state militarily. They have tried – often – and failed. That is not to say they have abandoned their efforts to harm the people of Israel. Terrorists and the states for which they are murderous, anarchic proxies still try to kill Israelis from time to time. But Israel's security forces, thank God, have been able to thwart most of those efforts recently.

This is also not to diminish the grave physical threats Israel faces from the missiles of Gaza, south Lebanon, Iran and increasingly of late, from Syria, too. The Israel Defence Forces stand in harm's way to try to prevent the missiles from flying, let alone landing.

Israel's singular ability to protect itself from military hostilities, however, has not been duplicated on non-military battlefields. It has not been successful in thwarting the worldwide campaign that defames it with an entire Roget's thesaurus of foul disparagements: an apartheid, occupying, colonialist, etc., state.

Many individuals have warned against this campaign for many years. Liberal MP Irwin Cotler, for example, was one of the first to point to the dangers of the cynical and calculated abuse of language by Israel's enemies.

The cumulative impact of some 40 years of generalized anti-Israel rhetoric made more infectious over the last decade by the additional "apartheid" calumny, the danger to Israel has become more imminent.

In the April 26 edition of *The Jerusalem Report*, Leslie Susser has written a highly informative yet chilling report on this very subject called *The Tide of Delegitimization*.

"The delegitimization strategy is not new," Susser notes. "But it is growing more insistent and the danger is that if allowed to go unchecked, it might achieve a critical mass that could seriously jeopardize Israel's existence as the state of the Jewish people."

Anti-Israel protests on campus

Susser explains why that is so.

"In comparing Israel to white supremacist apartheid South Africa, the delegitimizers have found the perfect tool for a potentially lethal two-pronged attack: if Israel is based on segregationist principles, it deserves to be spurned by the international community; and, if applied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the South Africa solution – one man, one vote, in a single unitary state – would mean the end of the two-state model, Israel and Palestine, and the end of Israel as the national home of the Jewish people. In other words, getting the Israel-apartheid analogy to stick is a formula for Israel's dismantlement.

"Over the past decade, the delegitimizers have had a number of high-profile successes, the most notable of which were the [UN] 2001 Durban [World Conference against Racism], which targeted Israel, and last year's United Nation's Human Rights Council's Goldstone report, which made allegations of Israel war crimes in Gaza. Both energized an ongoing campaign that has been making inroads in academic, trade unions, churches, the media, the UN and international legal forums.

"Worse: in recent years the challenge to Israel has been exacerbated by the "new media" through a glut of malicious anti-Israel blogging on the web and the use of social networking to mobilize anti-Israel activities."

Susser is a thoughtful, veteran analyst. He is not prone to overstatement or alarmism. His observations should be carefully noted and studied.

Typically also, Susser does not leave the subject without also exploring possible responses to the delegitimizers. He refers extensively to an interview he conducted with Eran Shayshon, one of the authors of a report by the non-partisan, Tel Aviv-based think-tank, the Re'ut Institute.

In next week's column, I will share some of the possible responses to the campaign to delegitimize Israel.

– MBD

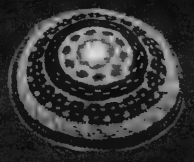
See]N

BIRTHRIGHT BASH

Young adults from Canada participating in the Taglit Birthright program join in celebrating 10 years of the program at an event held at the International Conference Center in Jerusalem last week. Taglit-Birthright is a free 10-day educational trip offered to Jewish young adults ages 18 to 26.

[Flash90Photo]

THE ISRAELI SOURCE



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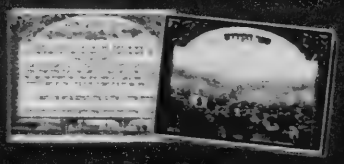

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Greater Toronto Area

City could pull Pride funds if QuAIA marches

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

On the heels of the Conservative government's decision not to give the Toronto Pride Parade federal dollars, a motion by two city councillors is seeking to pull municipal funding from the event if an anti-Israel group is allowed to participate again this year.

The City of Toronto contributed $121,000 to the parade in 2009, and city council had planned to give it the same amount this year.

But at the May 12 city council meeting, councillor Giorgio Mammoliti put forward a motion – seconded by David Shiner – to withhold city funding for the July 4 event if Queers Against Israel Apartheid (QuAIA) is allowed to march, as it did in 2009.

The motion urges the city "to advise the Pride organizers that the City of Toronto's 2010 funding and support be revoked" if they don't invoke the city's anti-discrimination policies and bar the group.

The agreement of at least two-thirds of councillors at last week's meeting was required for the motion to have been debated and brought to a vote, but it didn't receive the required support.

It was then referred to council's executive committee – the body chaired by the mayor that makes recommendations on funding and strategic priorities – for more debate before it comes back to council on July 6, two days after the parade happens.

If QuAIA applies and is refused entry to the parade, the issue of revoking city funds is moot. However, if the group is accepted, council will then vote on whether to revoke funding, which is being held up because of the motion, said Rita Davies, the city's executive director of cultural services, who administers the Pride grant.

Either way, the executive committee will know what Pride Toronto decides by June 4, the deadline for parade applications.

As of last week, QuAIA had not submitted an application to take part in the parade, said Tracey Sandilands, executive director of Pride Toronto.

Reached late last week by e-mail, Elle Flanders, a spokesperson for QuAIA, told *The CJN* that her group will be submitting an application to march. Flanders wrote that as a Jew who grew up in Israel, she was "personally not interested in being represented by homophobes like Mammoliti."

She added: "I am further embarrassed at the breakdown of democratic process when it comes to criticism of Israeli state policy. Mammoliti's motion is without basis: criticism of Israel does not equal hate. Crying anti-Semitism where it does not exist is harmful to the Jewish community."

Councillor Karen Stintz, who supports Mammoliti's motion, said that even if Pride refused QuAIA's application, it would still be possible for its members and supporters to march individually, as long as they didn't "carry banners."

"The group may choose to march without any banners, and we can't stop people from marching, as long as they don't carry [signage]," Stintz said.

She added that the city has notified Pride Toronto in writing that its funding is "in jeopardy" if they don't adhere to Toronto's anti-discrimination policy.

Asked if Pride had received any official letter from the city stating it would revoke funding from the parade if QuAIA was allowed to participate, Sandilands replied: "We have received no formal letter from the city about anything. However, during our meetings with city representatives, we have undertaken, and agreed in writing, that we will ensure compliance by all parade participants with the city's policies, which require that we present an environment that is positive and welcoming to all participants, and we intend to keep our word on this."

In April 2009, Pride Toronto signed the city's Declaration of Non-Discrimination, which requires it to declare that it "adopts and upholds" Toronto's policies prohibiting harassment and guarantees that the parade will be free of "hate activity based on age, ancestry, citizenship, religion, ethnic origin, disability, family status, gender identity, place of origin, race and political affiliation" among other criteria.

Martin Gladstone, the lawyer, filmmaker and gay rights activist who helped bring attention to the 2009 parade's alleged contravention of city anti-discrimination regulations – most notably through through his recently released film *Reclaiming Our Pride* – has asserted that QuAIA's presence in the parade introduces an element of "hate-messaging" through "political advocacy" based on the group's claims that Israel is an apartheid state.

He said the parade is about the celebration of gay rights, not "the demonization" of Israel.

"If a publicly funded venue lets in groups that promote hate and intolerance with false branding and lies, that is not free speech. That is a form of hate speech," Gladstone said. "It is especially hateful, as Israel is a gay haven, and these groups are silent and ignorant about the treatment of gays in the greater Arab and Muslim world. QuAIA can say what it wants, just not on our dime. Let them apply and get their own parade."

The Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center issued a statement last week supporting Mammoliti's motion, calling on the city to use the "window of opportunity to do the right thing and prevent hate groups like QuAIA from fomenting hatred and discord in the annual parade."

Shiner said council's consideration to revoke funding from Pride isn't a "Jewish community" issue.

"This motion means if [event organizers] don't abide by the same policies that everyone else has to abide by regarding using city facilities or receiving city funding, then the city will reconsider supporting the organization," he said. Meanwhile, the province says it has already put through its $300,000 to help fund the parade through its Celebrate Ontario program.

Mukunthan Paramalingham, spokesperson for Ontario's Ministry of Tourism and Culture, said while provincial money has already "flowed through" to Pride, the province is "aware of concerns that have been raised and [we] are currently monitoring the situation."

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Is Russia reverting to its old form?

Ill winds wafted westward last week from Moscow. They carried with them the distinctly disquieting, odious essence of the anti-Israel (and anti-West) policies from the worst days of the KGB/NKVD/Cold War/Kremlin attitudes of the old Soviet Union.

A flurry of news items last week carried the currents of the bad air.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Syria. He was there to conduct a great deal of business, the first item of which was the feasibility of Russia building a nuclear power plant for the government in Damascus.

In the midst of the discussion concerning the reactor, Medvedev took time to visit with Khaled Meshal, the leader of Hamas. The fact that Meshal and his organization, Hamas, are theologically, militarily and politically committed to Israel's annihilation did not seem to bother the Russian leader.

At the end of the week, the Russian news agency Itar-Tass announced that the Kremlin will supply Damascus with warplanes, anti-tank weapons and air defence systems. As reported in *Ha'aretz*, Mikhail Dmitriyev, head of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Co-operation, said Russia will supply Syria with MiG-29 fighters and truck-mounted Pantsir short-range surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery systems. He did not specify the kind of anti-tank weapons.

The prospect of a nuclear reactor in Syria poses major security challenges for the region.

The high-profile visit by the president of Russia to the head of Hamas was annoying as well as a rebuff of Israel.

But the announcement of the sale of weapons to Damascus is very troubling. Syria is an ally of Iran, a conduit of Iranian weapons to Hezbollah and a haven to terrorists and terrorist organizations, such as Hamas. Moreover, weapons sold previously to Syria by Russia were passed along to Hezbollah and used against Israel in the Second Lebanon War in 2006. Rather than moderating Syrian behaviour – trying to incline it toward accommodation and peaceful coexistence with Israel – Russia is doing the very opposite. It is assiduously ensuring that Syria remains aligned with the forces opposed to peace.

While Medvedev was fully engaged in Damascus, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Moscow warned the United States and other western nations not to unilaterally impose sanctions on Iran. Both the European Union and the United States are trying to devise a fall-back option to prevent the development of nuclear weapons in Tehran if the United Nations Security Council fails to agree on meaningful sanctions. Given these and other Russian pronouncements, not to mention the Chinese reluctance to impose sanctions on Iran, Security Council agreement is quite unlikely.

The events of the past week raise the unpleasant question: is Russia reverting to its old form? Let's hope not.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The government readied new austerity measures after consumer prices rose 19.4 per cent in April 1985, one of the largest monthly increases in Israeli history. The austerity measures included new taxes, a $23-billion (US) budget cut, and cuts to subsidies on basic food items, fuel and public transit. The increases, which far exceeded economists' expectations, came amid eight months of wage and price controls.

Dry Bones WAY OUTLOOK
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YES IT IS.
THERE'S THE FINANCIAL COLLAPSE OF GREECE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE E.U.
EUROPE'S ISLAMIZATION, THEIR GROWING ANTISEMITISM.
AND THEIR INABILITY TO FACE THE THREAT FROM IRAN!!
ACTUALLY I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE DARK CLOUD OF VOLCANIC ASH
AND THERE'S THAT TOO!
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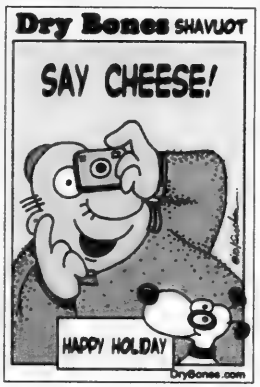
Anti-Semitic incidents in Montreal

I read the article "Montreal Jews fear 'gang atmosphere' amid rise in anti-Semitic incidents" in the May 5 edition of *Ha'aretz* and couldn't even recognize my own city (The *Ha'aretz* article is referred to in "Anti-Semitic crime stats refuted by Jewish leaders," *CJN*, May 13). The portrait that was painted of a community under siege is simply not an accurate reflection of how Jewish Montreal looks or feels.

Montreal, a fascinating, diverse and bilingual city, is a wonderful place in which to be Jewish. Both English and French communities recognize us as an important part of the rich fabric of our city and value the vibrancy we lend to the cultural blend. Our community recently held an Israel Day rally in the heart of downtown that attracted 13,000 participants. Later this month, thousands of people will join in our March to Jerusalem, our largest community walkathon. Israeli musicians will perform at this summer's Montreal International Jazz Festival. The city's Festival Sefarad is Canada's largest celebration of Sephardi culture. Montreal has the highest percentage of children attending Jewish day schools of any city in North America. We are not afraid to express our pride in being Jewish in very public ways, and we confidently send our children to Jewish institutions every day.



Is there anti-Semitism in Montreal? Unhappily, yes. Are anti-Semitic acts occasionally perpetrated? Unfortunately, yes. We must understand – though not accept, of course – that in any major urban centre there will be exceptions to the rule of civility, respect and tolerance. However, the statistics quoted in the *Ha'aretz* article are self-reported and anecdotal. Moreover, they don't distinguish between hate crimes and less extraordinary criminal activity, and are, therefore, of dubious accuracy.

Federation CJA is at the forefront of the fight against anti-Semitism. We engage in large-scale and widespread advocacy efforts to call attention to it and counteract it, in all its manifestations. Mindful of the international context, we understand the need to maintain vigilance. Several years ago, we created a department of community security, whose services we provide to the entire community. Many institutions have benefited from the federal Security Infrastructure pilot program, which enables us to provide better protection and to enhance our sense of well-being.

Andrés Spokoiny
Executive Director, Federation CJA
Montreal

* * *

Al Jazeera Canada

The scope of Al Jazeera Canada's international news coverage redresses the mainstream media's relative neglect of events in the Muslim world ("Al Jazeera launches English-language service," May 13). However, some of the human interest programs that Al Jazeera has broadcast are troubling. One program was devoted to Palestinian accusations of Israeli land theft; another examined the attitudes of Israeli Druze to conscription. Both programs lacked objective historical contexts and opposing viewpoints. Their common anti-Zionist message was loud and clear.

Al Jazeera seems to take its CRTC license as permission to engage in insidious and hateful propaganda. The CRTC should not hesitate to revoke this network's licence should its early days prove indicative of what is to come.

Howard Damie
Montreal

* * *

New Israel Fund's grants

For me the problem with the New Israel Fund (NIF) is crystallized in the sentence about the views of Rabbi Eva Goldfinger of the Oraynu Congregation for Humanistic Judaism: "She says she supports about 80 per cent of its views, disagreeing mostly with its granting funds to what she called violent Palestinian groups" ("Criticism key to democracy, New Israel Fund president says," May 13).

That "20 per cent" is what I'd call the deal-breaker. What's the point of supporting an organization that expends 80 per cent of its efforts pushing for a vibrant, fair-minded democracy, if the other 20 per cent of the time it does its utmost to undermine that democracy by funding Israel's enemies?

In that sense, the percentages are largely irrelevant. After all, Hezbollah is involved in a number of socially valuable activities, too – building hospitals and schools and the like. In that sense, we might think of it as "the New Lebanon Fund." But that neither changes nor mitigates the fact that it intends to annihilate Israel – an agenda that has the full backing of the "violent Palestinian groups" that, foolishly and suicidally, the NIF supports.

Mindy G. Alter
Toronto

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Coalition leaves British Jews uncertain

By WINSTON PICKETT
JTA

With Britons uncertain of how the country's first coalition government since World War II will go about governing, the country's Jewish community appears to be taking a wait-and-see approach to the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat government.

Nick Clegg

During the campaign, many Jews expressed alarm at Liberal Democratic positions on Israel.

Now party leader Nick Clegg, who last year called for a European arms boycott of Israel, is Britain's deputy prime minister. And William Hague, the Conservative party leader who, during the 2006 Lebanon war, called Israel's military response to Hezbollah's attack "disproportionate," is the new foreign minister.

What influence that will have on British foreign policy is, like much about the new government, a political unknown.

The new prime minister, David Cameron of the Conservative party, has been a strong backer of Israel. It is one of the many issues on which the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have fundamental philosophical differences. Others include how to trim the country's deficit and bring spending under control.

> *'With so much on the government's plate, Israel – along with foreign policy in general – will be put way on the back burner'*

"With so much on the government's plate, Israel – along with foreign policy in general – will be put way on the back burner," said Robin Shepherd, foreign policy director of the Henry Jackson Society think tank and author of *Beyond the Pale: Europe's Problem with Israel*.

"Given that both parties in the coalition will be preoccupied with the economy and that the Conservative party has shown no real interest in the Middle East anyway, the British Foreign Office will find itself in an immensely powerful position to influence the direction of policy," Shepherd said. "In other words, the Arabist-oriented bureaucracy is likely to inherit a lot of power by default as top politicians attend to other matters."

Candidates affiliated with the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats said the Jews should not worry.

"I don't think the Jewish community has anything to fear," said Robert Halfon, a Jew and a prominent figure in Conservative Friends of Israel who won a parliamentary seat last week for the Conservatives representing Harlow, north of London.

Matthew Harris, a Liberal Democratic candidate in Hendon who finished third in a race won by the Conservative candidate, said, "I think British Jewry will be pleasantly surprised by this government, and particularly by the quality of the five Lib-Dem cabinet ministers that will be taking up their posts. Whether on faith schools, security or even Israel, I think people will find the Lib-Dems and this coalition to be broadly supportive of Jewish interests."

For the time being, official Jewish bodies made do with issuing pro forma statements congratulating the new government.

The country's Jewish umbrella group, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, published a statement saying it "warmly welcomes the new prime minister, David Cameron, and his coalition Conservative/Liberal Democrat government" and that it "looks forward to a constructive, fruitful working relationship with Mr. Cameron, his cabinet and his wider team, together with a continued, regular dialogue with politicians of all parties and key civil servants."

Jeremy Newmark, chief executive of the Jewish Leadership Council, had no comment.

"As a strategic body, it is not our role to provide a running commentary on a government that has yet to finalize its cabinet and set out key policies," he told JTA.

Leaders of various Jewish organizations are hoping the candidates' pledges to the Jewish community, made in interviews with the country's main Jewish newspaper, the *Jewish Chronicle*, will hold fast. Both Clegg and Cameron promised support for security for the community. Clegg pledged to put 3,000 more police officers on the streets, and Cameron backed the funding of security around Jewish institutions, including schools.

As for the faith schools themselves – a major concern for many British Jews – new Education Secretary Michael Gove has long been considered a staunch advocate of Jewish communal interests, particularly in countering anti-Semitism. Gove, a former *Times* columnist and the author of *Celsius 7/7*, critiquing what he deemed the lax policies of Britain and the West toward terrorism, has publicly voiced his support of state-supported Jewish schools and pledged that the schools "will not have to pay for security" under a Tory government.

David Cameron

Both Cameron and Clegg said they backed changes to the current "universal jurisdiction" legislation, which allows British magistrates to issue arrest warrants for visiting foreign politicians and military staff. The law has been used to target Israeli officials and soldiers for alleged war crimes, in some cases scaring away Israeli officials from visiting Britain.

Cameron and Clegg have also spoken out forcefully against anti-Semitism.

As news of Britain's new coalition government sank in, Jews also were trying to assess how the government's priorities for cutting spending would affect domestic Jewish interests.

"It's too early to know how a deficit reduction program will impact on funding for state-supported Jewish schools and social services," said David Seidel, a community organizer in Brighton and a member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. "Ditto for the final outcome of the new government's policies generally, as well as whether the government can remain stable."

In post-election analyses, it appeared that the Jewish community, like the rest of Britain, swung Conservative in last week's vote.

In an analysis by the London Jewish Forum of 18 parliamentary constituencies, 40 per cent of Jews voted Conservative, 37 per cent voted Labour and 19 per cent voted Liberal Democrat. That differed only slightly from the London-wide general vote, which went 34 per cent Conservative, 37 per cent Labour and 22 per cent Liberal Democrat.

"This is a shift from a dominant Labour preference in years past and is something that is important to keep in mind on the local level where day-to-day Jewish interests are represented," said the director of the London Jewish Forum, Alex Goldberg. "When faced with budgetary cutbacks promised by the new coalition government, grassroots alliances are key."

Meanwhile, Jewish British ministers David and Ed Miliband are both set to run for the leadership of the Labour Party in the wake of prime minister Gordon Brown's resignation. The brothers are the sons of Jewish immigrants to Britain.

Brown stepped down last week as prime minister, and said he'll also step down as Labour leader by September.

The Milibands lost about 80 family members in the Holocaust. Their mother is Polish-born Marion Kozek. Their late father was Belgian-born Marxist intellectual Ralph Miliband.

British citizen identified as Dubai suspect

JTA

LONDON — A British citizen who travelled on his own passport has been identified as a suspect in the assassination of a Hamas commander in Dubai, a British newspaper reported.

The *Independent* reported Sunday that the 62-year-old British citizen entered Dubai under his own name and carrying his genuine British passport. His father is believed to be a Jewish Palestinian who moved to Britain after World War II. The man is believed to be hiding in western Europe, according to the report.

Dubai police have informed Interpol of the name and passport number of the suspect. The *Independent* decided not to publish the suspect's name.

The new suspect brings to 33 the number of people accused by Dubai police of being part of the assassination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in a hotel room in January. The Israeli Mossad intelligence agency has been blamed for the slaying, in which Mabhouh apparently was suffocated after being drugged.

In March, an investigation by Britain's Serious and Organized Crime Squad found that the Mossad provided members of an assassination team with forged British passports.

The assassins used forged passports from Britain, Ireland, Australia and Germany to enter and leave Dubai. One of the newly identified assassins used a French passport.

Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its involvement in Mabhouh's assassination.

Opinions

More on hair and equality

Equality is a difficult concept to define and apply. It pertains to principles, values, opportunity and agency. There are variables of culture, history and belief that underlie distinctions of significance and merit.

Norma Baumel Joseph in Montreal

When in my last column I wrote about women's head coverings, I wasn't oblivious to the distinction between issues of equality and identicality. The ongoing struggle for women's equality is not and has never been about women's desire to be like men. Rather, it stems from the human aspiration for full rights, duties and privileges.

Our society claims that we grant equal rights, but what does that mean?

For those women who chose to wear a head covering, I argued that our principles of freedom of religion and civil rights guarantee the right to choose. Whether the choice emanates from a desire to follow a religious precept, to stand and proclaim one's identity, or to mark one's place in a system of relationships doesn't matter. From society's perspective, the dispute should not be about imposed notions of equality, but about the right to self-identity and freedom of choice.

In fact, some women opt to uncover their heads, to show their freedom by challenging those notions of women's place and control. That decision is also one of choice and agency. It's often applauded as a sign of equality in western society. From our society's perspective, both choices should be equally tolerable. (For the purposes of this discussion, I'm not including issues of security, which raises other questions.)

Accordingly, when I argued that Jewish women should cover their heads in prayer, what was I demonstrating? It seems that some thought my point was that women should don the kippah as a sign of male equivalence or worth. For me, the issue is surely not one of gender identicality. Women don't want or need to be like men. Women should cover their hair at prayer only if the requirement is for a Jew to enter a sacred space or to pray with a covered head.

If the issue is rendered as Jewish, not gendered, then women should follow that tradition to pronounce their Jewishness.

The problem of course lies in the face of our androcentric texts. For ages, our definition of a Jew was male. All our norms were geared toward a man's performance. We need to redefine our conceptual standard.

Women are part of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. I believe women should practice the requisite rules as Jews, created equal in the image of God.

Does this wall unite or divide us?

"If you can do life review with a forgiving heart, your last 30 years will be quite transformed." So said Jane Fonda in a recent *New York Times* interview.

Jean M. Gerber in Vancouver

I am starting on those last three decades (I hope). We'll see how far I get.

According to this fitness guru, I should do a life review now, lest I miss that transformation.

Shakespeare saw old(er) age as a state in which we totter on, "sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything." Of course in his era, most people over 50 would be dead, totally infirm or considered sorcerers to live that long in an age of plague and war.

I have been fortunate to have a loving family, live in a democracy and be able to serve my community.

But I must include in this review a place, that, over the years, has had its meaning eroded in my heart.

Let's begin in Britain, where an ad for tourism in Israel depicting the Western Wall as part of its photos of Israel has been banned. People are appalled. Is not the Western Wall, the retaining wall of Herod's Second Temple mount, the supreme symbol of our people's return to their land and Jerusalem?

Well, yes and – more and more in recent years – maybe no.

I recall the first time I saw that remnant. It was a narrow strip of stone in a dark alley of the Old City. It was 1964. Jordanian soldiers patrolled the streets, and, of course, no Jews were praying at the Kotel, as they were barred from entry into their former homes and holy places. How I got there is a story for another time.

So it was with wonder that I came early one May morning in 1971 to see the Wall, newly restored and accessible to all who wanted to worship or just to gaze on this long-hidden symbol. In fact, I woke the entire family at 5 a.m. on our first day in Jerusalem to march them down to the Kotel so they could share the moment with me.

Over the years, each visit to that site has driven those moments of awe and wonder further away from me. Now women guards – for that is what they are – in ultra-religious garb demand that we dress, act and worship not from the heart but from the clothing. In fact they, like their men-folk, can attack without warning should we dare to wrap ourselves in tallit – never mind opening our mouths to sing.

And the State of Israel connives in this horrid takeover of a site that should belong to all. In fact, it can arrest us and charge any woman who dares to defy the ban.

Female soldiers aren't welcome at the wall for their induction ceremonies. It has been said that they're forbidden to sing the national anthem, merely to mouth the words, so that their voices will not offend.

Should we dare to take issue with Britain? We might want to pause in our indignant outrage and consider that maybe the wall isn't really a symbol of the state. Maybe, until it is returned to the entire Jewish people, it should not be so regarded.

Any life review I undertake includes my dedication to, and love for, the country of Israel. I once hoped to live there, and although that wish didn't come to pass, I have striven over the years to be there in good times and bad. (In fact, my children sometimes wonder if we choose to go there only when times are bad.)

But I don't live there, nor do I suggest a solution to the political *matzav*. One thing I do believe: we are in danger of losing our way. The government's appalling disregard of fundamental women's rights, placating a small minority for political gain – for that is what its policies with regard to the Wall are – sets a dangerous precedent. What other rights will follow those of women into the dustbin?

If I am to cultivate a forgiving heart, I may have to start somewhere else.

Some contemporary immigration issues

Historically, Canada has experienced a love-hate relationship with immigrants. We have extended a welcoming hand to those from certain countries. But for some others, we have been considerably less hospitable.

Gerald L. Gall in Edmonton

For example, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Chinese immigrants were subject to the notorious head tax and many prospective Chinese immigrants were simply denied entry. In 2006, the government of Canada formally apologized for this travesty.

Our own community is particularly sensitive to the abysmal behaviour of Canadian immigration officials in 1939 who refused entry to passengers aboard the ocean liner, the St. Louis. These desperate Jews were struggling to escape Nazi persecution and could find refuge in no country in the western world. Recently, the Canadian Jewish Congress received a grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to establish a St. Louis exhibit under the Community Historical Recognition Program.

After World War II, the doors of Canada swung open, permitting a wave of immigration that continues today. Demographic projections published by Statistics Canada indicate that by 2017, up to 23 per cent of the Canadian population will be members of a visible minority, and, by the year 2031, there might be twice as many individuals who are visible minorities as there are today.

Clearly, we are still a welcoming nation. And fortunately, Canada is not experiencing the strong backlash to immigration evident in parts of Europe and the United States. The government of France is proposing to ban Muslim women from wearing a full-face veil in public (either a niqab or a burqa). In Arizona, a new immigration law directed at stemming illegal immigration apparently permits racial profiling as a means to effect its enforcement.

Canada is, however, experiencing some changes in its immigration law and policy, particularly in connection with reform to our refugee system. Canada is known as a refugee-friendly country with a comparatively expansive policy related to those seeking asylum. We have traditionally identified refugee-producing nations and have had a somewhat negative attitude in respect of those applying from other countries. Now, we will be more receptive to asylum seekers from non-refugee-producing countries, the so-called safe countries of origin. Another change in our refugee policy relates to the timely removal of failed asylum claimants who, until now, were able to remain in Canada for years before their deportation was finally effected.

For immigrants who have successfully attained the status of permanent residents, there are private and public agencies in Canada that can assist with settlement issues. For example, for the past 85 years, Jewish immigrants have benefited from the work of the Jewish Immigration Aid Services (JIAS). In Edmonton, the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers has provided settlement assistance to immigrants from diverse backgrounds. Citizenship and Immigration Canada has established an Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program and plans to enhance its settlement program with respect to refugees.

One concern in this settlement process relates to the accreditation of persons with foreign credentials. Many foreign-trained professionals are denied accreditation in their chosen fields and instead must earn their livelihoods in unrelated areas of employment. The matter is made more difficult, given that the accreditation of foreign training is a matter of provincial jurisdiction and there is only a limited role that the federal government can take with respect to this aspect of settlement. However, the government of Canada has recently announced that it is taking measures through Canada's Economic Action Plan to work with the provinces and territories in developing a common approach to recognition of foreign credentials.

For many, the culmination of the immigration process occurs on the day they acquire Canadian citizenship. However, there are some prospective changes with respect to citizenship. For example, in the past, some immigrants have been able to get by without ever learning to speak either English or French. However, the federal government is now proposing that future citizens must demonstrate a degree of proficiency in one of our two official languages.

New Canadians citizens learn the importance of the values entrenched in our Canadian constitution. These values include government adherence to principles of fundamental justice. It is hoped that all aspects of the immigration process continue to reflect this constitutional imperative.

The Kirshner File

Dutch Jewish child was saved by Christians

Max Arian, 70, a father of three grown children and a grandfather seven times over, lives in a graceful but worn mid-18th century building in the centre of Amsterdam. It is about two kilometres from Anne Frank House, the museum that immortalizes a Jewish teenager whose poignant diary has been read by millions in at least 60 languages.

Sheldon Kirshner in Amsterdam

While Anne Frank died of typhus at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp after she and her family were rousted from their hiding place and arrested by the Nazis, Arian survived the five-year German occupation of the Netherlands thanks to the courage and kindness of Dutch Christian families.

He was one of 5,000 Jewish children, mainly under the age of five, who were brought to safe havens by Dutch individuals and the Dutch resistance movement. A statue in Amsterdam's Buitenveldert district, where many Jews live today, pays tribute to these Dutch rescuers. While 3,500 hidden children like Arian survived, 1,500 were betrayed and murdered, according to Diane Wolf, the author of *Beyond Anne Frank: Hidden Children and Postwar Families in Holland*.

Dutch Jewish children who fell victim to the Nazis were among the 107,000 Dutch Jews and the more than one million European Jewish children who were murdered during the Holocaust. For the Jewish community, the Holocaust was an unsurpassed catastrophe. 78 per cent of Dutch Jews having lost their lives, the highest fatality rate in western Europe. On the bright side, Dutch Christians rescued a total of 25,000 Dutch Jews during the Nazi era, some of whom did not survive.

After the war, Yad Vashem – the Holocaust museum and research centre in Jerusalem – honoured 4,717 Dutch Righteous Gentiles. One of them, Jaap Penraat, who died in 2006 at 88, was instrumental in saving 406 Jews by providing false documents.

Arian, a toddler when he was saved from the clutches of the Nazis, did not require forged papers to survive. He was hidden by a succession of families in the largely Catholic south, the first area of the Netherlands to be liberated by Allied armies.

He was an only child, born in Amsterdam to Arnold and Rebecca (Bep) Arian in March 1940, two months before the German army invaded the Netherlands. Arian was 2-1/2 years old when dire circumstances forced his parents to hide him. The Nazis had already passed a series of draconian anti-Jewish edicts, and the first deportations had begun.

Arian's memories of those days are sketchy and fragmented, but he has been able to reconstruct the chain of events that saved him from certain death.

His uncle, Nico, a bicycle mechanic in a bike-crazy nation, took him to a kindergarten opposite the Hollandsche Schouwburg, a theatre where Jews were held until they were deported to Auschwitz or Sobibor via the Westerbork camp.

A man from the Dutch resistance movement – which was slow to develop in the Netherlands – brought Arian to a family willing to look after him. Within weeks, this family panicked and returned him to the sender, fearing they would be exposed and subjected to severe penalties by the Nazis.

The second family that cared for him and another Jewish child, the Hellebrands, was headed, he thinks, by a miner. "They were lovely people, wonderful people," said Arian, a retired journalist who wrote a story about them in the 1980s.

Max Arian

All in all, he stayed with the Hellebrands for up to six weeks. After the Hellebrands, Arian was in the care of a succession of families whose surnames he has forgotten.

In December 1943, he was sent to the Micheels , a working-class family in the town of Heerlen. "Somebody, I don't know who, brought me to their house on a bicycle in the rain," he said. "After I arrived, I was served tomato soup."

Arian remained with them until the end of the German occupation. The Micheels – a poor, simple, open, nice, church-going family who had two children older than Arian – became his foster parents. Not once was Arian ever permitted to venture outside. "It would have been too dangerous," he said. Nor, of course, could he attend kindergarten.

Arian and his wife, Maartge, a retired French teacher, maintained regular contact with Alexander and Lies Micheels and their children after the war. Alexander and Lies died in 1980 and 1984, respectively.

"They were almost like family," he said of his late foster parents, whom he addressed as "aunt" and "uncle." "I'd go there on Easter, Christmas and the summer holiday."

Arian also kept in touch with his foster brother, Eddy, who died a decade ago. He still sees his foster sister, Josephine.

Arian's father, a commercial painter whose ancestors settled in the Netherlands from Krakow, Poland, in the 19th century, was caught by the Nazis and dispatched to Auschwitz on the first transport from Westerbork in the summer of 1942. He was killed in August of that fateful year.

Arian's mother, whose family arrived in the Netherlands centuries ago, survived the Nazi era in hiding.

His maternal grandmother, Mietje, managed to survive the rigours of Thereresienstadt. But her husband and Arian's grandfather, Philip, was murdered in Auschwitz.

With the liberation of the Netherlands, Arian was reunited with his mother. He remembers that day clearly. "A strange woman stepped out of a car. She was my mother, but I didn't recognize her."

Initially, Arian did not want to leave his foster home. "I loved my foster parents. They had been very nice to me. And they didn't want to be separated from me, either. But they knew it would have been impossible to keep me away from my mother. They understood her pain."

A statue in Amsterdam honours Dutch Christians who protected Jewish children during the Holocaust.

[Sheldon Kirshner photos]

After leaving his foster family, Arian lived with his mother and grandmother, to whom he was particularly attached.

"She was very important to me," he said. "She was a lovely woman, good and brave."

His mother, who never remarried and suffered from depression, earned a livelihood as a fruit and vegetable wholesaler. She passed away in 2004, after Arian's grandmother died.

For a long time after the war, he was unable to resign himself to his father's death, hoping against hope that he would somehow return from the dead.

"These were thoughts and dreams," he explained.

After visiting Auschwitz in 1986 in the company of 90 other Dutch Jews, he finally ascertained that his father had died there. This confirmation enabled him to come to terms with his death.

Not surprisingly, Arian – who worked as a reporter and editor for *De Groene*, an arts and political weekly, for 25 years until his resignation in 2002 – cannot grasp why the Holocaust had such a profound impact on the Netherlands.

"Jews had been safe here. There was tolerance. This is such a nice country. There was anti-Semitism, but there was never a Dreyfus Affair, or pogroms. People were free. The idea that Dutch Jews would be killed on such a massive scale was simply inconceivable. Nobody thought anything terrible could happen."

On further reflection, he mused, "The Dutch didn't do enough to help. It took them too long to realize what was happening to the Jews. The Dutch people retreated into their own lives. They looked away. It was normal. When they protested the persecution of Jews in February 1941, it didn't help."

Arian is far from convinced that the Dutch were primarily indifferent to the plight of Jews. He has only to look into the mirror at himself for irrefutable validation.

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Jewish Life

Why the golden rule is golden

By RABBI ISSER PLINER

The story goes that a young Jewish man was approached by two non-Jews who tried to convert him to their religion. "What do Jews have? Only the Ten Commandments? Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. It sounds like it is speaking to a lowly people. Join us for we have the lofty ideal of 'love your neighbour.'"

Rabbinic Reflections

The young man, who was totally ignorant of his heritage, knew not what to say. He accepted the notion that "love your neighbour" had no connection to Judaism. Later, he attended a yeshiva for beginners, and he learned that "love your neighbour as yourself" is the Golden Rule for Jews.

Actually, our sages of the Talmud refer to this verse in the Torah as the "Great Rule." Rabbi Akiva coined the term, because he understood that "love your neighbour as yourself" is the foundation of most of the Torah's precepts. Hillel the elder expressed the same idea when he gave advice to a gentile who wanted to be taught the Torah while standing on one foot: "What you would not like someone to do to you, do not do unto others. This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and study."

The young man's story makes us aware that Judaism shares the golden rule with other religions. "Love your neighbour as yourself" serves as a central principle for millions of people in the world. In fact, we have come to understand it as a universal truism that would be adhered to even if it wasn't a verse in the Torah.

However, it would appear from the sayings of Rabbi Akiva and the story of Hillel the Elder and other statements recorded in the Talmud and midrash by our sages that to accept the Jewish concept of "love your neighbour" as at best a universal truism is to understate its true meaning and scope.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab addressed this issue. He asked: why does this verse of the Torah conclude with the words "I am God," as if to say this idea derives from God himself? What would that mean for the other verses that don't conclude with God's signature? "I am God" doesn't give the verse "love your neighbour" any greater status, since the entire Torah is the handiwork of the Almighty.

Rabbi Schwab explains that "I am God" concludes this verse specifically to dispel the notion that, through the prism of the Torah, "love your neighbour" is a universal truism. Rather, it's a value rooted in eternity and not affected by human nature and changing conditions. Our reason for striving to love our neighbours as ourselves is that the Almighty commanded us to do so and for no other reason.

The sages of the Talmud conveyed a similar message. The tractate of the Talmud that is dedicated to morals and ethics – Pirkei Avot – opens with the following statement: "Moses received the Torah from Sinai." Why does this tractate begin by telling us where Moses received the Torah from, while the rest do not? Was this the only tractate handed down to Moses on Sinai while the others derived from somewhere else?

Surely not. Our sages are telling us that not only was the entire compendium of Jewish law given on Sinai, but even the precepts of proper behaviour were handed down there. We may logically understand what proper behaviour is and the need to comport ourselves accordingly. Yet, the only reason to behave ethically and morally is because God commanded us to. For this reason alone, the golden rule to "love your neighbour as yourself" is truly golden.

Rabbi Isser Pliner is the dean of Eitz Chaim Schools in Toronto.

Goldman Sachs: a Greek tragedy

Money Matters

By Rabbi Jay Kelman CA

Just as we thought the recession was over and economies around the world had turned the corner, we are witness to charges of fraud against Goldman Sachs and the potential default on the massive debt owed by Greece. As I have often written, many of the economic issues have less to do with economics and much more to do with ethics.

The problems besetting Greece appear to be rooted in an ethic of entitlement – people demanding the right to continued high levels of services regardless of the ability of the country to afford them. As has been noted, 15 years ago, Canada and Greece had similar debt levels. Canada wisely chose the path of cutbacks, restraint and balanced budgets. Greece did not. There was some short-term pain in Canada, but today we're the economic envy of the world (which highlights how bad it is for many others), while Greece is in danger of going bankrupt.

Goldman Sachs is the most successful investment bank in the world. Whether part of the success is a result of illegal activity in their soliciting of investors is something we may never know. While any legal outcome will be greatly significant for Goldman Sachs, it's the firm's moral conduct that should concern us. So long as making money in every which way – barring outright illegality – is the only goal that really matters, we will continue to see innocents suffer and quality-of-life issues receive scant attention. While many businesses have recognized the importance of promoting a proper work-life balance, much of the professional investing world has not.

What's most interesting is that Pete Rose is barred from the Baseball Hall of Fame – despite unquestionably having had a baseball career that warrants such induction – because he bet either on games involving other teams or bet on his own team to win. He has become *persona non grata*, as the 1919 "Black Sox Scandal" is still fresh in the memory of baseball authorities. Yet many in the investment world have come to the defence of Goldman Sacks, despite the fact its recommendations of which stocks to purchase came from people who were actually betting against the same stocks they were recommending.

From the perspective of Jewish law, there's nothing inherently wrong with betting against one's clients – provided such "bets" are revealed to the investing public. Let the investor decide if they'd like to invest with advisers who don't have confidence in their own recommendations. (With the track record of many advisers, the answer may very well be yes.) We don't subscribe to the view that people should put their money where their mouth is, that the interests of professionals must be aligned with their clients.

In conducting business with others, one should be looking out for their own personal interests. It's in the realm of charity and acts of kindness that the interests of others should be paramount. The business world must be run with integrity, transparency, clarity and forthrightness, but Milton Friedman's motto that the business of business is business is not far off the mark.

One may be prohibited from using business profits for charitable purposes or for retaining staff who don't contribute to the ongoing success of the business. While one may do so as an act of charity if one is a sole proprietor, doing so for a public company or a nonprofit is a misapplication of benevolence. One can't be nice to someone at a third party's expense.

Goldman Sachs executives may be correct in asserting their innocence. They may have done nothing legally wrong. And that's the crux of the problem.

Send comments to rabbijay@torahinmotion.org.

Jewish Life

There was only one Maimonides

By MARTIN LOCKSHIN

If there were not incontrovertible evidence that there was only one man named Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides or Rambam: 1138-1204), it would be tempting to think that there were two, or even more. Some of his works display an unrivalled mastery of rabbinic literature, others an amazing mastery of a totally unrelated field: Greek and Muslim philosophy. Maimonides was also an accomplished physician and a prolific writer on medical issues. And he wasn't a scholarly recluse, but rather an involved leader of the Jewish community of Egypt. He also provided compassionate advice to other Jewish communities far from his home.

Martin Lockshin

New books on Maimonides are published all the time. Almost all of them have to take a stand on the vexing question of identifying who the "real Maimonides" was.

There are two mutually exclusive viewpoints on the issue. In the yeshiva world, the real Maimonides was the scholar of Halachah (Jewish law) who felt that God's Torah was the essential place for a Jew to look for truth. True, Maimonides also dedicated time to philosophy, but he did that, according to the understanding, only in order to save a few perplexed Jewish souls.

The antithetical viewpoint, supported by professors of philosophy, is that Maimonides saw truth as coming out of philosophical inquiry. The Torah may be an important document for regulating human behaviour, but, according to this understanding, the essential truths that human beings ought to be striving to find are attainable not through Torah or Talmud study, but through philosophy.

And of course there are a variety of compromise positions. (Some wags have argued that when Rambam scholars get together, they first have to set the ground rules: "Are we going to talk about Mymonides or Yourmonides?")

Two books that appeared in 2009 take positions on the Maimonides question. Both were written by scholars associated, now or in the past, with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Rabbi David Hartman's *Torah and Philosophic Quest (Expanded Edition)* and Sarah Stroumsa's *Maimonides in His World: Portrait of a Mediterranean Thinker*.

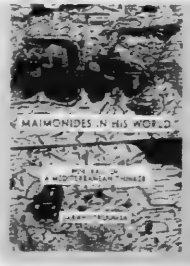
The first edition of Rabbi Hartman's book appeared in 1976, a few years after he left Canada and moved to Israel. In that book, he argued that the dichotomy between Maimonides the rabbi and Maimonides the philosopher was false. Through close readings of a number of texts from Maimonides, he argued that they were best understood by seeing Maimonides as committed to both Halachah and philosophy, and working toward integrating them.

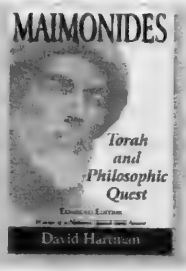
Now, 33 years later, Rabbi Hartman revisits the issue. His new book is actually just a reprint of the 1976 volume (with the same bibliography that stops in the early 1970s). He adds a 25-page postscript, in which he modifies his 1976 opinion that Maimonides pursued "the way of integration." Hartman's revised conclusion is that while Maimonides "believed in the value and importance of both Halachah and philosophic love of God," he "placed the latter above the former in the hierarchy of human activities."

For a scholar to modify his opinion publicly three decades after first recording it is perfectly reasonable and commendable. Many argue that Maimonides did the same, changing his opinion about many issues between his first major work, the *Commentary on the Mishnah*, composed around his 30th birthday, and his great work of philosophy, *Guide of the Perplexed*, composed two decades later.

In fact, some might argue that Rabbi Hartman and Maimonides both pursued the path of integration in their younger years while showing a marked preference for philosophy later in life.

Sarah Stroumsa's book about Maimonides is very different. (Tellingly, Stroumsa and Rabbi Hartman make no reference to each other's scholarship in their notes or bibliography.) With meticulous scholarly research, Stroumsa advances the clear thesis that a good understanding of Maimonides is impossible without solid knowledge of the intellectual life of the (non-Jewish) Mediterranean world that he came from.





Stroumsa's argument isn't based on one compelling piece of evidence, but on the combined force of a large number of proofs. In the framework of a short review, it's difficult to do justice to her argument, but I will summarize two fascinating examples of points of contact that she identifies between Maimonides' writings and the thought of the Islamic Mediterranean world in which he lived.

Maimonides once received a letter asking for his advice about a marital dispute. The husband claimed that his wife, having already raised a very large family, was refusing to sleep with him. The wife denied the allegation. The rabbi(s) who wrote to Maimonides didn't know how to proceed in such a case. Maimonides wrote back with the unusual suggestion that "reliable persons" should move in with the couple in order to determine what was really going on in their home. Stroumsa points out that this proposal has no precedent in Jewish law, but she shows that this type of marital therapy was commonly recommended in Muslim law books and practised in Muslim Spain, where Maimonides was born and grew up.

A second example is more controversial. Maimonides' life and the lives of all Jews of Muslim Spain were horribly interrupted by the 1148 invasion of Spain by the radical Muslim Almohades. Between the ages of 10 and 28, Maimonides lived under Almohade rule and may have had to pretend to be Muslim for part of that time. (The Almohades ignored the generally accepted Muslim legal principle that defined Jews as a protected minority [*ahl al-dhimma*]. Instead they forced Jews [and Christians] to convert to Islam.) Jewish historians often portray the Almohades as the benighted fanatics of medieval Islam.

Stroumsa reminds us, though, that the Almohades had among them a number of influential thinkers. In particular, they are known in Islamic studies circles for having a stricter interpretation than other Muslims of what the Islamic requirement of belief in one God entails. Maimonides, too, is known in Jewish studies circles for having the strictest definition of what the Jewish belief in one God entails, even writing in his great halachic work, the *Mishneh Torah*, that any Jew who takes the anthropomorphic language of the Bible (e.g. references to "God's hand" or "God's anger") literally is guilty of heresy. Almost all Muslims – even Maimonides' famous contemporary, the philosopher Averroes (or ibn Rushd) – and almost all Jews took a more forgiving attitude to the beliefs of the masses. Stroumsa offers the tantalizing suggestion that Maimonides learned his uncompromising attitude about monotheism specifically from the Almohades, the group whose uncompromising attitude had caused him and Jews in general much suffering.

The final word about Maimonides' thought has yet to be written, perhaps because no one who writes about him has mastered all the areas of knowledge that he mastered. But our understanding is richer from the attempts of scholars such as Rabbi Hartman and Stroumsa to shed new light on the great rabbi about whom it is said, "From [the biblical] Moshe to Moshe [Maimonides], there was none like Moshe."

Martin Lockshin is a professor of Jewish studies at York University and rabbi of the Toronto Partnership Minyan.

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Consul general calls for renewed outreach efforts

— *Suggests new approach to improve Israel's image* —

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

"What do you do when someone tries to isolate you? One simple thing: you make friends."

For Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general for Toronto and Western Canada, that's the key to his long-term ambition of changing Israel's image in Canada

But he believes making new friends for Israel will require a major shift by the local Jewish community to become more outward-looking and seek to build more ties with new immigrant groups.

In an interview late last month, Gissin – now midway through his four-year term – said the adversity faced by Israel and its supporters over the last few years – events such as Israeli Apartheid Week, boycott attempts against the Toronto International Film Festival for its focus on films from Tel Aviv and against the Royal Ontario Museum for its Dead Sea Scroll exhibit, and what he calls the ongoing "unholy coalition of Muslim radicals and anti-Zionist Jews" – is part of a larger, orchestrated attempt to isolate the Jewish state on the world stage.

That's why – despite the success of last year's Brand Israel pilot campaign in making Toronto a locus of positive exposure for the Jewish state, as well as a lightning rod for an anti-Israel backlash – he feels his work to repair Israel's image is just beginning.

The Canadian Jewish community can help, he said, by building lasting relationships with new immigrant groups who can benefit from lessons learned by Jews in overcoming obstacles and thriving in a new land.

Amir Gissin

Gissin said the Jewish community should give of itself "without immediate expectations of return," but with an eye to the long term.

"There are many things that can be done beyond pure philanthropic engagement," he said. "I want to suggest the following perspective: the [Canadian] Jewish community today is a strong one. That wasn't always the case. Still, it managed to build a functioning and flourishing [foundation] both culturally and financially.

"During this process, a huge experience was gained. And we now use these experiences every day in our [institutions]. But when we look at emerging, young communities, such as the African communities, we see groups who are inexperienced at building themselves up. They're troubled with more urgent issues, such as their own family struggles. This is where we can help."

Gissin said Jews should be deeply involved in mentoring and "engaging" with these communities.

"This is a vision currently not shared by most of the Jewish community," he lamented, saying that he hopes Jews, their lay leaders and their grassroots organizations will soon come to understand that "becoming relevant with other communities is the best safeguard to preserve the interests and goals of the Jewish community and in helping Israel" in the long term.

Gissin cited the Jewish-Somali Mentorship Project – which began last May and is supported by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canadian Somali Congress, the Canadian International Peace Project and Canadian Heritage – as a successful example of the "cross-culturalism" the community should be practising.

The Canadian Somali community is Canada's largest African diaspora community and one of the country's largest Muslim communities.

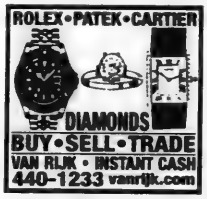
"The success of this project has caused the Somali community to look for ways to give back to us," he said.

Gissin said the current allies of the Jewish community and Israel are those who have had "good experiences" stemming from grassroots efforts of the past.

He said there's a "growing understanding" in Israel that the country needs to stop focusing on its "traditional" bilateral relationships and start focusing on other nations.

"Israel is beginning to engage more with more eastern European countries instead of western European ones," he said, adding that Israel isn't abandoning its traditional allies.

Continued on page 15



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'Canada perceived as a true friend'

Continued from page 14

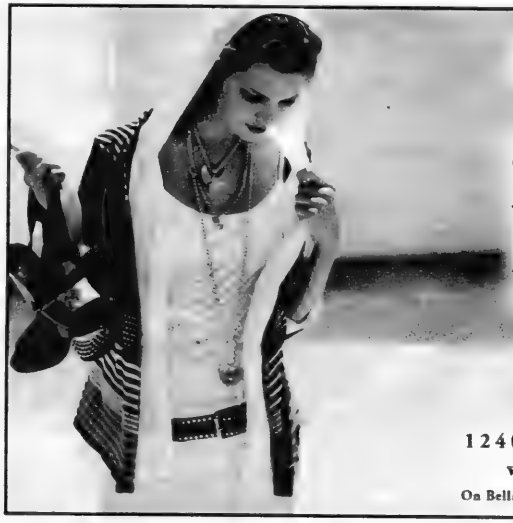
"Israel is developing a new focal point on relations with Europe," Gissin said. "[Relations with] countries like Poland, Hungary and Slovenia are now as deep, if not deeper, than western Europe."

Gissin said Canada is making a name for itself in Israel through its positive voting record at the United Nations and its various expressions of support for Israel, which have attracted attention in the Israeli media and the public arena.

"Compared to only a few years ago, Canada is now perceived by Israelis as a true friend, which is different than how they view most European Union countries," he said. "There's no doubt the Canadian Jewish community plays a central role in this shift."

Gissin had one last warning for Canadian Jews.

"Without intensive efforts to make more friends, we might wake up one morning to discover that the guys running the show [in Canada and the West] have different ideologies and commitments than the Jewish community does."



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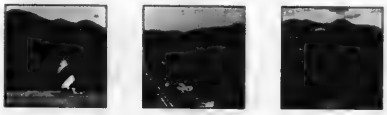

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Haifa underground parking lot to double as hospital

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

One day, you go to a hospital and leave your car in the underground parking lot. Then two days later, you return to the parking lot, but instead, your injury will be treated right there, said Suzanne Kaye, national executive director for Canadian Friends of Rambam (CFR).

This describes the current project for expanding the Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa, Israel.

Located close to the northern border of the country, the existing campus has faced rocket attacks in the past, such as during the Second Lebanon War, when the hospital protected its patients by bringing them to the basement.

In anticipation of another similar circumstance, the hospital came up with a plan to build a three-storey underground parking lot that could also be used as an emergency hospital.

Building an underground hospital for use only in wartime is impractically expensive, Kaye told *The CJN*.

Instead, in wartime, the hospital would replace the cars in the lot with 1,750 beds for their patients, where they can be treated while they are kept safe from chemical, missile and biological warfare, she said, stressing that hospital staff would be able to convert the parking lot quickly.

Actors show how an underground parking garage in Toronto could be turned into an emergency hospital. *[Canadian Friends of Rambam photo]*

The underground hospital could even be used to protect people during natural disasters such as earthquakes, Kaye added.

CFR arranged for actors to demonstrate the project to about 170 people from the professional and business community on May 4, bringing in hospital beds, equipment, and patients to the underground parking garage at Greenwin Square, 365 Bloor St. E., in Toronto.

The concept has "been kind of hard to understand for us here [in Canada]," said Kaye, explaining the reasoning for the demonstration.

It seems natural to park your car in a car park, and you assume it's always going to be there as a car park, she said. But "no, tomorrow it's going to be a hospital."

Guest speaker at the event at Greenwin Square was Michael Halberthal, head of the pediatric cardiac critical care unit and chief of triage at Rambam for mass casualty.

Part of Halberthal's job entails examining the patients entering the hospital during emergencies to determine who's to receive immediate treatment and who must wait. Although it's a difficult job, this ensures that people with serious injuries would receive care first, he told *The CJN*.

He described the planned underground hospital as completely safe and designed with special floors and ventilation systems to ensure that car fumes won't linger after conversion, affecting the treatment of the patients.

The builders have dug the hole and will begin adding cement soon, he said, adding that the project is slated for completion in about two years.

In total, developing the underground hospital will cost about $90 million (US), and Halberthal said the hospital is hoping to collect as much as possible through donations.

At the event at Greenwin Square, CFR advertised what they called a "garage sale," offering all 1,750 bed bays for purchase for $10,000 each, which would then be named for the donor.

There have already been a few purchasers, Kaye said, describing it as a great beginning.

As construction of the hospital/parking lot continues in Haifa, CFR plans to hold more events to share its progress.

As someone with an emotional and family connection to Israel, Kaye called the hospital/parking lot an essential cause, even for people who don't live in Israel.

Those living in the country call it their home, she said. "But when you live outside of Israel, it becomes your soul."

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Police hate report includes 'Nazi' as victim group

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Jews were the most targeted group in Toronto for hate crimes in 2009, but a couple of unexpected victim groups reported by police have some in the Jewish community shaking their heads.

Listed in tables of "victim groups" were "Nazi," "non-Jewish *shikse*" and even "police." They joined more conventional targets of hatemongers such as Jews, blacks and homosexuals.

Bernie Farber

Acting Insp. Steve Irwin defended the inclusion of the unorthodox categories in the Toronto Police Service's 2009 Annual Hate/Bias Crime Statistical Report. The victims "were affected by hate motivation," said Irwin, who headed the hate crime unit of the police intelligence branch for six years.

"They were targeted as identifiable groups."

But Bernie Farber, CEO of Canadian Jewish Congress, said it's absurd to include Nazis among protected victim groups. "It makes the law silly. It makes anti-hate laws' sentencing provisions ridiculous. That's why no court in this land or other police force we know of makes this distinction."

Farber's critique, expressed to Irwin after the report was available last week, appears to have had an impact on police thinking. Irwin told *The CJN* that following talks with Farber, "we've engaged in discussion on the report and how we are interpreting those incidents that Bernie has raised."

Those conversations are currently internal, but will also soon expand to include the attorney general's department, people in "the legal world" and "communities that we have relationships with," Irwin said.

Jews most targeted group in 2009

Inclusion in the report of an occurrence against a Nazi was based on police interpretation of Section 718 of the Criminal Code, which provides enhanced sentencing for crimes motivated by hate directed to a number of identified groups, but which includes a category of "similar factors," Irwin said.

The Nazi mentioned in the report was the victim of the crime of "mischief" because of his ideological beliefs, he said, adding similar attacks against mainstream political parties, such as the Liberals or Conservatives, would warrant the same inclusion.

Police were included in the report based on graffiti smeared on a school that stated, "kill them."

The "*shikse*" incident occurred within the Jewish community when the neighbour of a Jewish man who was dating a non-Jewish woman, disapproving of the relationship, escalated a verbal attack against the woman by smashing a window.

Len Rudner, Ontario regional director of Congress, said police are missing the point of Section 718 and the anti-hate provision, which protect groups based on characteristics that "can't be changed, are inescapable."

Meanwhile, the hate crime report stated 174 incidents were recorded by Toronto police in 2009, up 13.7 per cent from the year before, but only half the number registered in the peak year, 338 in 2001.

The 174 occurrences in 2009 "is still below the 17-year average of 201 occurrences by approximately 13.4 per cent," the report said.

"The victim group most targeted in 2009 was the Jewish community, with 52 occurrences. The [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered] community was the next most targeted, with 26 occurrences, followed by the black community with 24 occurrences and the Tamil community with six occurrences," the report stated.

"The Jewish community makes up just over four per cent of the population of the City of Toronto but was victimized in 30 per cent of the total hate/bias crimes in 2009," the report found.

Irwin acknowledged that for a city the size of Toronto, the number of criminal hate occurrences were few, but each incident is taken very seriously by police. "They're like murders to us, the most serious crimes," he said. "Like murders, hate crimes impact on what people perceive the city to be" as well as people's comfort levels in walking the streets.

Asked why police statistics differ so greatly from the 479 incidents in the GTA recorded by B'nai Brith Canada in its annual *Audit of Antisemitic Incidents*, Irwin said "our threshold is higher" and that only acts that are criminal in nature make the police list.

Farber agreed that "Toronto is one of the safest places for Jews to live." Credit for that should go to Toronto police and law enforcement services in neighbouring jurisdictions, which have made addressing hate crimes a priority, he said.

Centre's history reflects changing face of city

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

A plaque commemorating the colourful history of the Cecil Community Centre was unveiled last week as part of Heritage Toronto's Jewish Heritage Plaque initiative.

This is the fourth plaque erected as part of the Jewish heritage project, following one at the Kiever Shul in Kensington Market; one at the original site of the Federation of the Jewish Philanthropies of Toronto, now the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto; and another honouring the Young Men's-Young Women's Hebrew Assocation, at the site of the current Miles Nadal JCC on Spadina Avenue.

The Cecil Street building is a monument to the changing demographics of the area around College Street and Spadina Avenue, said Rebecca Carson, communications director of Heritage Toronto, a charitable organization and city agency.

"We're honouring the history of their support not just for the Jewish community but of Canada itself," she said.

Eric Slavens, a Heritage Toronto board member, said the project started when he sought ways to raise awareness of Toronto's Jewish history, leading to the series of plaques.

"The contribution of the Jewish community hadn't been properly recognized in the city through plaques," he said, adding that the goal was to mark places that shaped the city. Up next is the original Mount Sinai Hospital building on Yorkville Avenue, said Gary Miedema, co-ordinator of the Heritage Toronto plaque initiative.

Posing with the plaque commemorating the history of the Cecil Community Centre are, from left: Barry Weinberg, Eric Slavens and Helen Friedman.
[Photo courtesy of Heritage Toronto]

Although the Cecil Community Centre is now owned by the City of Toronto, it began as the Church of Christ in 1891, and as per Heritage Canada's policy, the plaque bears this name. It became the Ostrovtzer Synagogue in 1925.

In 1922, Israel Weinberg, who was in the fur business at the time, and David Sussman, who owned the Toronto Slipper Company, purchased the building for $22,000, naming it after Ostrovtze, their hometown in Poland, explained Barry Weinberg, grandson of founder and former synagogue president, Israel Weinberg.

They replaced the heavy bell tower with a dome, which is still a feature of the building today, Miedema said.

"Many of the leading cantors in America of the '40s, '50s, and '60s performed and launched their careers at this shul," Barry Weinberg said.

Helen Friedman, Israel Weinberg's daughter, said she remembered the cantors performing at the shul on Sundays, after they had stayed with her family at their home on Grace Street.

She said the building had a huge emotional significance for her, recalling, for example, that when she was a child, food was left in a neighbouring home so that she and the other children could eat on Yom Kippur.

She was also married in the synagogue, on Sept. 12, 1943.

In 1966, the building was turned into the Chinese Catholic Centre, reflecting the changing community.

In 1978, it became the Cecil Community Centre and a home for the Chinese Interpretive and Information Services, now known as the Chinese Information and Community Services.

"I saw the beautiful building and I saw the opportunity," said Ramon Tam, who was involved in the transformation of the building for the centre. "The city bought it and they didn't know what to do with it."

Activities now held there include classes for seniors and activities for kids. During elections, all-candidates meetings are offered where proceedings are translated for the Chinese audience.

Despite the changes, the building still retains remnants of its Jewish history. The chandelier has Stars of David, and at the entrance are marble plaques engraved with the names of the founders of the synagogue.

Barry Weinberg said his grandfather had stipulated in the original purchase agreement that even if the building was sold in the future, these Jewish symbols must remain to recall a time when it was a centre for the Jewish community.

"Only in a city like Toronto could we have one building representing so many cultures," Slavens said.

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Greater Toronto Area

Toronto-born rabbi gives bomb shelters to Israelis

— *Operation Lifeshield provides unique service* —

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Oh, a storm is threat'ning
My very life today
If I don't get some shelter
Oh yeah, I'm gonna fade away

War, children, it's just a shot away
It's just a shot away
– from Gimme Shelter by the Rolling Stones.

A Toronto-born man is saving lives in Israel.

Rabbi Shmuel Bowman is executive director of Operation Lifeshield, a non-profit organization that raises funds to build and deliver above-ground air raid shelters to Israeli municipalities that have been targeted by Hezbollah and Hamas bombardments in the past.

Rabbi Shmuel Bowman

Two weeks ago, Operation Lifeshield placed its 68th shelter near a school in Ashkelon, which was bombarded during the war in the Gaza Strip in 2009.

"We know we save lives," said Rabbi Bowman, a Torontonian who made aliyah in 1993 and has headed Operation Lifeshield since its formation in 2007. "If you're in a shelter during an attack, you won't be killed."

Operation Lifeshield, the only non-governmental organization in Israel active in this endeavour, was founded by two Israeli American businessmen, Shep Alster and Josh Adler, following the 2006 war in Lebanon.

By chance, they found themselves in the Galilee when war broke out and, like thousands of Israelis, had no place to hide when Hezbollah rockets struck Israel day after day.

Stung by this harrowing experience, they established Operation Lifeshield, which works in co-operation with the Israeli government and the Israel Defence Forces' Home Front Command.

Operation Lifeshield supplies two types of shelters – 30-ton models that hold up to 15 adults and 70-ton models that protect as many as 50 people.

The lighter model cost $19,000 to build, while the heavier one cost $38,000.

Both models are made of steel-reinforced concrete and can withstand direct hits and prevent shrapnel and bomb fragment injuries.

The majority of the shelters, 50, have been placed in southern Israel, in Sderot and environs, said Rabbi Bowman, who was in Toronto last week on a North American speaking tour to publicize Operation Lifeshield.

Prior to 2009, Sderot and a host of nearby communities were continually bombed by Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both of which are based in Gaza.

The remaining shelters have been placed in northern Israeli towns such as Safed and Karmiel, both of which are within range of the Lebanese border.

The shelters are open to Jews and Arabs alike, said Rabbi Bowman. "This is a humanitarian project."

For the past year, Operation Lifeshield has focused its efforts on sending shelters to Ashkelon.

"The people of Ashkelon became painfully aware that they are very vulnerable," he explained. "We've covered Sderot. It's done. There is no need for us to be there anymore. Now the focus is on Ashkelon."

In 2010, Operation Lifeshield will place 16 more shelters in Ashkelon.

Next year, Operation Lifeshield plans to concentrate on Ashdod and the Haifa region.

But as Hamas and Hezbollah upgrade their rockets, Operation Lifeshield may well expand its activities to the coastal region around Tel Aviv, Rabbi Bowman said.

"The entire country needs coverage," he added.

In general, shelters are required in parks and other open areas, as well as in or near schools, youth clubs, senior centres and synagogues.

Rabbi Bowman expects further tension to erupt in southern and northern Israel as Hamas and Hezbollah acquire a larger arsenal of still more deadly weapons and Iran takes further steps to acquire nuclear arms.

"Israel is in a very difficult position," said Rabbi Bowman. "Israel faces conventional and nuclear threats."

Hence the urgent need for more bomb shelters.

For further information about Operation Lifeshield, visit www.operationlifeshield.com

It's naive to equate Israel, Iran on nuclear issue

While western attention remains substantially focused on Iran's nuclear program as *the* major threat to instability in the Middle East, several Arab states are trying to divert attention to Israel and its undeclared nuclear weapons. They're using the current United Nations conference on nuclear non-proliferation as their forum.

Some media, including CBC Radio's *The Current*, have latched onto this story. In a segment titled "Israel's Nukes" (May 11), substitute host Gillian Findlay interviewed three experts: Wael Al-Assad, the Arab League's director of disarmament; Gerald Steinberg, professor of political science at Bar-Ilan University, and Peter Galbraith, senior fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation in the United States.

When Findlay mentioned to the first guest, Al-Assad, that Israel has said it favours a nuclear-free Middle East provided there's first regional peace, he replied that this is only "an invitation to proliferation," that the Arab states all signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), even though the Mideast conflict has not be resolved, and that a nuclear-free Middle East (even in the absence of full peace) would actually "help Israel be part of the region."

According to Reports

By PAUL MICHAELS

Steinberg countered Al-Assad's claims, explaining that despite Arab League rhetoric, it's Iran's nuclear program, not Israel's, that has triggered alarm in the region about proliferation. Steinberg also explained that Israel's longstanding policy of ambiguity (neither confirming nor denying that it possesses nuclear weapons) is "the least bad option" for a tiny country whose very survival is threatened. Israel's undeclared nuclear deterrence has been designed to deal precisely with this "vulnerability" – something western countries like Canada don't have to contend with.

As to the Arabs having signed the NPT, Steinberg reminded Findlay that several of them (Syria, Libya, Iraq) have simply violated its terms(as non-Arab Iran is currently doing). On the other hand, Israel has violated none of its international obligations and, unlike Pakistan and India, which have also not signed the NPT, has not tested a device.

Steinberg challenged Findlay's assertion that a "double standard" has been applied by pressuring Iran and not Israel on the nuclear issue. Talk of a "double standard," he said, is just a diversion, especially for media consumption, from the real problem – the menace that Iran's nuclear program presents to the world.

Nonetheless, Findlay's final guest, Peter Galbraith, downplayed Iran's threat to the point of appearing to be an apologist for the regime. Even though Galbraith acknowledged that Israel's nuclear program began as a "meaningful deterrent," he believes that the significant Arab threat has now "largely disappeared." In response to Findlay's question about the regional effect Israel's "opening up" on the nuclear issue might have, Galbraith said it would have "some impact" on Iran's program. And he immediately added: "But in the end, I think you also need to find some accommodation with Iran in which Iran has what it's entitled to under the NPT [which allows civilian nuclear power]... But also that there's some recognition of Iran's role as a pre-eminent power in the region. I think what the Iranians are really after is respect."

To say that this view would strike nearly all Israelis, and a great many others, as naïve is to put it mildly.

* * *

In his May 11 *Toronto Star* column, "York's Mideast debate a debacle," Martin Regg Cohn cut to the heart of a report prepared for York University following the intense controversy over its conference last year, "Israel/Palestine: Mapping Models of Statehood and paths to Peace."

The conference (a mix of academics and pro-Palestinian activists), he said, had more to do with "contributing to the conflict" than with looking for solutions. While Israel and the PA are talking about a two-state solution, Canadian academics were promoting a one-state (bi-national) "solution" that would mean Israel's disappearance.

Regg Cohn lucidly contextualized the matter: "Convoking such a conference delegitimizes the State of Israel, however much you try to sugar-coat it. Why not a conference proposing to dissolve Croatia and Bosnia into a reunited Yugoslavia? Or reconstituting the Soviet Union?

"If York academics are keen to rewrite history and unravel the UN's 1947 vote to partition British Mandate Palestine, why not undo the partition of British India? After all, if you're opposed to a Zionist Israel, why not oppose the homeland for Muslims in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan?"

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

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Greater Toronto Area

Canadian union decries joint Canada-Israel stamp

JTA

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) has refused to put its stamp of approval on the first-ever postage stamp issued jointly by Canada and Israel.

Unveiled last month, the international rate stamp commemorates 60 years of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Depicting a red maple leaf and a blue Star of David, both comprised of human figures, the stamp is worth $1.70 in Canada and 4.60 shekels in Israel.

"CUPW recognizes that Israel is a democracy and has taken steps to end discrimination against lesbian and gay citizens," Denis Lemelin, national president of the postal union, wrote in a recent letter to the head of Canada Post.

"However, we are puzzled about the concept of shared values with a country that has consistently ignored United Nations and World Court decisions in regards to the ongoing occupation of the West Bank and Gaza... Sadly, in Israel there are still over 20 laws that discriminate against the Palestinian national minority on such basic issues as education, jobs, land ownership and access to public resources."

Lemelin's letter goes on to cite Israeli violations of UN resolutions, its building of a "separation wall" and ongoing discrimination against Palestinians.

The editor of *Canadian Stamp News*, Charles Verge, also took a swipe at the joint stamp, writing that "I am amazed and mystified by the totally political nature of this stamp."

Not everyone agrees with this stance, however. Canada Post spokesperson John Caines said that CUPW's opinion does not reflect that of Canada Post.

"The stamp has been issued. It's out. It's just their reaction... it's got no impact on the stamp at all," he said.

Canadian Jewish Congress CEO Bernie Farber agrees. "The fact of the matter is the stamp is out there. It's a legal stamp. It's a stamp that's celebrated by many people, many Canadians who understand the shared values between Canada and Israel," he said.

Farber doesn't think Lemelin's letter reflects popular opinion either.

"You have your grassroots membership and then you have the leadership of CUPW. I think it's fair to say there will be many times when the grassroots will not be in sync with the leadership," he said.

"I doubt that a letter from Lemelin will have the kind of effect that he is trying to generate. I think most Canadians get it. I think most postal workers get it."

He said the stamp represents a connection between Israel and Canada.

"The stamp recognizes the fact that, even though thousands of miles separate us, we share a common understanding of human rights, we share a common understanding of democratic values," he said. "I'm proud of the fact that the Canadian government is celebrating the two countries."

With files from Rita Poliakov

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'The bill will lead to deep divisions'

Continued from page 1

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto stated that it "strongly supports the Jewish Federations of North America in its opposition to the proposed conversion bill before the Knesset.

"The bill will lead to deep divisions among Jews throughout the Diaspora and potentially alienate millions of Jews from Israel. At a time when anti-Israel forces are aggressively questioning the legitimacy of a Jewish state, such legislation diverts Diaspora communities from the urgent need to collectively advocate for Israel's well-being," said federation president and CEO Ted Sokolsky.

UJA Federation said it was "particularly concerned about a provision of the legislation that would, in effect, alter the Law of Return by denying converts to Judaism automatic citizenship if they came to Israel before their conversion.

"There is no need for this change," Sokolsky said. "It will create two categories of immigrants and deny one category a stake in the Jewish state where they have chosen to live."

Andrés Spokoiny, executive director of Federation CJA in Montreal, was not reachable for comment at press time.

The bill, proposed by Knesset member David Rotem of the Yisrael Beiteinu party, would permit conversions by local rabbis across Israel who were appointed by the Chief Rabbinate. It would deny citizenship under the Law of Return to those who were converted after they immigrated to Israel.

Following a recommendation in 1998 by the Ne'eman Commission looking at conversion in Israel, the state established a commission led by Rabbi Haim Druckman to facilitate conversions of hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants. Thought the conversions were finalized by Orthodox rabbis, clergy from Reform and Conservative Judaism were involved in preparing olim as part of the process.

The legitimacy of those conversions was questioned by haredi rabbinical courts, which in some cases nullified them. In Jewish tradition, conversions have not been questioned by other rabbis, and conversions overall were the province of local rabbis.

In Canada, at least one Orthodox rabbi expressed misgivings about the Israeli conversion bill. Montreal Rabbi Reuben Poupko, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel Beth Aaron, said "the bill is problematic on many grounds. It got rid of Druckman [conversion courts] and put a monopoly into the hands of the Chief Rabbinate, in the hands of the haredi community.

> ***'In Jewish tradition, conversions have not been questioned by other rabbis, and conversions overall were the province of local rabbis'***

"The most mainstream Orthodox religious groups were disenfranchised, let alone other streams of Judaism," he said.

Rabbi Poupko said the root of the problem is the absence in Israel of the principle of separation of church and state.

"Why does Israel even have a conversion bill? It doesn't make sense," he said.

In the early days of the state, authority over religious issues was granted to the observant community, but that situation has grown "anachronistic over the decades," he said. A religious bureaucracy has evolved "that has only served to undermine respect for religion in Israel."

Rabbi Poupko, past president of the Montreal Board of Rabbis, believes respect for religion in Israel would only increase if the political and religious realms were separated.

"The Jewish People survived a long time without the artificial support of a government behind it. Rabbis were able to negotiate between different kinds of conversions and divorces without the seal of approval of a government," he said.

Israeli Jews would likely have more respect for their faith if religion was unencumbered by political considerations and was not "an instrument of coercion in the hands of the haredi rabbis," he added.

Rabbi Reuven Bulka, spiritual leader of Ottawa's Machzikei Hadas Congregation, said, "There's no question something needed to be done about the issue of integrating the Russians Jewishly into the population."

"If the motivation for this legislation is in order to facilitate the conversion of Russians and integrate them into the Israeli mainstream, then we can do nothing but applaud it. But from the way it's being done, it seems there are some add-ons to it that simply make no sense."

Rabbi Bulka, a former co-president of Canadian Jewish Congress, said he supports "an expanded approach" as recommended by the Ne'eman Commission, to integrate Russian olim through additional rabbinical courts.

Rabbi Moshe Stern of the Orthodox Shaarei Tefillah Congregation in Toronto, said, "Whenever Jews are divided among themselves, it is very unhealthy. We have in the world so many enemies. I think any issue that divides us can only lend aid and comfort to those who seek to do us harm."

However, he continued, "there is a system and halachic grounds for proper conversions. When you go outside that system and demand recognition, I think they are the ones causing a disservice to the unity of the Jewish people."

Rabbi Stern rejected suggestions haredim are calling the shots in Israel. "The haredim don't have control over the situation. It is in the control of the Chief Rabbinate, and I support them and their decisions."

He said converts should conform to the halachic process. "There are clergy and groups who've gone outside the parameters of Torah and Halachah but who want to be accepted regardless... What do they want us to do, compromise our principles?"

Correction

In the article "Toronto cantor perfects his own cheesecake recipe" (May 13), the quantity of graham cracker crumbs used for the crust was omitted. The correct amount is one cup. *The CJN* regrets the error.

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Class Acts

SHAVUOT ART: Grade 4 students at Bialik Hebrew Day School hold up their pastel still-life drawings of fruit baskets, made as part of their study of Shavuot. Their teachers, Gila Rabin and Martha Fleury, guided them in practising the overlap, highlight, and shadow techniques required for still-life art.

YOM YERUSHALAYIM: Netivot HaTorah Day School students Jacob and Ahava perform a humorous skit about the Hebrew language as part of Yom Yerushalayim celebrations sponsored by Netivot, Bnei Akiva, Ayin L'Tzion Congregation, Mizrachi Canada and Moshava Canada. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

MITZVAH DAY: Students from the Beth Tzedec campus of the Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly United Synagogue Day School) joined peers from Zareinu to support Ve'ahavta on Mitzvah Day. The students packed 210 backpacks with school supplies for disadvantaged students in Israel.

HELEN AND STAN VINE CANADIAN JEWISH BOOK AWARDS

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FICTION
Robin McGrath, *The Winterhouse*. Published by Creative Book Publishing.

HISTORY
Allan Levine, *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba*. Published by Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada and Heartland Associates.

HOLOCAUST LITERATURE
Michael R. Marrus, *Some Measure of Justice: The Holocaust Era Restitution Campaign of the 1990s*. Published by University of Wisconsin Press.

YOUTH LITERATURE
Eva Wiseman, *Puppet*. Published by Tundra Books.

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIR
David Sax, *Save the Deli*. Published by McClelland & Stewart.

JEWISH THOUGHT AND CULTURE
Kenneth Sherman, *What the Furies Bring*. Published by Porcupine's Quill.

SCHOLARSHIP ON A JEWISH SUBJECT
Jeffrey Veidlinger, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire*. Published by Indiana University Press.

YIDDISH LITERATURE
Goldie Sigal, *Stingy Buzi and King Solomon*. Published by Lomir Hofn Press.

JURY OF HELEN AND STAN VINE CANADIAN JEWISH BOOK AWARDS
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On Campus

Declare interest in a 'just peace,' prof advises Israel

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

A declaration from Israel stating that a "just peace" is in its strategic interest would help counter the perception that it's a colonial and apartheid state, says Ruth Gavison, a Hebrew University law professor and a founding member of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

Speaking at the University of Toronto last week, Gavison said Israel should make it clear it wants to end its occupation of the West Bank.

By doing so, Israel would be better able to challenge the ongoing anti-Israel campaign of demonization, delegitimization and divestment, she suggested in a speech.

Gavison, an authority in human rights, said Israel's well-being and survival depend on its willingness to acknowledge and accept Palestinian statehood.

She added that the Palestinians' success in winning international support and recognition for their cause has been predicated on Israel's failure to define itself in terms of its future borders.

But in a warning, she disputed the notion that "everything will be fine" if Israel withdraws from the West Bank. She did not elaborate.

In a survey of its current challenges, Gavison said that Israel faces a "very, very bad situation," since it's widely regarded as an oppressive state and a threat to peace and order.

"It's very troubling," she noted.

Flaying the forces demonizing and delegitimizing Israel, Gavison dismissed accusations that Israel is a colonial and apartheid state, calling them "untrue and unfair."

She urged the international community to reject these charges, but added that Israel itself is partially to blame for its unpopularity because it has not sufficiently dealt with its four-decade occupation of the West Bank.

Given its image, Israel should announce it is a state bound by international law. "It's the moral and wise thing to do," she observed.

However, Israel has the right to question interpretations of international law, she said.

Citing the 1917 Balfour Declaration and the 1947 United Nations Palestine partition plan, Gavison said the Zionist movement always understood the need to enlist international support for its goals and worked ceaselessly to advance its case through intense diplomacy. As a result, Israel ensured its legitimacy under international law, she said.

Gavison discussed the United Nations 2009 Goldstone report, which claimed that Israel and Hamas both committed war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

The report, based on a fact-finding mission led by South African Jewish judge Richard Goldstone at the behest of the UN's Human Rights Council, was criticized by the Israeli government.

Though she acknowledged that the council has an anti-Israel track record and that the Goldstone report didn't address the key issue of asymmetrical warfare, she said Israel isn't above criticism and would have been well advised to respond to Goldstone's accusations in an attempt to defuse them.

Suggesting there are two lessons to be learned from the report, Gavison called on Israel to establish a commission to monitor the actions of the Israeli armed forces and urged the UN to ensure that its representative bodies are not politicized.

Although she praised the vitality of Israeli democracy, Gavison expressed concern about Israelis who try to delegitimize the views of fellow citizens with whom they disagree.

In another observation, she said that strains of moral righteousness and superiority in Judaism could be "very dangerous" if coupled with force.

And in a veiled critique of the way Israeli Arabs are treated, she said that Israel should accept its international obligations on this matter.

Gavison's talk was sponsored by the Joseph and Gertie Schwartz Memorial Lecture, the Lipson Memorial Lecture and the Louis and Rachel Lesk Memorial Fund in Israeli Studies.

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Politicians, young Jews mingle

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — More than 300 young Jewish adults mingled with politicians from all levels of government at a swank get-together on the 46th-floor penthouse of a downtown office building.

It was the second annual Montreal "Action Party" organized by the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee (CJPAC), which was founded five years ago with the aim of building relationships with elected officials from all political parties across the country and encouraging Jews of all ages to engage in the political process.

To read article, please go to cjnews.com

FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov

The Canadian Jewish news

Only paid Family Moments announcements can be guaranteed to appear in a specific issue, when received by deadline, 10 days prior to publication date. All other items will appear on a first-come, first-served basis, as space allows.

Mazel tov announcements featured on onlysimchas.com will appear as space permits.

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Label the back of all photos and enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Please keep all announcements to 25 words, maximum.

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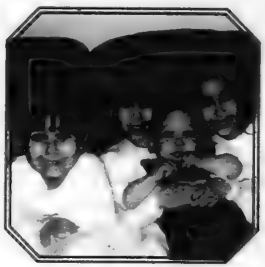
and click the Family Moments banner at the top.

Happy diamond anniversary, Mom & Dad, Sylvia & Phil Flower. Love, Judy and Rosanne, Philip and Steven and grandchildren Leo, Sara, Alexandra and Marisa.

Happy ninth birthday Samantha Taylor, daughter of Michael and Fara Forman. Love from your sister Jordyn and brother Joshua.



Happy first birthday Justin! Hugs and kisses, and lots of love from your big sisters Daliah, Mia and Sarah Beldeb.

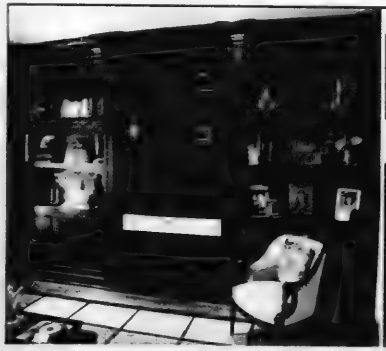
Mazel tov Leslie & Ryan Kimel on the birth of Asher. A brother for Logan and Sloan. Grandparents, Ron Kimel, Barbro Kimel, Lou & Arlene Chelin.

Happy birthday to Noam Aufgang who will be 6 years old on May 12th. With love from all your family.

Mazel tov to Stephanie & Sasha on their engagement! Thrilled parents are Erika & John Komlos and Yvonne & David Haghani.

Mazel tov on your engagement Noah & Amanda! Parents, Debbie & Larry Buchbinder, Monica & Roy Murad. Grandparents are delighted.

Happy 25th anniversary Dr. Hartley & Cheryl Miltchin! Love Remi, Tessa, Whitney and Harlan.



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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Lelia Speisman, is away on medical leave.

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Please note holiday deadline for What's New. Deadline for June 3 issue is May 21. Deadline for June 10 is May 31. Phone 416-391-1836. Fax 416-391-0829. E-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 22

SHABBAT SERVICE

Beth Lida Forest Hill Synagogue hosts "Bring a Friend to Shul" Shabbat. Shabbat services begin at 9 a.m., followed by Kiddush. Minchah 8 p.m. followed by seudah shlishit. 22 Gilgorm Rd. 416-301-8764.

Tuesday, May 25

PRISONER OF TEHRAN

Temple Har Zion's adult education committee presents **Marina Nemat**, author of *Prisoner of Tehran*, speaking on her imprisonment by the Iranian government. 7:45 p.m.

LUNCH & LEARN

Dr. Michael A. Cohen speaks at Beth Tikvah on "Self-healing for Muscle and Joint Pain." 12:15 p.m. $20. Reservation required. 416-221-3433, ext. 352, or helen@bethtikvah.on.ca.

Wednesday, May 26

MUSICAL PROGRAM

Beth Emeth's Club Sameach musical program with **Jossy Abramovich**. 7:30 p.m. Members $8, guests $10. Reserve spot at shul office or 416-633-3838. Visa, MasterCard or cheque.

JEWISH DIABETES CHAPTER

The Jewish Diabetes Chapter of the Canadian Diabetes Association presents **Dr. Carol Greenwood**, professor, department of nutritional sciences, U of T, on "Diabetes: The Impact of Nutrition on the Brain." $1, all welcome. 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim, 470 Glencairn Ave. 416-363-0177, ext. 7403.

Thursday, May 27

CARD AND GAME DAY

Thornhill Study Group of National Council of Jewish Women invites card groups or single players to games of bridge, maj, kaluki or other board/card games. Light lunch, prizes. 12-4 p.m. Council House, 4700 Bathurst St. $20. Reserve at 416-633-5100.

HIGH SCHOOL REUNION

AISP (Alternative and Independent Study Program) high school reunion: the first decade, 1971-81. Avondale Alternative School, 171 Avondale Ave. 7-10 p.m. If you were part of the AISP community from 1971-81, contact **Janyce**, 416-221-0018, aisp.reunion@gmail.com.

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Shaarei Tefillah's Spring Lecture Series. **Rabbi Michael Skobac** on "Da'at Calm: A Jewish Approach to Inner Peace." 7 p.m. Free.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Temple Sinai Club presents a dialogue between **Father Raymond De Sousa** and **Rabbi Michael Dolgin**. "The Religious Significance of the State of Israel – Catholic and Jewish Perspectives." 7:30 p.m. Members $8, guests $10. Register with Marcie, 416-487-4161.

CHARITY BOOK LAUNCH

"An Evening with Anita Diamant." The author discusses her new book *Day After Night*. Beth Tzedec. Cocktail reception 6:30 p.m., main event 8 p.m. Tickets $40 and up. Proceeds to Canadian Hadassah-WIZO projects. **Jodi**, dorldor@live.ca, 416-873-6902.

OTHER NEWS

WEEKEND LECTURES

A Weekend with **Dennis Prager**, Beth Sholom. May 28: Shabbat dinner – "How to Fix Non-Orthodox Judaism." May 29: Shabbat sermon – "Why I Am a Jew." Lunch & Learn – "Is a Religious or Secular America (or Canada) Better for the Jews?" Reservations required for all meals. 416-783-6103, programs@bethsholom.net.

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

Blessed Is the Match, documentary on Hannah Szenes, who parachuted into central Europe in 1944 to save Jews from Nazi persecution. May 30, 7 p.m. Temple Emanu-El. $10 at the door. Light refreshments.

Continued on page 27

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www.beithalochem.ca

Continued from page 26

TALENT SHOW

Westmount Ladies Talent Show: "Under the Stars." May 30. Arts and crafts 7 p.m.; show begins 8 p.m. 10 Disera Dr., Unit 250. $12. Tickets, orrice@westmountshul.com.

MEDITATION

Meditating Mondays continue at Temple Har Zion. May 31. Beginners and experienced meditators welcome. For more information, call 905-889-2252.

BRAVO

Can volunteering boost brain health? Learn about BRAVO, a new project that joins two of Baycrest's strengths – research and volunteerism. May 31, 1:30-3 p.m. Wortsman Hall, Baycrest. Free. Register: 416-785-2500, ext. 3374, lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

DOCTORS AGAINST RACISM

An evening with Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, featuring **Dr. Steve Samuel** and **Dr. Jeffrey Fialkov**. "Doctors Without Morals: How Hate Has Infected Medicine." May 31, 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Sisterhood Hall. All welcome. Members free, guests $2.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Pride of Israel and Na'amat Canada "Fore the Future" golf tournament. June 1. Carrying Place Golf & Country Club, 16750 Weston Rd. Shotgun start at 12:30 p.m. $190, includes kosher lunch and dinner, silent auction, prizes and a Hole-in-One Challenge to win a 2010 GMC Terrain. Or join them for golf lesson and dinner. 416-226-0111, ext. 10.

A.D.D.A.P.T.

Attention Deficit Disorder Awareness Program Team invites the public to a seminar. "All Grown Up and Starting a Job: Strategies for Transition to the Workplace." **Carter Hammett**, employment counsellor at JVS Toronto, speaks. June 7, 7-8:30 p.m. Free, donation appreciated. 30 Drewry Ave., 2nd floor. 416-395-1727 to register.

BENEFIT CONCERT

"Take my Hand" benefit concert, proceeds to Alli's Journey – organization that raises funds for people 18-35 with cancer. **Jully Black**, **Amanda Martinez** and others. June 9, 7:30 p.m. Koerner Hall, Royal Conservatory. 273 Bloor St. W. $99. Tickets, 416-408-0208 or online at tickets.rcmusic.ca/public.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill needs people to plant and garden its memorial garden. July 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Short meeting before the day. **Joy Levy**, 905-764-0656, ext. 224, jlevy@bellnet.ca.

SUPPORT GROUP

Baycrest Holocaust resource program is opening a support group for child survivors of the Holocaust. **Shoshana**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2271, or syaakobi@baycrest.org.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE

Join One Family Fund Canada for a ride through the countryside north of Toronto June 6. Raising money for victims of terror in Israel. $36 to register, minimum $500 in sponsorship required. **Noah**, 416-644-4955, noah@onefamilyfund.ca.

SPRING CONCERT

Toronto Jewish Folk Choir's 84th spring concert. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park Cres. Honouring **Emil Gartner**. With cellist **Esther Gartner** and chamber ensemble. May 30, 3 p.m. $25, students and seniors $20. Under 12 free. 416-789-5502 for tickets (until 5 p.m. May 27). tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

FITNESS CLASS

Exercise for Your Body and Brain. Tuesdays, 10:15-11 a.m. Thursdays, 11:15 a.m.-12 p.m. Baycrest. For adults 60+. Class appropriate if you are well or have challenges like diabetes, osteoporosis or mild to moderate arthritis. Balance should be good. Fee will apply. **Dianne**, 416-785-2500, ext. 2341.

WINTER IN ISRAEL

Jewish National Fund CAARI Program (Canadian American Active Retirees in Israel). Spend 2-7 weeks in Israel in winter 2011. Work in schools, hospitals or community agencies, tour archeological sites and learn about current issues. Information session June 2. 2 p.m. Temple Sinai. RSVP with **Anice**, 416-665-2482.

WALK WITH ISRAEL

Join Kulanu Toronto at Walk With Israel. May 30, 10 a.m. Coronation Park. RSVP at kulanutoronto@gmail.com.

JF&CS GROUPS

Call **Shawna Sidney**, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, or visit www.jfandcs.com. Registration required for all programs.

Effective Parenting: Four-sessions to help parents learn how to raise a happy, motivated and well-behaved child. For parents of kids 2-11. May 25, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green.

SINGLES EVENTS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 34

What's New

One Family, Two Homes: Three-session series for families experiencing separation and divorce. May 27, June 4 and 11. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Promenade Mall, Suite 313.

Beyond the Chupah, Becoming a Couple: Two-session marriage prep group for those getting married in the next year. May 30 and June 6. 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Beth Emeth.

FOR SENIORS

Adath Israel Congregation: Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mah-jong, cards, refreshments. All welcome. $2. **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Marcia**, 416-932-1229.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama June 16, departs 10 a.m. Father's Day dance, June 20, 7-10 p.m. Line dancing Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Social bridge Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Non-members welcome.

LZA Senior's Cultural Club: Tuesdays 10 a.m. Join discussion group at Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

May 25, lecture – "Retirement Opportunities: Don't Wait for the Snow to Fall." 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

May 26, North York Concert Orchestra. 7:30-8:30 p.m. $5.

May 27, wellness lecture: "Older Adults and Depression." 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Spring Fair: celebrating art, food and flowers. For artistic and culinary enthusiasts of all levels. May 27, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. ext. 4269.

"Learning How to Cook: There Is Food Beyond the Toaster Oven." Tuesdays, June 1-22. 7-9:30 p.m. ext. 4235.

Learn to speak Hebrew in eight classes. Tuesday and Thursday nights, July 6-29. 7:30-9:30 p.m. $170, $100 for students/seniors.

Ryerson/Chang courses at Prosserman. Foreign Affairs: A Journey Through the Best of Foreign-Language Cinema, Wednesdays, May 26-June 23. Reverence and Regard: The Many Faces of Women in Hollywood Movies, Wednesdays, June 30-July 28. Latin dance, Wednesdays, June 30-Aug. 18. 8:30-9:30 p.m. Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays, June 9-July 28. Ext. 4235.

Prosserman's new Mind, Body & Soul program offers opportunities for health and wellness from a holistic perspective. Ext. 4036, naomig@prossermanjcc.com.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, www. mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel holds services Sundays 8 a.m. and Thursdays 7:15 a.m. Full kosher breakfast follows. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

From May-June, Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space hosts *Fragments: Survivors*, by **Jason Schwartz**. Part of Contact photography festival. visualarts@mcjcc.org.

MNjcc summer registration starts May 26 for non-members. www.mnjcc.org, ext. 0, for info or to sign up.

Miles Nadal Jewish community Choir and Women's Chorus perform June 2 and 3. 8 p.m. $10. ext. 0.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

HONOURING VOLUNTEERS: Marlene Segal, Elaine Genesove and Sara Rachlin were honoured recently for their volunteer work with Emunah Women of Toronto at Emunah's annual Family in Israel dinner. From left are Segal, who received the outstanding volunteer award; Genesove, who received the chesed award, and Rachlin, who received the *keter shem tov* award. *[Rebecca Ansel photo]*

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Sam Gardner	Apr 30/10	4 Forest Laneway
Gloria Freireich	May 1/10	370 Red Maple Street
Bunny Borovoy	May 1/10	243 Flamingo Road
Anna Flancman	May 1/10	132 Sultana Avenue
Max Binstock	May 3/10	15 Canyon Avenue
Irene Gurvey	May 4/10	343 Clark Avenue
David Wise	May 3/10	14 Firthway Court
Faye Hymson	May 2/10	29 Boulderbrook Drive
Dorothy Snider	May 6/10	29 Northern Heights Dr.
Ann Gerskup	May 6/10	800 Vaughan Road
David Sweet	May 7/10	24 Euphrasia Drive
Ileana Lovi	May 7/10	147 Elder Street

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of
PEARL GOLDBERG ז"ל
will take place
Monday, May 24th at 2:00 p.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Darchei Noam Section NN
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
HAROLD ROSS ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
Dufferin St. N. of Major Mackenzie
Temple Har Zion
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
EVA BERMACK ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 23rd at 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Bathurst S. of Steeles
Foresters (Court Topaz) Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
ELIZABETH BLUM ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 30th at 11:00 a.m.
Pardes Shalom Cemetery
B'nai Torah Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

The family of the late
HENRY STEIN ז"ל
would like to express their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to family and friends for their generous donations, meals, visits and warm expressions of sympathy and support during this most difficult time. Your thoughtfulness was a great comfort to us and will always be remembered. Please accept this as our personal thank you.
Lil and Ronny and family

The unveiling of a monument to the loving memory of the late
SHIRLEY FARBERMAN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 23rd at 10:15 a.m.
Mount Sinai Memorial Park
Pride of Israel Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend

Watch this space each week for obituaries and related notices.

When placing unveiling notices, please ensure the ad is booked at least 15 days prior to the date of the unveiling.

To place any family related notice, please call: 416-391-1836

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PHILIP M. KRAVETSKY ז"ל
Shraga Feivel Mordechai
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Phil Kravetsky passed away on April 14, 2010 (30 Nissan 5770) at the age of 86. He was the son of the late Charles and Ethel Kravetsky; he was predeceased by his wife, Deena (nee Zlatin). He was also predeceased by 10 of his 11 siblings, by his son-in-law Dov Patkin, granddaughter Gitti Patkin and his great-granddaughter Mindle Samet.

He is survived by his children, Michelle and David Hamer (Sharon MA), Shayna Patkin (Jerusalem), Bas-Sheva and Eliyohu Simmonds, Rocky and Barb'ra Kravetsky, Sandra and David Friedman (Baltimore MD), Mark and Sharon Kravetsky, Charles Kravetsky (Hamilton ON), Ahuva Kravetsky, and Jack Kravetsky and Esther Tock (Toronto ON) as well as 44 grandchildren, 96 great grandchildren and 6 great-great grandchildren. Also surviving him are his brother Marvin and sister-in-law Carol (Toronto ON), his brother-in-law Lloyd Friedman and his sisters-in-law Goldie Kravetsky and Jean Zlatin (Halifax NS).

Phil attended St. John's High School and worked briefly as a bookkeeper for Public Abatoir before enlisting in the RCAF in 1942. After his discharge from the air force, Phil worked as a public accountant. In 1951 he and his brothers Cecil, Wilfred, and Marvin began a business partnership in the transportation and distribution industry that continued for half a century and at its peak had operations in 6 provinces.

Together with Deena, Phil was involved in many community and charitable organizations. Amongst others, he was president of the Libavicher Synagogue for over 30 years and remained its honourary president thereafter. Phil was the driving force behind the establishment of the Chabad Mikvah. He was a founding trustee of the Chavurat Tefila Synagogue, the long time Regional Vice-President of Mizrachi Organization of Canada, served on the Vaad Ha'ir, on the board of the Chesed Shel Emes and served the Talmud Torah, Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate, I.L. Peretz School in various capacities. Phil's newest great grandson born in Israel, on April 11 was named, April 19, Shraga Feivel Mordechai as an honour to his memory. Proud parents are Phil's Grandson Nachliel Dror and wife Rochel (Harbater) Friedman.

A fund in his memory has been established in support of the construction of the new Jewish Learning Centre of Winnipeg. Contributions may be made in care of Lubavitch Centre, 2095 Sinclair Street, Winnipeg R2V 3K2 (www.chabadwinnipeg.org) or the charity of your choice.

Kosher food store opens in Kelowna

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

KELOWNA, B.C. — The Okanagan seems an unlikely place for a food and Judaica store, with a Jewish community of only 1,000 in the entire valley. But it has one, thanks to Michele Troup and Mila Shapiro, who opened Mem's Kosher Foods & Holyland Treasures in Kelowna on March 15, just in time for Passover.

The store sells kosher meat, poultry, fish, knishes and desserts, as well as giftware, and is launching a Jewish deli before the end of May. "It's not a kosher deli because I don't have access to kosher challah," says Troup. "But with the exception of the rye bread with caraway seeds, everything in there will be kosher. We're planning to offer tabouli, hummus, garlic dip, sandwiches, soups and towards the end of the week, brisket on a bun."

Mem's meats, imported from eastern Canada, Vancouver and New York, have been top sellers – and not just among Jewish community members. "We also carry Turkish coffee, Bamba [snack foods], Kedem grape juices, 778 jams from Israel, and many other products," Troup says.

Shapiro, 36, moved to the Okanagan from Israel and previously worked as a computer technician. Troup is 49 and still serves as the office administrator for the Okanagan Jewish Community. The pair have stocked their 1,600-square-foot store with cookbooks, educational books, Passover plates, jewelry, music, kosher candy, giftware, toys and cards.

Their opening has not been without adversity. By the end of August, Mem's will be relocating into as-yet-unknown new premises because their present location, at 3010 Pandosy St., will be torn down. The developer of a new condominium and retail project, Sopa Square, has approached Shapiro and Troup about opening a store in the square, but that project's completion is still a year away.

Still, the two are determined to make Mem's work and find a new home for their deli, groceries and Judaica. "There was a need for this store," Troup says. "There was nowhere local to obtain anything Jewish or kosher – you had to travel to Vancouver or have your family ship it to you. Particularly on Passover, we couldn't get any of the products we needed, and Safeway stopped carrying things for us."

"This store is our mitzvah. We're raising our children here, and it's very, very hard to do that in a Jewish way without losing our traditions and beliefs. We're trying to price our goods right so that Jews who want to can follow the laws and keep kosher."

For more information about Mem's, call 778-478-0244.

Michele Troup, left, and Mila Shapiro own Mem's Kosher Foods & Holyland Treasures.

JNF: 3 dinners; 4 honorees

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Over the next month, JNF Ontario region will honour four individuals across the province in three separate Negev Dinner galas.

First up is the Hamilton Negev Dinner on May 30. The event will toast Phil Rosenshein and Ben Sauder, friends for more than 80 years and two stalwarts of the city's Jewish community.

Keynote speaker for the event is actor and director Henry Winkler, best known as "The Fonz" on the 1970's sitcom *Happy Days*.

Funds from the dinner will go to the creation of the Hillel Landsman Park, to be built in Hastor Hagelilit, a development town in northern Israel.

The dinner will take place at the Hamilton Convention Centre. For more information, call 905-527-5516.

The second dinner, in Windsor, on June 8, will honour Sandra Pupatello, Ontario's minister of economic development and trade.

JNF said it chose Pupatello for her longstanding support of the organization and its projects in Israel. Pupatello will be part of delegation joining Premier Dalton McGuinty on his visit to Israel at the end of the month.

Money raised at this dinner will go toward the completion of a wastewater treatment facility in Yeruham, a community about 30 kilometres south of Be'er Sheva.

The Windsor gala's keynote speaker will be U.S. Ambassador to Canada David Jacobson. This dinner will take place at the Caboto Club (2175 Parent Ave.). For more information, call 519- 969-8733.

Lastly, in London, Ont., on June 13, JNF will pay tribute to Dr. Calvin Stiller, the physician credited with establishing the use of the drug Cyclosporine for preventing rejection in transplant patients.

The scheduled keynote speaker is former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton. The gala will be held at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn (591 Wellington Rd. S.). For details, call 519-432 2139.

Funds raised at this tribute dinner will go towards the creation of a play area for the students of Shehafim School, a special education facility that caters to Arab, Druze, Bedouin and Jewish children with physical and cognitive disabilities. It's located in the community of Meva'ot HaHermon in the Upper Galilee.

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Pro-Israel MP resigns to run for mayor of Winnipeg

By MYRON LOVE
Prairies Correspondent

WINNIPEG — Judy Wasylycia-Leis, long one of Israel's and Canadian Jewry's best friends in the House of Commons, has resigned her seat to run for mayor of Winnipeg in the upcoming election in October.

The former NDP MP for Winnipeg North has decided to challenge two-time incumbent Sam Katz, the city's Jewish mayor, for the top job in what should be an exciting race between two high-profile candidates.

In an interview with *The CJN*, Wasylycia-Leis noted that she was sitting at 36 per cent in a poll taken in March, before she officially declared her intention to contest the mayoral election. In the same poll, Katz was the choice of 51 per cent of respondents, while three other potential candidates divided the remaining support.

But now, with the three other candidates having removed themselves from consideration in deference to Wasylycia-Leis, she estimates that she's likely around 40 per cent in the polls.

"I think I'm within striking distance," she said. "I'm putting together a strong team [headed by Liberal senator and former Manitoba Liberal leader Sharon Carstairs]. One of my challenges is to get people excited enough to come out and vote."

(The turnout in civic elections here has historically been low, except when there has been a compelling mayoral race.)

Wasylycia-Leis, 58, is originally from Kitchener, Ont., and comes from a Ukrainian and Dutch background. "I grew up with a sense of social justice and community activism," she said.

Judy Wasylycia-Leis *[Myron Love photo]*

After graduating from the University of Waterloo, she headed to Ottawa, where she worked as a policy planning consultant for the New Democratic Party. She later served as executive assistant to party leader Ed Broadbent and as women's organizer for the federal NDP. She ran unsuccessfully in three attempts to be elected to Ontario legislature while in Ottawa.

She moved to Manitoba in 1982 to work as executive assistant to newly elected NDP Premier Howard Pawley and later co-ordinated the Women's Directorate in the Manitoba government.

It was after settling in north Winnipeg that she first became exposed to members of the Jewish community, both as neighbours and through her work with the NDP. In north Winnipeg, there was traditionally strong support for the NDP from among the Jewish community.

"Through my Jewish friends, I became more aware of Jewish issues and developed a real interest in Israel," she said.

She was elected to the Manitoba legislature in the 1986 provincial election in the north-end Winnipeg riding of St. John's and was appointed minister of culture, heritage and recreation with responsibility for the status of women and the Manitoba Lotteries Foundation. In 1988, the Pawley government was defeated on a budget vote and while Wasylycia-Leis held her seat, the NDP dropped to third place in the legislature.

In 1993, she resigned her seat to run federally for the NDP. That was the election in which the Liberals swept the country, reducing the formerly ruling Tories to two seats and the NDP to nine seats.

Wasylycia-Leis also lost, but she spent the next four years doing volunteer work and preparing to run again in the next election. She was elected to Parliament in 1997.

Wasylycia-Leis recalled that her first highlight there was getting a motion passed to have labels placed on all liquor bottles warning pregnant women about the dangers of fetal alcohol syndrome. She regrets that the measure, once passed, was never implemented.

Her second highlight, she said, was having her 2003 motion to introduce a National Holocaust Remembrance Day receive unanimous approval.

While an MP, she visited Israel twice on Canada-Israel Committee missions – most recently coinciding with Israel's 60th anniversary celebrations – and she went to Poland on a Holocaust studies tour under the auspices of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre. She was also a longstanding member of the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Anti-Semitism.

"I may disagree with some Israeli government actions," she said, "but I stand squarely behind Israel's right to exist and to defend itself."

She said she decided to come back to Winnipeg to run for mayor in response to huge demand. "I think Winnipeg is at a crossroads," she said. "This city has great potential which hasn't been realized yet."

She said she plans to spend the next few weeks meeting with Winnipeg community groups before she starts to unveil her platform for the fall campaign.

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BIBLICAL ART

As part of their study of the second book of Samuel, Grade 7 students at the Toronto Heschel School present the biblical text through drama, music, dance and visual arts. Here student Noa Mayer, left, is assisted by guest ceramic artist Shayne Sneiderman.

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Shavuot: so very dairy good!

By NORENE GILLETZ
Special to The CJN

Shavuot is always associated with the eating of dairy dishes. Dishes such as cheesecakes, blintzes, kugels and cheese bagels, rich in milk, cheese, sour cream and butter, are typical Shavuot fare.

Without a doubt, the queen of cheesecakes is Marcy Goldman, a Montreal-based cookbook author and freelance food writer. Her popular website BetterBaking.com has 20,000 regular subscribers and about one million visitors a month.

Her best-selling baking bible, *The Best of BetterBaking.com*, is now back in print – and it's better than ever. You'll still find all the original fail-safe, triple-tested recipes in the new edition, along with 30 new recipes and new photos that will make you hungry for more! Recipes range from contemporary to classic, traditional to trendy, with one common ingredient – excellence! Tips on baking techniques and quality tools and ingredients as well as a Source Guide will provide you with the confidence, skills and resources to get perfect results every time.

Goldman has also updated her kitchen classic, *A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking: 10th Anniversary Edition* (Whitecap). Briefly out of print, this new

edition includes a bonus chapter with 35 new recipes that will make any holiday celebration complete. The book is a culinary treasure certain to be handed down, passed around and enjoyed by many generations to come.

SWEET CHEESE CORNFLAKE-TOPPED DAIRY KUGEL

Source: *A Treasury of Jewish Holiday Baking: 10th Anniversary Edition*

This is perfect for Shavuot or a Shabbat luncheon, as a dairy main dish (served with a soup and salad) or for break-the-fast on Yom Kippur. The recipe doubles easily and can be offered with sour cream, fresh fruit or even warm blueberry sauce. The vanilla gives it a contemporary flavour and makes it lean toward a dessert dish.

2 (10-12 oz.) packages egg noodles
1/3 cup melted unsalted butter or oil
6 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup sour cream
1 cup dry or pot-style cottage cheese (without curds)
1 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract (optional)
1/2 cup sugar
pinch of salt

Cornflake Streusel Topping:
1 cup cornflake cereal
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tbsp. sugar

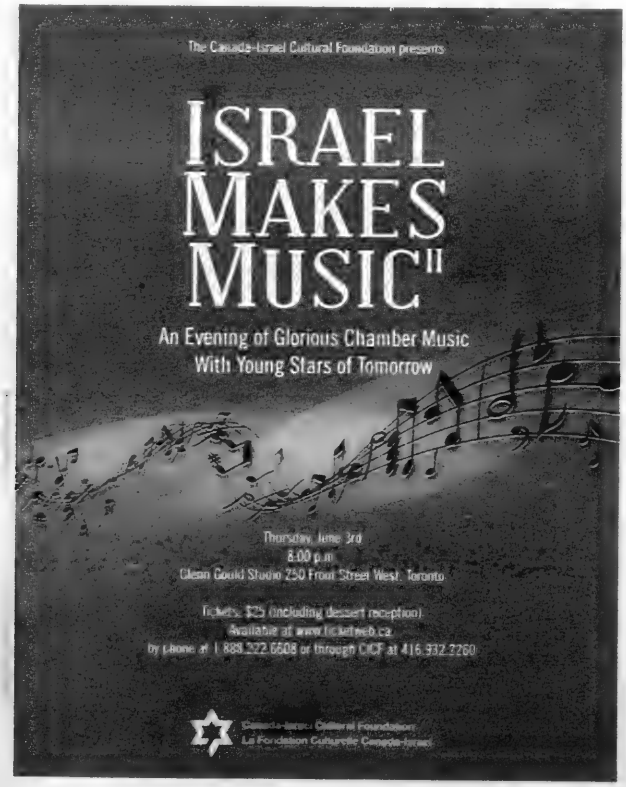
Prepare the noodles according to package directions; drain and place in a large bowl. Spray a 9x13-inch pan with nonstick cooking spray and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350.

When the noodles have cooled to almost room temperature, combine with the butter, eggs, sour cream, cottage cheese, vanilla, sugar and salt. Spoon the noodles into the prepared pan.

Place the cornflakes, cinnamon and sugar in a Ziploc bag and roll over it with a rolling pin to crush the cereal. Sprinkle the "cornflake streusel" over the noodles. Bake until the top lightly browns, about 1 hour. Serves 8 to 12.

For more Shavuot recipes, please go to cjnews.com

Norene Gilletz is a cookbook author, teacher and food consultant in Toronto. For updated information, call 416-226-2466 or visit her website at http://www.gourmania.com.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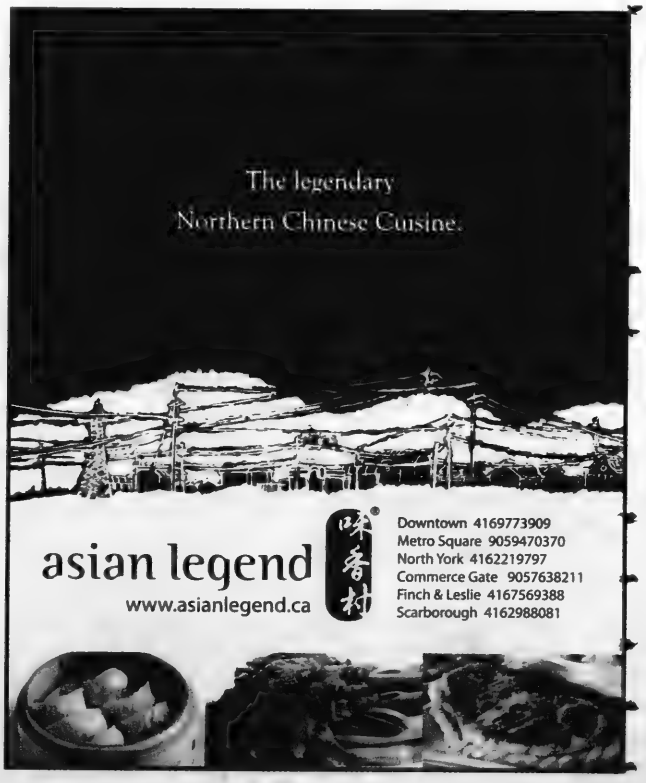

Class Acts

ASSOCIATED HOSTS STUDENT CAUCUS: Associated Hebrew Schools' Danilack Middle School hosted the Bi-Annual Jewish Day School Middle School Student Council Caucus. Seven Jewish day schools took part, including students from Associated, Bialik Hebrew Day School, Leo Baeck Day School, the Toronto Hesche School, the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School, Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly United Synagogue Day School) and the Anne and Max Tanenbaum Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto. Students spent half a day sharing programming ideas, fundraising strategies and learning new leadership skills.

Beth David B'Nai Israel Beth Am

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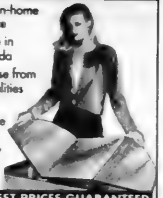

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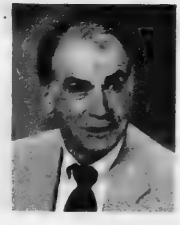

Professor Stephen Berk

The Great and Not So Great—Who For Better or Worse Shaped the History of the Jews

May 28: Herzl: A Birthday to Remember. *Kabbalat Shabbat*, 6:30 PM. Dinner/lecture.
May 29: Those Who Watched and Those Who Acted: Indecent and Decent Bystanders During the Holocaust. *Shabbat*, pulpit lecture. *Shacharit* Service 8:45 AM and **FDR and the Jews: An Assessment.** *Shabbat*, luncheon/lecture following service.
May 30: Israel, America and Goldstone. *Shacharit* Service 8:45 AM. Breakfast following service, co-sponsored by Beth Tzedec Men's Club and Sisterhood. Lecture 10:00 AM.

Reserved seating. Prepaid reservations required for dinner and lunch. Dinner: $35; Children 4–13: $20. Lunch: $27; Children 4–13: $18. *No charge for children 3 and under.* Please call 416-781-3511 to RSVP by May 25. Mastercard and Visa accepted.

Lecture is wheelchair accessible.

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דער יידיש ווינקל

דזשערי קעין

שוועך צו זײַן אַ ייִד וען רבנים טאָנצען אַרום די פֿראָגעס
וער איז אַ ייִד
וען איז גיוד כשר
קען אַ פֿרוי דאָוונען ביים כּותל־מערבי
און וער האָט וואָס לעצטע וואָרט אין מבֿן אַן עטפּער צו די פֿראָגעס?

אונדזער "קאַנערזען דושיש ניט האָס געדוקט קאָלומס געשריבן פֿון רבנים פֿון אַלע רעליגיעזע ריכטונגען. פֿאַר מיר האָבן די קאָלומס געזיכן וי אומבאַקוועם ס'איז פֿאַר די רבנים צו האַנדלען פֿראָגעס וען גיוד אַדער פֿרוין ביים כּותל־מערבי און וועלכן אַדער העלכע רעליגיעזע גדולים האָבן האָס לעצטע וואָרט אין דעם. די פֿראָגעס שטעלן איין רעליגיזן קיבער קענן אַן אַנדערן, ספּעציעל וען ס'קומט צו גיוד. האָס נישט קענען אדער נישט וילען בעפֿעלן אַן עטפּער איז האָס רבנים פֿון אַלע ריכטונגען קענען זיך איינקלן לאָזט סדיזענטער מעטשן וואָס האָבן דורכגעמאַכט גיוד אין אַ מדבר פֿון אומזיכערקייט. איז דער גיוד כשר צו נישט? "אַרוב דער רב איז נישט נעוועז זיכער אין זײַן טעאָלאָגיע פֿאַרוואָס האָס ער דורכגעפֿירט דעם פֿראָגעס פֿון גיוד? וי קומט עס צו אַזוֹ פֿאַרוויסיקטע לאָגיע? דער עטפּער בעפֿיטע מען אין ישראל וז די הרדים האַלטן אַ קאַנטשיק איבערן קאָפּ פֿון דער נכסת און אויך איבער די קעפּ פֿון דער מערהיט פֿון אָרטאָדאָקסישע און קאַנסערוואַטיווע רבנים אוכעטום. אָלע האָבן מורא אַריינצולעפּן דעם קאַנטשיק פֿון די הרדישע העוט און זאָגן "מיר זײַנען נוטע יודן גלײַך מיט אייך און פֿאַלן די מנהגים פֿון אונדזער טראַדיציע. מיר זײַנען כשר און אונדזער גיור פֿראָגעס איז כשר."

רַאַבײַ רוב מאָרמור, דער נעוועזער רַאַבײַ פֿון טאָראָנטעס האַלי בלאָסאָם טעמפּל, האָס אין אונדזער צײַטונג נעשריבן וי שווער עס איז היינט צו זײַן אַ ייִד און אַ ציוניסט וואָס נעהערט צו דער רעפֿאָרם באַוועגונג. ער האָס נעוויזן וי דער הרדישער רעשטיק- אַנהאַלט אויף דעם רעליגיעזען לעבן פֿון ישראל און וייער פֿולער נעגירונג פֿון אַלע אַנדערע יידישע רעליגיעזע באוועגונגען מאַכט אַן שאָדן פֿאַר ישראל און פֿאַר יידן אין אַריסלאַנד וואָס האַלטן ישראל טייער און וויל לעבן וי יידן.

מאָרמור האַלט אַז רעפֿאָרמיאָנער תּורה־דישע פּאַליטיק האַלט צוריק פֿרייהײַט פֿאַר די אַנדערע ריכטונגען אין ישראל און קערט אָפּעק פֿיל יידן פֿון נעבן וייער פֿולע שטיצונג צו ישראל אין איר פּאַליטישען און עקזיסטענציעלען נערוואָנג מיט דיך אַליין און מיט דער וועלט.

ס'איז חערט צו דערמאָנען אַז איבער פֿופֿציק פֿראָצענט פֿון אונדזערע יונגע האָבן ניט חסונה מיט יידן. איך האַלט אַז אוריב מיר וילן נישט פֿאַרלירן דער יונגן דור און וייערע קינדער וועלן אונדזערע רבנים מוז אריפֿהערן טאַנצן אַרום די פֿראָגעס וואָס איך האָב נעשטעלט אין קעפּל פֿון מײַן קאָלום.

אונדזערע רבנים שטייען אויף אַ שיוועע. די האָבן עס איז וייערע העט צו ניין אויף אַ חבֿר וואָס וועט נישט פֿאַרוואַלעסיקן פֿונדאַמענטאַלע רעליגיעזע און הומאַניסטישע תּורהן און מאַכן עס גרינגער פֿאַר מענטשן אין נעמישטע התּונה צו שטאַרק אונדזער יידישן קיבער. אַזעקצוזאָרפֿן אַ נעלענעהייט צו וועלן מער באַסטיפּטל צו אַ נייער דור איז אַ שאָדן וואָס מיר קענען נישט פֿאַרשאַפֿן.

צו קורץ צו ישראל וז די הרדים רײַינען וואָס רעזל איז נישט קיין ענטפֿער. נתניהו איז נישט רער פּריפּס און די כוסה איז נישט רער וואַטיקאַן. די מלחמה צווישן די אָרטאָדאָקסן, העלטלעבע, רעפֿאָרם און קאַנסערוואַטיוויזם ריכטונגען אויף איין ייִט און די הרדים אוים רער אַנדער ייִט איז אומזיניק און מיאוס. עס שוואַכט אָפּ אישראל און די יידישע נאָם אומעטום.

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Health & Lifestyles

Gala to raise money for brain tumour centre

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

The annual gala that raises funds for the Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumour Centre at the Princess Margaret Hospital will be held this year on May 26 at the Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex.

The centre was founded by the late businessman Gerry Pencer, who was diagnosed with a brain tumour 12 years ago.

Holly Pencer Bellman, Pencer's daughter and executive director of the centre, said that when her father was diagnosed, there wasn't a consolidated treatment facility.

"Surgery was in one place and treatment in another. If we needed information or support, we went somewhere else," Pencer Bellman said.

Her father decided he would change that, she said, and before he died, he pledged $4 million to Princess Margaret Hospital to start the centre.

Pencer Bellman said her father was involved in creating the centre, and "it is exactly his vision. He's all around it."

The largest of its kind in Canada, the centre is 5,700 square feet and takes up half of the 18th floor of the hospital.

"The Pencer Centre has blossomed into the leading multi-disciplinary facility of its kind in North America, regularly held up as a model for similar organizations the world over," she said.

The waiting room of the Pencer Centre

"Not only a state of the art treatment and research facility, it's home to 5,200 patients and their families each year. It's a place where patients can visit with their families, participate in workshops, hang out and have coffee with a friend, talk to a [therapist] or relax in the library with a book."

The Pencer Centre has also developed an international reputation as a significant contributor to leading-edge research, she added.

"Ongoing studies conducted at the Pencer Centre have led to the establishment of a new standard of care for patients, like [my father] who are diagnosed each year with the most aggressive type of brain tumour.

"Not only is this new treatment protocol extending the life of patients, but it has also stimulated the explosion of interest in expanding the limits of conventional treatments as well as exploring novel treatments for other brain tumours," Pencer Bellman said.

For information on the gala, call 416-923-2999 or visit pencerbraintrust.com.

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Health & Lifestyles

TOY DESIGNERS AID ZAREINU MOVEATHON

Rachel Fuhrer, left, and Sean Fuss joined fellow Grade 8 students at Leo Baeck Day School's Thornhill campus to create toys for children with mental and physical disabilities as part of the Zareinu Educational Centre "Design-a-toy Project." The toys will be on display at the Zareinu Moveathon on Sunday, June 13.

Breast cancer specialist urges increased funding to fight disease

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Much more money needs to be poured into cancer prevention activities, says Dr. Ellen Warner, a physician whose practice is devoted to breast cancer.

An associate professor of medicine at the University of Toronto, Warner was a principal investigator of a study of the frequency of BRCA1/BRCA2 mutations among Jewish women with breast cancer.

She spoke recently at a program called Taking Charge of Our Health, sponsored by L'Chaim Cancer Support for Jewish Women, a project of National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto section.

Also on the program was Dr. Barry Rosen, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology at U of T and head of gynecologic oncology at both the University Health Network and U of T; Tanya Giaquinto, a registered dietician, and Brenda Baskind, an inspirational speaker.

Warner said that we need to put "tons of pressure on the government, and we need to be activists. Politicians don't care about cancer prevention."

Drug companies, as well, have little interest in research into cancer prevention, she said. "They need to increase their funding."

To prevent cancer, said Warner, we have to understand how it develops. "Genes become damaged, either by chance, by radiation, by chemicals or by a virus, and make the cells malfunction. Preventing cancer means we have to prevent damage to our genes."

Dr. Ellen Warner

The number 1 risk factor for cancer is aging, she said, "but half of cancers are preventable."

First of all, Warner advised, "don't smoke. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Canadian women, and smoking also increases the risk of other cancers. It's never too late to quit and to get the benefits from quitting."

Sun protection is also essential, she said. "The ozone layer is thinning, and a lot more ultraviolet rays are getting through. You must protect yourself.

"Number 30 [sunscreen] is the highest protection necessary, but don't rely on sunscreen. Stay out of the sun. Being fair-skinned is the sign of a smart, healthy woman."

She said that screening needs to be done for breast, colon and cervical cancers. Screening is crucial, because a lot of tests find lesions that are not yet cancer.

"Know your family history, and talk to your doctor about it. Some people inherit a defective gene from their parents, and if the doctor finds you have an increased risk, he may refer you for genetic counselling. You may be a candidate for a clinical trial."

Rosen said that screening for ovarian cancer is a problem, because a number of symptoms aren't specific to that disease. "All of us get these symptoms, and if we wait until we get other symptoms, it's often too late. If ovarian cancer could be detected in stage 1, it would be 90 per cent curable. A lot of effort is being put into finding the right test, but [we] haven't found it yet."

Jewish women have a mutation of the BRCA genes more commonly than any other population, he said, but that could be an advantage, "because [then] you are in a position to prevent [those diseases.]

"If you know it's in your family, then you're in a position to change the course of your history."

Currently, he said, 2,500 women a year are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and 1,500 die. "I am encouraged, however, with the research that is developing. There is a lot of awareness and we are doing all that we can. I think that the future is bright."

Tanya Giaquinto advised women to be "as lean as possible, move your bodies, and eat mostly foods that are of plant origin. Limit your amount of animal foods, avoid processed meat, and reduce your salt."

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Russia reportedly signs arms deal with Syria

By NATASHA MOZGOVAYA
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JERUSALEM — Russia has signed deals with Syria under which it will sell it warplanes, anti-tank weapons and air defence systems, the Itar-Tass news agency quoted a senior Russian arms trader as saying on May 14.

Mikhail Dmitriyev, head of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation, said Russia would supply Syria with MiG-29 fighters and truck-mounted Pantsir short-range surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery systems.

He didn't specify the kind of anti-tank weapons.

The arms deal is likely to be watched with unease by the United States, which imposed sanctions on Damascus for its support of terror groups and corruption.

Earlier last week, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited Syria – the first visit to Damascus by a Russian ruler since the 1917 Bolshevik revolution – and oversaw talks on Russia's possible assistance in building a nuclear power plant in Syria.

While in Syria, Medvedev also met with Khaled Meshal, the exiled leader of the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas.

Israel's Foreign Ministry said it was "deeply disappointed" that Medvedev met the leader of Hamas, which it said is "a terror organization in every way."

In related developments, a top U.S. State Department official said Russia must take into account Syria's problematic nuclear stance before considering co-operation with Damascus over nuclear power.

The May 12 comments from spokesperson Philip Crowley followed reports that Medvedev and his Syrian counterpart, Bashar Assad, had discussed the possibility of nuclear collaboration in Damascus earlier in the week.

"Co-operation [with Syria] on atomic energy could get a second wind," Medvedev told reporters May 11, but he gave no further details on what form the collaboration might take.

Russian news agencies quoted Assad as saying that he had discussed with Medvedev the possibility of building power plants, including nuclear ones, in Syria.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev

In September 2007, Israeli warplanes bombed a site in eastern Syria that the U.S. later claimed was a nuclear installation aimed at building an atomic bomb with aid from North Korea.

Syria is a signatory to the international Non-Proliferation Treaty, which forbid member states from seeking nuclear weapons, while Russia is one of a handful of states permitted nuclear arms under the treaty.

Crowley told reporters that Washington is cautious about any nuclear deal that includes Syria.

Asked May 13 whether the United States approved of a possible nuclear bond between Russia and Syria, Crowley said NPT signatories, including Russia, have "special responsibilities".

"All members have rights, but all members also have responsibilities," he said, adding: "What concerns us is Syria has not answered questions that have been raised about its compliance with the NPT and all countries that contemplate energy co-operation need to take that into account."

Turkey makes nuclear deal with Iran

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JERUSALEM — Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday he saw no need for United Nations Security Council sanctions after Iran agreed to send some of its uranium abroad.

Iran signed an agreement late Sunday with mediators Brazil and Turkey for a nuclear fuel swap designed to allay international concern over the Islamic Republic's atomic ambitions and avert fresh sanctions on Tehran.

Iran said it had agreed to swap 1,200 kilograms of its low-enriched uranium for higher-enriched nuclear fuel, to be used in a medical research reactor. The exchange would take place in Turkey, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Ramin Mehmanparast said.

Iran, which rejects western accusations it is seeking to develop nuclear bombs, had earlier insisted such a swap must take place on its territory.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called on six world powers, which have been discussing further UN sanctions on the major oil producer, for fresh talks on Iran's nuclear program after the fuel exchange agreement.

Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan

"Following the signing of the nuclear fuel swap deal, it is time for [five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany] to enter talks with Iran based on honesty, justice and mutual respect," Ahmadinejad said.

There was no immediate comment from Washington, which has been leading a western push to impose additional punitive measures on Tehran.

Turkey and Brazil, both non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, had offered to mediate to find a resolution to the impasse. It was seen as the last chance to avoid a fourth round of UN sanctions.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan discussed the deal with Ahmadinejad in Tehran, Iranian state media reported.

"The swap will take place in Turkey," Mehmanparast told reporters, shortly before the agreement was signed by ministers in front of reporters.

Mehmanparast said Iran would send low-enriched uranium to Turkey within a month, and that it would be under the supervision of the UN nuclear agency, state Press TV reported.

Major world powers had urged Iran to accept a months-old International Atomic Energy Agency plan to ship 1,200 kilograms of its low-enriched uranium – enough for a single bomb if purified to a high enough level – abroad for transformation into fuel for a medical research reactor.

The proposal, backed by the United States, Russia and France, was aimed at giving time for diplomatic talks with Iran.

Tehran agreed in principle to the deal in October but then demanded changes such as a simultaneous swap on Iranian soil, conditions other parties in the deal said were unacceptable.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said Turkey would be obliged to return Iran's low-enriched uranium "immediately and unconditionally" if Monday's agreement between Iran, Brazil and Turkey was not implemented.

"Based on the agreement signed this morning, if the swap does not take place, then Turkey will be obliged to send back our dispatched uranium immediately and unconditionally," Mottaki said.

Trita Parsi, director of Washington-based National Iranian American Council, said a potential breakthrough had been made in the long-running dispute, saying Turkey and Brazil had succeeded in filling a "trust gap."

"But will the deal be satisfactory to the U.S.? With the details remaining unknown, it's impossible to speculate," Parsi said in an e-mail comment.

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* * * * *

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Israel Briefs

U.S. to fund missile defence

The Obama administration authorized $205 million to let Israel to complete its Iron Dome short-range missile defence system. "As the president has repeatedly said, our commitment to Israel's security is unshakable and our defence relationship is stronger than ever," a White House statement said. "The United States and our ally Israel share many of the same security challenges, from combating terrorism to confronting the threat posed by Iran's nuclear-weapons program. The president recognizes the threat missiles and rockets fired by Hamas and Hezbollah pose to Israelis, and has therefore decided to seek funding from Congress to support the production of Israel's short range rocket defence system called Iron Dome." A senior administration official set the figure at $205 million and said it was over and above the $3 billion that the United States annually allocates to Israel in defence assistance. The Obama administration is sustaining and in some cases increasing defence assistance to Israel partly as a means to encourage Israel to advance peace talks with the Palestinians.

Woman attacked for tfillin marks

A woman was attacked in Be'er Sheva reportedly for having the imprints of tfillin lines visible on her arms. Noa Raz was physically assaulted by a haredi man in Be'er Sheva's Central Bus Station, where she was waiting for a bus to her job in Tel Aviv, according to the Israel Religious Action Center. According to the centre, the man asked Raz twice if the imprints were from tfillin. When she told him they were, he began to kick and strangle her while screaming "women are an abomination." Raz, a Conservative Jew, reportedly broke free from the man and boarded her bus. Raz is a member of Women of the Wall, which holds a monthly Rosh Chodesh women's prayer service at the Western Wall. In March, haredi men threw chairs at the women as they prepared to pray at the Wall. Raz filed a report with the police about the incident. The Israel Religious Action Center called on Be'er Sheva police to treat the assault as a hate crime.

Hamas inclusion rejected

Israel's Foreign Ministry rejected a call by the presidents of Russia and Turkey to include Hamas in the peace process. In a joint news conference May 12 in Ankara, Russia's Dmitry Medvedev and Turkey's Abdullah Gul said Hamas should not be excluded from the current peace process. Gul said peace could not be achieved without Hamas' involvement. Israel's Foreign Ministry last week condemned Medvedev's meeting with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal in Damascus. "Israel has always stood behind Russia in its fight against Chechen terrorism and we expect similar treatment in the case of Hamas terrorism against Israel," the ministry said. "Hamas is a terrorist organization in every sense of the word. Its declared purpose is the destruction of the State of Israel."

Ethiopians remembered

A memorial service was held for the some 4,000 Jewish Ethiopians who died making their way to Israel. The annual state service was held May 12 near a memorial erected on Mount Herzl by the Absorption and Immigration Ministry in memory of those who died during the trek to the Jewish state. Speakers included family members of the dead, as well as Israeli President Shimon Peres and Absorption Minister Sofa Landver. "This journey is the closest to the story of the Exodus from Egypt," Landver said at the event. "The price of the exodus from Ethiopia was especially high." Landver said Israel's aliyah operation has yet to be completed, and she said she will soon fly to Ethiopia in an effort to expedite the Ethiopians' arrival. – *Files from JTA*

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(Following the Meeting of the Board of Directors)
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Agenda will include:

Presentation of Audited Financial Statements
Appointing Auditors and authorizing the Directors to set their remuneration
Election of Directors
Ratification of Acts of the Officers, Board of Directors and Executive Committee since the last Annual Meeting
Such other business as may properly come before the Meeting

David Engel, President

New Schechter Institute campus launched in Jerusalem

Torontonians instrumental

By JENNY HAZAN
CJN Israel Bureau

JERUSALEM — Several Torontonians were honoured in absentia May 4 at the dedication of the Schechter Institute – Legacy Heritage Center for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, the pluralistic Jewish educational centre's new main campus and national headquarters.

A central part of the institute's 25th anniversary celebrations, the dedication ceremony was attended by Natan Sharansky, the chairman of the Jewish Agency and a former Knesset member, along with hundreds of graduates and supporters.

"We have some wonderful donors in Toronto," said Rabbi David Golinkin, president of the Schechter Institute and the centre's Jerome and Miriam Katzin Professor of Jewish Studies. Not only have Toronto donors contributed significantly to the new campus, he said, but it's also thanks to the longtime support of the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto that the institute was able to open a TALI school branch in Eilat. TALI schools and preschools offer Israeli children a pluralistic education.

Among the Canadian honorees who contributed to the $8.2-million Schechter Institute campus were Harold and Carol Wolfe, Ab and Phyllis Flatt, Shoel Silver (through the Nathan and Lily Silver Family Foundation), and Barry and Paula Sonshine (in honour of Mildred Sonshine and in memory of Joseph Sonshine).

The new building, located in Givat Ram next to the Israel Museum, is slated to open in September, in time for the new academic year. Its five storeys and 2,300 square metres will be home to the Liebhaber Center for Jewish Education; the Harvey L. Miller Family Bet Midrash (study hall) for students of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary, which trains rabbis for the Masorti/Conservative movement; 14 classrooms and lecture halls for the more than 600 educators enrolled in the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies Graduate School MA program; the TALI Education Fund Pedagogic Center, the Institute's nationwide Jewish studies enrichment program for secular public schools and kindergartens; and a new expanded library.

Until now all of these activities have been housed in a building that used to serve as a Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) dormitory, dating back to 1963. "It was totally inadequate for what we do. It was not meant as a space for learning," said Rabbi Golinkin. "We really needed this new building." The old building will be converted into administrative offices.

The old building also wasn't large enough to accommodate the institute's rapid expansion. Since it was founded in 1985, the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies has grown from a four-student learning group into a multi-faceted educational facility with programs serving more than 40,000 students across Israel and in Ukraine, including modern Orthodox, traditional, Reform, secular, and even a few non-Jews. The MA program is the largest Jewish studies program in Israel, with more than 1,000 graduates. The TALI school program has been implemented in 184 schools and preschools across Israel and enrolment is expected to reach 40,000 children this fall. Midreshet Yerushalayim, the institute's Jewish learning program for Russian-speaking immigrants and Jewish communities in Ukraine, recently expanded in Israel to include a learning program for Hebrew speakers. Over the last decade, the institute's full-time faculty has doubled and its library stacks have more than tripled.

"We take this as a good sign that our mission – to spread Jewish learning throughout the State of Israel as well as the Ukraine – is a worthy one. Now more than ever, secular Jews in Israel are thirsty for Jewish education," said Rabbi Golinkin.

"The State of Israel has accomplished many incredible feats since 1948, but in the areas of Jewish identity and Jewish education we have failed to teach most Israelis about Jewish history, culture and tradition," he said. The only Jewish studies subject taught in Israeli schools is Bible, and it's only required to be taught two hours per week. "It's not enough," added Rabbi Golinkin.

Natan Sharansky, left, and Rabbi David Golinkin

According to a poll published in the *Jerusalem Post* last July, 59 per cent of Israelis consider their level of Judaic knowledge to be "mediocre or lower." The same poll indicated that 43 per cent of secular Israelis want to increase their knowledge of Judaism.

"There is a growing trend of secular Israelis searching for Jewish meaning," said Rabbi Golinkin. "This is why our institution has grown so rapidly over the last 25 years."

This was the institute's rationale behind opening a centre of learning, The Schechter Center for Jewish Culture – Legacy Heritage Building, in the heart of secular Tel Aviv, in the Neve Tzedek neighbourhood. The $3.2-million facility was also dedicated during the 25th anniversary celebrations.

"We were very overcrowded in Jerusalem, and in Tel Aviv we didn't have a campus at all. Our growth was restricted because of our facilities," said Rabbi Golinkin. "Now we expect all of our programs to continue to grow, as they have been growing for many years."

Cancellation of conference urged after Israeli barred

By PAUL LUNGEN
Staff Reporter

Canadian doctors are being urged to stay away from a medical conference in Egypt that is proceeding even though an Israeli doctor is being refused entry to the country.

Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (DARA) is calling on Canadian colleagues to write to the hosting medical organization, the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH), urging it to postpone or cancel its 56th Scientific and Standardization Committee (SSC) conference later this month unless Dr. Uri Seligson is permitted to attend. Seligson, a professor of hematology at the Sheba Medical Center of Tel Hashomer Hospital, is chair of the ISTH education committee and two years ago lobbied to permit Cairo to host the event.

DARA vice-chair Rob Zadik said some American doctors have indicated they will boycott the conference because of the refusal of the Egyptian government to permit Seligson to attend.

Zadik is concerned Egypt will similarly prevent other Israeli physicians from participating in the 20th World Congress of the International Association of Surgeons, Gastroenterologists and Oncologists, to be held in Cairo in October.

"This is unacceptable," Zadik said. "This is a country with which Egypt has a treaty. We won't stand for it.

"If this is the behaviour of a country with which Israel has a peace treaty, what is the motivation for Israel to form peace treaties?" he asked.

"This is medicine. There is no room for this kind of behaviour. We won't lay back. We'll do our best to have it cancelled or moved."

As of late last week, there was no indication there would be any changes to the conference. An ISTH spokesperson at the organization's headquarters in Carrboro, N.C., declined to comment about DARA's concerns, referring *The CJN* to the group's website.

The site contained a letter to colleagues from the president of the Cairo gathering, Nevine Kassim, which, apparently without irony, notes "the natural hospitality of Cairo" and states "the goal of the SSC and the ISTH 'Reach the World' is to share scientific and clinical information in our fields."

> ***'If this is the behaviour of a country with which Israel has a peace treaty, what is the motivation for Israel to form peace treaties?'***

Reached in Israel by e-mail, Seligson said Egyptian authorities turned down his visa request three times since early March. He decided against a fourth attempt when he learned "there were threats by Egyptian physician and pharmacist organizations to boycott the meeting if Israeli speakers deliver lectures at a satellite session. As a result, the Danish company Novo Nordisk [the sponsor of the session] cancelled the whole session."

"All Israelis cancelled because their lectures were cancelled or out of solidarity," he stated. "Only one visa was issued to an Israeli physician. The others were pending."

Seligson said Egyptian authorities "could have suppressed the threats by the doctors if they wished to do it." Their failure to do so "portrays a sad picture of the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel."

Though he had recommended Cairo as the venue for the May 22-25 conference, Seligson now believes no similar meetings should be scheduled in Egypt unless Israelis are permitted to attend.

In Egypt, meanwhile, the English-language *Daily News* reported that the head of the Doctors' Syndicate, Hamdy El-Sayyed, said any Egyptian doctor who participates in a conference hosting Israelis would be brought before a disciplinary board.

"Israeli physicians are not allowed to enter Egypt or conduct any kind of medical activities in the country, either," he said.

The *Daily News* cited the *Al-Masry Al-Youm* newspaper as reporting that "professors of hematology at Qasr El-Aini, Ain Shams and Alexandria medical schools expressed dissatisfaction toward the participation of two Israeli doctors in the conference. A professor at Qasr El-Aini, Mona Al-Qasas, told *Al-Masry Al-Youm* that the organizers had invited them [the Israeli doctors], even though Egyptian doctors threatened to boycott the conference."

Zadik noted in a letter to the ISTH that in 2009 the Ontario Medical Association cancelled a continuing medical education event in Dubai after Israeli physicians were disallowed and the American Academy of Emergency Medicine cancelled its endorsement of an international anesthesiology conference in Dubai in March for the same reason.

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MUSICIAN GETS AHEAD, STEP BY STEP

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

He visited six concentration camps, walked in silence on the March of the Living and then started singing.

Mark Feldman, a Canadian musician and lead singer of the Mark Feldman Band (MFB), was this year's musical director for the Toronto contingent of the March of the Living, which takes participants on a tour of concentration camps in Poland and then to Israel.

During the trip, Feldman played to a crowd of 7,000 people.

"It was the most moving musical experience of my life. Being on stage and... [having seen] the gates of Auschwitz, the whole thing was really the most surreal experience of my life," he said.

"I really feel every Jew should visit Poland before Israel. It makes you appreciate Israel."

As musical director, he performed after each concentration camp tour and also went from bus to bus, singing some of his own songs.

Before the trip, Feldman was asked to learn 25 Hebrew songs – a difficult feat to do in three months.

"I can read Hebrew, but I can't understand it," he said. "I didn't know any Hebrew songs at all."

Feldman, 30, has been playing music since he was 15. So far, he's released two solo CDs and will release a self-produced CD with MFB in June.

As a singer-songwriter, his music is almost Bob Dylan-esque, though his latest CD is a bit more rock, with catchy lyrics and a bluesy quality.

"There's definitely an edgier sound on this new record. There's a transition from soft pop to more rock," Feldman said, explaining that rock songs work better live. "I've always found, playing live, it's hard to be lax for two hours. I couldn't exude the energy being directed at me."

Feldman had been playing with his band when his second solo CD was released in 2008.

"We just kept playing and getting tighter as a unit. We figured we'd do this one ourselves," he said of the newest CD, called *Who's Got to Know?*

Feldman and the band turned a cottage into a studio and recorded everything themselves.

"It cost about one-10th what [my last solo CD] did. It gave us some creative control," he said.

Since finishing his CD, Feldman has gone back to his soft rock-pop style.

"[I wanted] to write a song that everyone can sing along to, not scream along to," Feldman said.

Feldman first started writing songs in high school, while in a band.

"When I got to university, I heard songs on the radio and said, 'I can do this. Maybe I will.'"

And he did, but it wasn't easy. Since releasing his first CD in 2004, Feldman has learned to appreciate each accomplishment, no matter how small.

Mark Feldman, 30, has been writing music since high school.

"It's the small stepping-stones, being written up the first time [in 2004], that was a big deal back then," he said.

And Feldman's come a long way.

So far, he's signed a three-song deal with Orange Lounge/InDiscover Recordings, and also signed deals with Experience Music Group and Triple Scoop Music. Recently his song, *Cabin*, off his second album,.was in the TV show *The Ghost Whisperer.*

Over the years, Feldman's learned to understand the business aspect of the music industry.

"Unfortunately, you're in a business where you're trying to sell yourself. A part of me hates that, but you learn how to [do it]," he said.

"I've always sold myself by being a genuine person. People gravitate towards honesty."

When writing songs, Feldman's usually thinking about both himself and his audience.

"It's 50/50. You find a concept that's universal and you make it your own," he said.

"I saw an interview with Jeffrey Steele, a famous songwriter. He always said, 'Just listen to what other people are saying. Look into someone's eyes and say what they're feeling.' And I think that's an incredible way to look at it. You can create from within, but to some extent, you're finding the issues at the core of who others are."

When creating a song, Feldman usually starts with a lyrical idea.

"It's humming around [singing] gibberish... and you formulate an idea based on phonetics," he said. "I find the best songs are the ones that just come out... when you write a song that you connect to, it gives you goosebumps."

This happened during a rainy day in Jamaica, when Feldman wrote *Blue Skies*, a song about seeing the positive in a bad situation. It was especially popular during the March of the Living, after participants had toured death camps.

"We'd be in Birkenau and everyone would be down, then someone would sing *Blue Skies*," he said.

Apart from performing, Feldman also teaches. He runs a division of Stay at Home Music, a company that has some 40 to 50 teachers.

"I hire teachers in addition to teaching 30 students myself," Feldman said.

While he enjoys teaching, the musician sees bigger things in his future.

"I'm still nowhere near where I want to be," he said.

But he knows how to get there.

"It's just learning how to be professional and handling yourself in a professional manner. Some would say it's unartistic, and maybe it is, but it's such a dense industry," he said. "Most [people] who make it are those who have an incredible work ethic."

For more information on Feldman and his band, visit www.mfband.com. To learn more about Stay at Home Music, visit www.stayathomemusic.ca.

Young Israeli musicians perform at Beth Torah

By RENA GODFREY
Special to The CJN

A trio of young Israeli musicians will perform Beethoven and a medley of Israeli songs in a series of private and public concerts presented by the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada in Toronto and Montreal next month.

The group, the Fresh Faces of Jerusalem, is made up of Tamar Greenstein, Uriah Tutter and Elisha Zak-Krawets, all 16, who began their musical careers at age six, at the Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna. The conservatory is attended by 550 children who are from three to 18 years old.

Thanks to scholarship funds set up by the conservatory, all three members of the Fresh Faces participate in master classes with leading musicians. They play regularly with the conservatory's chamber orchestra and the Young Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra. They are also members of a chamber music group for outstanding musicians at the Jerusalem Music Centre, and they participate in festivals throughout Israel.

In addition to practising up to four hours after a day at high school, Greenstein, Tutter and Zak-Krawets give back to their musical community by volunteering as mentors in the From Risk to Opportunity program. Funded by the Jerusalem Foundation, this program provides access to first-rate music instruction for disadvantaged children.

Greenstein mentors Julian, a nine-year-old violin student who comes from a home where there is ongoing physical abuse between the parents. Greenstein is sensitive to Julian's situation and appreciative of her own supportive family.

"I am very lucky to have been born into a musical family," Greenstein said. "My passion is chamber music, and I hope I will become a very good chamber player." She is especially excited about performing in Canada for the first time.

Tutter, a cellist, performed a world première of a well-known Israeli composition at the Israeli Contemporary Music Festival. His siblings also attend the conservatory.

Tutter and his sister, Halel, who studies violin, practise with their brother, Yotam, who suffers from cerebral palsy and can only play piano with one finger. Despite Yotam's disability, he has an amazing musical ear and is able to feel the music just as well as all the other students at the conservatory do. The Tutter family have formed a unique musical ensemble. Playing together is one of the few activities that the Tutters can do together.

Pictured, from left, are Tamar Greenstein on violin, Elisha Zak- Krawets on piano, and Uriah Tutter on cello.

Zak-Krawets, the pianist of Fresh Faces, studies composition in a program at the conservatory and is working to become a composer. He was chosen to compose a symphony for the Israeli Contemporary Music Festival 2010. His symphony will be recorded live for Israeli radio.

Patient and kind, Zak-Krawets also plays a four-hand piano ensemble with Jacob, a nine-year-old blind boy who comes from a financially disadvantaged home. For Zak-Krawets, playing with Jacob is a powerful and meaningful experience.

Lena Nemirovksy-Wiskind, director of the Jerusalem Conservatory Hassadna since 1994, created the From Risk to Opportunity program at the conservatory. "For children from at-risk families, their studies at the conservatory brings them pride and a feeling that we believe in them," she said. "We also see the amazing power that music plays in the lives of children with special needs.

"With the very talented students who decide to take their studies to a professional level, we feel great joy in helping them receive outstanding professional guidance so that they can fulfil their dreams."

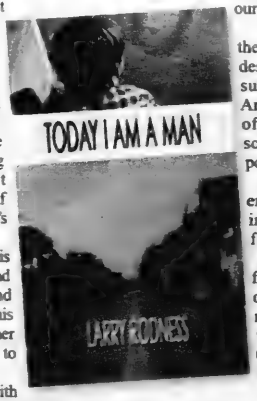
Under the direction of Prof. Michael Gaisler, the Fresh Faces perform at Beth Torah Congregation in conjunction with the Israel Aliyah Centre, on June 6.

For more information on the Fresh Faces of Jerusalem, call the Jerusalem Foundation of Canada, Toronto office, at 416-635-5491.

Musician's first book is '80 per cent biographical'

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Larry Rodness' first book, *Today I Am A Man* (Savant Books), opens with an uncomfortable scene: a man in his 50s beating up on a teenager outside a high school to avenge his son.



After reading the book's explosive opening chapter, you start to get glimpses into the psyche of Steven Goldman, the book's protagonist.

He's a man haunted by his past; a victim of bullying and abuse – both physical and mental – by the designs of his peers, and he's a loving father and husband trying to come to terms with his demons.

In a recent interview with *The CJN*, Rodness explained that though the characters are fictional, the story is really "80 per cent biographical" and that the Goldman character is based on his own experiences as a youth.

In the book, Goldman recounts how his family moved from Toronto to Los Angeles for three years at the behest of his father in order to try to live the American dream.

Rodness' family did the same thing in 1963.

"My family thought we were going to the land of opportunity," Rodness said. Instead, his family eked out a meagre living before finally returning to Toronto "defeated, with our tails between our legs."

In the book, young Goldman, the transplanted high schooler describes trying to fit into the surfer culture of 1960s Los Angeles. He befriends a gang of delinquent youths in high school to become one of the popular boys.

In the process, he discovers a love of music and more importantly, his own moral fibre.

Goldman's newfound friends turn out to have their own agendas and revel at misleading and tormenting the naive Jewish kid from Canada, getting him into trouble as often as they can.

His one solace is the love of a girl who lives next door, who supports him through each new crisis of faith and friendship.

Rodness, a Toronto musician, said he originally wrote the story as a screenplay and has been shopping it around to gauge interest from filmmakers.

"One of the life lessons I learned [while living in L.A. as a youth] was how to deal with a bully," he said, adding that readers of his book will find it's all about "sexual awakenings, learning respect for women… [and] realizing that if you're fortunate in life, you find the right person to grow with."

He said he let family members read the manuscript before publishing it and that he was happy they were all "OK with it."

The title comes from the often uttered phrase used by bar mitzvah boys in their thank-you speeches.

"Every kid says, 'Today I am a man,' but not every kid understands what this means as a bar mitzvah," Rodness said, adding that his experiences at that age taught him that one doesn't get something for nothing, and that you shouldn't always look for the "easy way" in life.

Larry Rodness

He said that every child experiences some type of bullying in their formative years, parents need to face this fact and not run from it. It's a lesson he hopes readers will take away from the book.

Today I Am A Man is available on Amazon.com and locally at Israel's, The Judaica Centre, and Batner Bookstore.

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Film explores same-sex marriage with humour

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

When Nelson Hirsch, a young and handsome Jewish bachelor, informs his parents that there is a significant other in his life, they seem pleased. Yet the prospect that their beloved son will marry a nice Jewish girl seems too good to be true.

In Evgeny Afineevsky's comedy, *Oy Vey! My Son Is Gay!* – which is due to be screened at the Inside Out film festival on Sunday, May 23 at 7 p.m. at the Isabel Bader Theatre – the realities and norms of our fast-changing modern society are on full display.

Exploring the contemporary issue of same-sex marriage with humour and empathy, it comes down on the side of our common humanity.

When Shirley (Lainie Kazan), Nelson's brassy mother, learns that Nelson is ending his bachelorhood, there is only one question on her mind. "Is she Jewish?" Her assumption harkens back to an earlier era.

Her husband, Martin (Saul Rubinek), is hardly as impulsive. "Don't call the rabbi," he advises. Does Martin know more than he lets on?

Eager to sort things out, Shirley stops by Nelson's apartment, where she is greeted by Angelo (Jai Rodriguez), Nelson's Italian-American partner, who passes himself off as his interior decorator. In short order, Shirley also meets her son's gorgeous neighbour, Sybil Williams (Carmen Electra), a magazine cover girl whom she assumes is Nelson's fiancé.

Lainie Kazan and John Lloyd Young in *Oy Vey! My Son Is Gay!*

In exasperation, Nelson (John Lloyd Young) struggles to tell his mom that he's gay. But Shirley is so self-absorbed by her idle chatter that his disclosure goes over her head. Finally, Nelson manages to break the news to her. Shirley, turning to Martin, intones indeadpan fashion, "Your son is a homosexual."

Despite her initial reaction, Shirley finally accepts her son's sexual preference. Martin, however, is a holdout. Angelo's parents seem more understanding.

This predictable film with the usual stock characters is only sporadically funny. More too often than not, it is droningly boring. It's clear that several non-essential scenes could easily have been consigned to the cutting floor.

The performances are middling to good. Kazan, the central character, is a force of nature, but she's way over the top. Rubinek is considerably more measured. Young and Rodriguez acquit themselves reasonably well. Electra is quite a dish, especially in the bathtub.

Oy Vey! My Son is Gay! might have been a better film had there been a decent script and had Kazan been able to control her emotions.

All in all, it falls considerably short of the mark.

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The Israeli film, *Eyes Wide Open*, will be shown at the Isabel Bader Theatre on Monday, May 24, at 9:15 p.m.

A U.S. film, *Off and Running: An American Coming of Age Story*, will be screened at the Royal Ontario Museum on Sunday, May 30, at 3 p.m.

Communication, a New Zealand short, will be screened at the Royal Ontario Museum on Sunday, May 23, at 2:30 p.m.

Ajami is a rough and tumble Israeli film

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Ajami, Israel's entry for best foreign movie at this year's Academy Awards, is gritty to its core.

Set mainly in Jaffa and fleetingly in the West Bank town of Nablus, *Ajami* opens in Toronto on May 28.

Co-directed by Yaron Shani, an Israeli Jew, and Scandar Copti, an Israeli Arab, it unfolds in chapters against the unsettling backdrop of a drive-by shooting, an expected reprisal and the disappearance of an Israeli soldier in the West Bank.

The mistaken murder of a young Arab man in Jaffa as he repairs his car on the street touches off the chain reaction of retaliatory killings and subsequent attempts to reach a workable truce through the payment of hard, cold cash.

This segment is in Arabic, with English subtitles. It's narrated by Nasri (Fouad Habash), a 13-year-old who keeps a detailed diary of events.

He and his older brother, Omar (Shahir Kebabha), try to protect themselves and their family by turning to a local fixer and elder, Abua Elias (Youssef Sahwani). They hope he can defuse a tense situation that is spinning dangerously out of control.

"Money is the only solution," says Elias, putting his finger on the pulse of the problem.

Shahir Kabaha, left, Fouad Habash, centre, and Eran Naim, right, star in *Ajami*.

About 40 minutes into the film, Hebrew kicks in as Dando (Eran Naim), a Tel Aviv detective assigned to the drug squad, starts looking for his missing brother, the soldier.

Amid the ensuing drama and grief, Dando's wife complains that he works too hard and is an absent husband.

Dando's quest to find his brother dovetails with a chapter revolving around Binj (Copti), a hardened Arab drug dealer who's dating a Jewish woman.

Binj's Arab friends do not appreciate his relationship with her. But the schism between Jews and Arabs in Israel transcends Binj and his Jewish girlfriend. It also emerges when an Arab man suggests that the Arab sector does not receive its fair share of government funds and when a Jew compares Jaffa, with its growing Arab minority, to the Gaza Strip.

Ajami moves slowly and even aimlessly at times, belying its explosive content.

The actors, all amateurs recruited and trained by the directors in workshops over the course of almost a year, do not strain for effect. They react to various situations in naturalistic fashion.

Ajami, which sometimes has the feel of a graphic documentary, deftly explores themes such as family ties and Arab-Jewish inter-communal tensions.

Israel, in this rough and tumble film, is a seething cauldron of crime, vengeance and misspent lives.

Tragedy permeates *Ajami*.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

CONCERT FOR PAUL PENNA DOWNTOWN JEWISH SCHOOL

World music group **Jaffa Road**, dancers from the **Kaeja d'Dance** troupe, 11-year-old piano prodigy **Yike (Tony) Yang**, comedian **Linda Kash** and blues-jazz singer **Jackie Richardson** headline an upcoming tribute to **Dr. Larry Librach**.

Husband-and-wife comedy duo **Deb McGrath** and **Colin Mochrie** co-host the gala event, which is a fund-raiser for the Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School.

The director is playwright-director **Alisa Palmer**, and the producer is **Danny Greenspoon**. Librach is director of the Temmy Latner Centre for Palliative Care at Mount Sinai Hospital and an internationally recognized advocate for quality end-of-life patient care

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. at Bloor. Monday, June 7, 8 p.m. Tickets are $250; includes dessert reception. 416-928-3537, 2010tributegala@djds.ca

* * *

Jewish Book Awards: The 22nd annual Helen and Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards is the community's annual celebration of excellence in contemporary Canadian writing on Jewish themes and subjects. The awards categories are: history, fiction, Yiddish, youth literature, Holocaust literature, biography and memoir, scholarship on a Jewish subject, and Jewish thought & culture.

Most writers labour in isolation, so it's intensely gratifying to see the best of them getting their moment in the sun when they are called forward to receive an award. This year's ceremony also features a special tribute and presentation to **Howard Engel**, author of 12 bestselling Benny Cooperman mystery novels.

The awards ceremony is free and open to everyone. Miles Nadal JCC, Al Green Theatre, 750 Spadina Ave. Thursday, May 27, 8 p.m.

* * *

Evening with Anita Diamant: Canadian Hadassah-Wizo presents An Evening with Anita Diamant, featuring the bestselling author of *The Red Tent* as she discusses her new book, *Day After Night*. Patron ticket $150, ticket and book $70, general admission $40. Beth Tzedec Congregation, 1700 Bathurst St. Thursday, May 27, 8 p.m.; patron cocktail reception 6:30 p.m. 416-873-6902.

* * *

***Winds Tail* from Judy Singer's *Ephemera* exhibit**

Arts in Brief

• The Royal Ontario Museum's Institute for Contemporary Culture is screening **Harun Farocki** and **Andrei Ujica**'s remarkable documentary *Videograms of a Revolution* (1992), which documents Romania's 1989 revolution, stitching together official state television broadcasts with amateur archival footage. $10. ROM, south entrance; Signy and Cleophee Eaton Theatre, 100 Queen's Park. Wednesday, May 19, 7 p.m.

• Hear the Miles Nadal JCC Choir and Women's Chorus in concert. Wednesday, June 2 and Thursday, June 3, 8 p.m. $10. MNjcc, Al Green Theatre. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• The Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation presents Israel Makes Music, an evening of chamber music featuring three young performers – cellist **Michal Beck**, pianist **Yevgeny Yontov** and clarinettist **Udi Nave** – performing **Bach**, **Mozart**, **Ben-Haim** and **Brahms**. $25, includes dessert reception. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. June 3, 8 p.m. 1-888-222-6608, www.ticketweb.ca

• *Ephemera*, an exhibition of new paintings by **Judy Singer**, is on view June 4 and 5 at Spazio Dell' Arte, 400 Eastern Ave., Suite 201. www.judysinger.ca

• Congregation Darchei Noam presents And the Beat Goes On, a fundraising concert featuring singer-musician **Lenka Lichtenberg**, jazz vocalist **Julie Michels**, and host **Diane Flacks**. A portion of funds goes to Save A Child's Heart, an Israel-based international humanitarian project providing heart surgeries for children in need. $60, includes silent auction, hors d'oeuvres and dessert reception; with wine bar. Darchei Noam, 64 Sheppard Ave. W. Sunday, June 6, 7 to 10:30 p.m. 416-638-4783, caroldn@bellnet.ca

•**Robert Adams**, Welsh-born writer and critic reviews *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by **Mohsin Hamid**, May 25, 8 p.m. and Wednesday May 26, 2 p.m.at The Hart House Theatre, 7 Hart House Circle, University of Toronto. Tickets : $35 at UofT Box Office, 416-978-8849, or uofttix.ca

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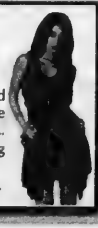

Books & Authors

The Winterhouse is a real winner

By BILL GLADSTONE
Special to The CJN

If truth were told, not all past winners of the fiction prize in the annual Helen & Stan Vine Canadian Jewish Book Awards have been outstanding reads. Once in a rare while, a winner has been selected merely because it was the best of a bad lot and pickings were slim that year.

Fortunately, that's not the case with *The Winterhouse*, the novel by Newfoundland writer Robin McGrath that has been named the winner of this year's fiction prize, to be awarded at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre on May 27.

The Winterhouse (Killick Press) is a lovely book, full of memorable characters, sharp writing and plenty of history, folklore and rustic charm. It is mostly set in a rugged and scarcely populated island in the British colony of Newfoundland in the fall and winter of 1820.

The story revolves around two characters: Rosehannah, a strong-willed and independent 14-year-old daughter who is left to fend for herself after her mother dies, and her father moves away to cohabit with a widow; and Jacob Harris, a travelling Jewish sales agent who is shipwrecked upon his arrival from England and stays for the winter.

As the story begins, the father sells his store to the newcomer, who, much weakened from his ordeal, hardly notices as the man includes Rosehannah in the deal. The father hastily marries Rosehannah to the stranger so he can depart with a freer conscience now that his only child (step-child, actually) has a husband to care for her.

The subtleties of the developing relationship between the wise and capable Rosehannah and the quiet and gentle "mister" take a back seat to the demands that survival imposes upon them in their isolated fishing village along the ocean coast and the inland "winterhouse" where they retreat to better endure the winter.

McGrath commands an awesome knowledge of fishing and boating, plants and berries of the woods, how to skin and roast a variety of wild and domestic birds, and such diverse skills as snowshoeing, crafting metal objects in a home-made forge, and salting fish and game. To all of this, she adds a dollop of humanity as she paints the various families on the island who live in a necessary symbiosis with one another. Sociability, neighbourliness and tolerance are not just expected; they are mandatory.

All in all, it seems an astonishingly authentic portrait of a rustic community, comparable, say, to A. J. Cronin's Welsh village in *The Citadel*, except much more rudimentary. *The Winterhouse* is made all the more lovelier by McGrath's language, which is salted with delicious old words and aphorisms.

The novel features, as an epistolary subplot, a modern correspondence between some genealogical researchers who are delving into the Harris family tree and into the history of the Jews on the Newfoundland "Rock." Through this expeditious device McGrath is able to introduce much fascinating material.

The Winterhouse is an impressive book that will appeal to patient readers willing to take the time to let a good book win them over.

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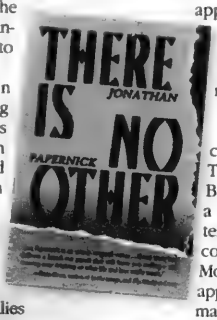

There Is No Other by Jonathan Papernick

In *There Is No Other* (Exile Editions), a collection of compelling stories by former Torontonian Jonathan Papernick (now of Boston), we meet a caretaker who has a vision of the Virgin Mary in a Reform temple in Boston; an angry Jewish kid who comes to a school Purim party wearing a Mohammed costume and a suicide-bomber apparatus; and an American Jewish businessman who wants to build baseball stadiums in Israel and the Palestinian territories in the hope that the game will bring on peace.

Like a speeding curveball, most of these stories have an ironic twist that spins them in an unpredictable direction. Papernick (unlike Robin McGrath) writes about Jewish tradition from the inside, with an insider's comprehension of its quirks and contradictions, in a prose style tinged with dark humour and irreverence.

Comparisons have aptly been made with Nathan Englander and Bernard Malamud. Papernick is in the same ballpark, but at this stage he's still hitting mostly singles and doubles, with not enough home runs to make it into the majors.

My favourite story is *The Madonna of Temple Beth Elohim*, which presents us with the hilarious conundrum of a rabbi who cannot keep the crowds out of his synagogue after word gets out that someone has seen the Virgin Mary in a piece of wood on the altar.

That rich irony is counterbalanced by the sense of discomfort generated in *There Is No Other*, when the kid in the suicide costume achieves his Columbine ambition. Papernick is nothing if not a literary iconoclast keen on exploding our idols, ideals and conceptions about ourselves and others.

Not all of the stories have Jewish characters. In *What Is It Then, Between Us?* a husband runs momentarily down the block to find a handyman to fix the radiator and ends up in a bar and, ultimately, a full-blown sexual liaison. Then he rushes home to find his wife, for once, "in the mood."

The two worlds meet in *Skin for Skin*, when a non-Jewish boy forces himself upon a Jewish girl from the same high school. She is shocked, first by the crucifix dangling from his neck, then by another appendage – which she seeks to improve with a Japanese paring knife.

At times erotic as well as neurotic, and infused with a dark and sometimes-funny magic realism, many of these stories feature an array of semi-crazed, lonely people living on the precarious edge between reality, Jewish tradition, and their dreams.

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Hockey tournament a win for Alzheimer's research

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

The Gordie and Colleen Howe Fund for Baycrest scored $3.6 million for Alzheimer's research at its annual Scotiabank Pro Am for Alzheimer's hockey tournament in Toronto and Edmonton earlier this month.

"It combines people's passion and love of the game of hockey with fundraising for a fantastic organization and cause," Ruth Morayniss, director of marketing and donor communications for the Baycrest Foundation, said of the tourney.

This is its fifth year in Toronto and the first in Edmonton, where participants raised $2.6 million and $1 million respectively, she said, adding that the event has grown every year. Five years ago, the Toronto tournament had 24 teams. This year it had 50.

There are discussions about bringing the tournament to Calgary and Montreal next year, and there are talks about expanding to more cities across the country, as well as a few in the United States, said Mark Gryfe, president of the Baycrest Foundation.

Since the first year, the foundation has raised more than $10 million for the Gordie and Colleen Howe Fund for Alzheimer's research, Morayniss said.

Teams that raised the most money had first pick of the ex-pros and Olympic stars in the draft.

Top fundraisers play with NHL alumni

It's all about the experience and the fundraising, Gryfe said, explaining that when players drafted the hockey stars, they got to spend the weekend with them.

Many NHL alumni played in the tournament, including former Montreal Canadiens greats Guy Lafleur and Mark Napier, as well as former Calgary Flame and Toronto Maple Leaf Doug Gilmour. There were also three women from Canada's 2002 and 2006 gold medal Olympic hockey teams.

The top team this year was called the Geri Hat-Tricks, which picked former Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman Borje Salming first.

The top 20 individual fundraisers also had the opportunity to play in an all-star game with 20 NHL alumni.

Napier said he has been involved in the tournament since the beginning. He said the former professionals love to participate either through playing, signing autographs or refereeing, and this year, there was a waiting list.

"It's the best event I've ever been involved in," said Gryfe, who has been fundraising for about 30 years and was recently given the Gordy Wolfe Award for Jewish communal professional leadership.

The event began years ago as a golf tournament, he explained. "That turned into a discussion of hockey, and as soon as we said it, we knew it was a winner."

Shane Altbaum, an MBA student at the University of Toronto, said it was surreal to play hockey with his childhood heroes.

"As I stepped into my first face-off against Doug Gilmour, I leaned in and said to him 'I've been dreaming about this for 15 years.' He smiled and beat me cleanly."

The event had a special significance to Altbaum beyond playing with the hockey stars. As a child, he said, he would watch hockey with his grandfather every night, but eventually his grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer's.

Napier also has a connection to the disease. Five years ago, after he had already been involved with the tournament, a family doctor diagnosed his father-in-law with Alzheimer's.

Even after taking medication, there was little improvement, he said. His father-in-law went to Baycrest for an evaluation, where they discovered his disease to be a different form of dementia.

He didn't know much about Baycrest before this happened, he said, but soon discovered that it's one of the best facilities of its kind not only in Canada, but in the world.

Participants in the tournament raised varying amounts. Harry Lebovic raked in more than $100,000, winning the Gordie Howe Award as top fundraiser.

Altbaum, who participated this year for the first time, said he raised about $4,000, and looks forward to taking part in coming years.

He said the experience was indescribable.

"You're walking through the arena playing with your heroes," he said. "It's something I'll talk about for the rest of my life."

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Baycrest Foundation president Mark Gryfe, left, with top fundraiser Harry Lebovic, middle, and hockey legend Gordie Howe. ***[Jack Beker photo]***

Internet medical info can mislead

By MICHAEL GORDON

"I'm just not sure I want to try this on my mother," the daughter said as we discussed starting her mother on a medication used to treat people suffering from dementia.

I had seen her mother twice. The first evaluation came up with a provisional diagnosis of moderate dementia. The second one followed some investigations and a chance for the daughter and her husband to consider my medication recommendation.

The Senior Side of Life

Six months had passed and the mother was still manifesting the same symptoms, which included some cognitive deficiencies as well as a flattening of her mood, a symptom often seen in individuals who suffer from Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Meanwhile, the well-educated daughter perused all the information she could find on the Internet and became overwhelmed by all the blogs about medication side effects and could not make the treatment decision. "I have been afraid to fill the prescription," she said.

I reiterated my views on trying the medication, which although not curative often improves cognition, interactive and social abilities, and likely decreases the rate of further decline. I then asked her about her view of risk. "I am just afraid to take any chances," she said.

I asked her how she got her mother to my office that day. She answered, "By car, via Highway 400 and then the 401."

I looked at her and said, "Now that is really risky. With a drug, most of the time if there is a problem, when you stop the drug, the problem goes away. When you drive and there is a problem – it can be fatal."

Three months later, the daughter visited with her mother and was elated. "I cannot tell you how much better she is," she told me.

When I asked her to explain, she replied, "She is just there. She is engaged and responsive, even though her memory is probably not much better, but she now communicates and even has some of her humour back. It is really something."

Many family members come to my office now with newspaper articles and, more and more lately, information from the Internet. They want to know if I know something about what is printed, which, of course, is not always so. They ask why there are so many conflicting reports and are often paralyzed in decision making.

Some of the disease-specific blogs have only the bad outcomes, which is why people blog about them. Rarely do people who have had good results take the trouble to write about them.

I try to explain to my patients and their families that data, the raw material from studies, has yet to be incorporated and tested. After that, it might be called "information." The problem is that information is fluid and may change from one study to another, depending on the nature of the study. Only after it has been consistently verified can it become what we would generally call "knowledge," meaning that it is consistent and likely reproduced by many investigators and observers.

The key to quality medical practice is how the "knowledge" is used in the context of an individual patient, and such complex decision-making becomes the wisdom of the profession and of the physician. That's why a physician's medical experience, using all the available tools and observations, matters so much.

Getting information from various sources may be helpful. But it is the discussion with your physician, whom presumably you trust, that should finalize why you accept and make important medical decisions.

Dr. Michael Gordon is medical program director of palliative care at Baycrest and co-author with Bart Mindszenthy of Parenting Your Parents (Dundurn Press). His latest book, Brooklyn Beginnings: A Geriatrician's Odyssey, can be researched from his website: http://www.drmichaelgordon.com.

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1 banana, 2" slit cut into peel
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1 tsp ground black pepper

Wash potatoes well, poke holes into them, rub each with about 1 tsp salt, wrap with heavy-duty aluminum foil. Place directly on oven rack at 350°F for about 50 min., or until tender, then scoop out into ovenproof bowl and cover. At same time, bake banana in peel on rack until blackened, about 15 min. and scoop out into separate bowl. While potatoes are still warm (you may have to reheat in oven a minute or two), add butter and let melt. Add milk, cinnamon, brown sugar, baked banana, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp pepper. Using a potato masher, combine. Season to taste with additional salt and pepper as needed. Reheat when ready to use.

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The key to weight loss

What is the key to successful weight loss?

I get asked this question *a lot*, and I actually do have a simple answer. The key to successful weight loss is having your head in the right place to do it! So many people come to my office saying they want to lose weight, and they know they have to, and they really believe that they want to be thinner and healthier. The problem is, they are not willing to put in the work required to lose weight; they still would rather have the instant gratification of eating what they want.

About Nutrition

By LISA WEINBERG

On the flip side, when a client comes in who is motivated, determined and committed, it turns out to be an easy goal to achieve, because through the process, the client does not feel punished or deprived and naturally make the right choices because it is what he or she really wants. If you want to be thinner and healthier, more than you want to eat that tempting food in front of you, you actually no longer want those tempting foods because they would put you further away from your goal.

Sorry to say it, ladies, but men are often very good at putting their mind to this task and to being very motivated. Men also generally have an easier time losing weight for physiologic reasons, and they tend to be less emotional eaters than us.

Your attitude is truly one essential key to successful weight loss and in keeping it off afterward, an equally challenging task. If you are going to start dieting and each day or week make an excuse for why you weren't successful, then maybe you need to ask yourself if you are really ready.

Remember my advice from a previous column, if you find you cannot yet set your mind to successfully losing weight, then at the very least, stop gaining!

Lisa Weinberg is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in Toronto, in private practice and at the Genesis Professional Group. You can also follow Weinberg at http://twitter.com/lisaweinbergrd If you have any nutrition questions, please send them to The CJN.

A sick chicken, or to be a Jew

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

There's something particular about being Jewish.

We celebrate things that no other people celebrate, such as the fact hockey is played in Metulla, Israel, and nowhere else in the Middle East. Being Jewish means we are exclusively proud of *daf yomi* – a daily regimen of studying one page of Talmud a day, for 7-1/2 years, until all tractates are completed.

URBAN WRITER

We rejoice about the fact that more than 22 per cent of those who have received the Nobel Peace Prize are Jewish or of Jewish descent. We are excited that Jews were dominant in the clothing industry, and that about 25 per cent of the people on Forbes Fortune 500 list are Jews.

Being Jewish means we have contributed and cheered while valiant and plucky Israeli and Diaspora Jews – our home team – flew on the wings of eagles, saving Jews from Yemen, Ethiopia, Uganda, Odessa and the Baltic.

To be Jewish is to be a member of a clan with a voracious appetite for curiosity, compassion, and the intent of self-development and the enhancement of our existence and world.

Of course, we Jews have our foibles, and we have our migraines.

Being Jewish means that when we see someone with a gold tooth, we think of the Holocaust, when our family's teeth were painfully and hatefully extracted. Our memories, because we are Jews, are littered with sinister and serrated images from every century.

Being Jewish means that when your little boy – say one who is four years old – is pretending to be a monster and tries to scare an older woman sitting on a bench in front of your condo, she responds, "You can't scare me, *zees'ala* [sweetheart], I was in the Holocaust."

Being Jewish means that (as funny as it may seem being parodied) 10 Jews around the table really does make for 11 opinions (if we're lucky) and causes great ethical and practical bottlenecks. (An example: should the unearmarked donation be used to buy more prayer books or redesign the cloakroom? Another example: should we build settlements in the territories?)

Being Jewish, or more so, being "*chassidishe*," means it's difficult to be seen on Friday night while walking home from shul on a side street. A *bekishe*, a man's silken black cloak, does not reflect light and, therefore, puts the wearer in danger. (Perhaps our many entrepreneurs in the clothing industry should design a luminous *bekishe* strip).

One morning my boy said *Modeh Ani* (the prayer thanking God for returning his spirit) by heart. He had heard me all those months. That instance was important, because I worry if I am imparting enough to him about Judaism. I glimpsed a success. Being Jewish at that moment meant my son was expressing appreciation, identifying with creation and the Creator, and stating his place in the world.

Being Jewish at that second was also troublesome, as it meant my son is a Jew and is committing to being so, and what parent of our faith doesn't worry about our safety as a people, and particularly about the safety of our children?

Henny Youngman joked: a Jewish woman had two chickens. One got sick, so the woman made chicken soup out of the other one, to help the sick one get well.

That's the challenge and conundrum of being Jewish. We celebrate our chickens and then they always get sick. We care, sometimes to our detriment. Some Jews are wise, and – as Mark Twain said about people in general – "some are otherwise."

I have such a headache now, but I'm so proud. I'm going to bed. Good night.

To comment, visit http://avrum.net.

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Many Faces... One Community

A salute to our community and its volunteers

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Across the street. Across the globe.

Volunteerism is alive and thriving

There is no better indication of the health of a community then how many of its members are committed, able and willing to volunteer their time. Jewish Toronto was built on a strong tradition of volunteerism, of individuals giving of themselves to improve the lives of others, and we are both so proud today in knowing that tradition is alive and thriving.

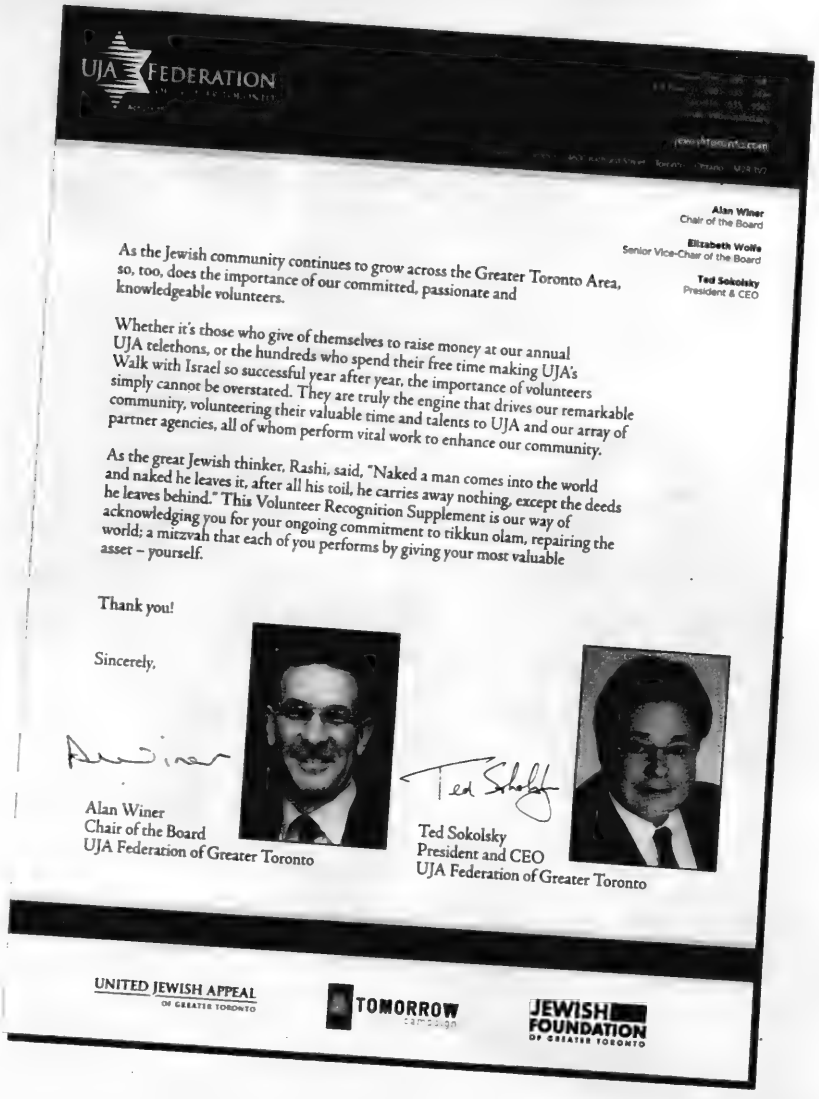
We should never take for granted the thousands of volunteers whose passion for Jewish life and vision for a bright future have moved them to come out to telethons, the Walk with Israel, rallies and events. We are truly one of the most fortunate communities in the world.

As we venture forward in our new positions as the Chairs of United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2011, we are inspired by the work of everyone who has ever offered their time, their energy and dedication to community life and we are grateful for their commitment.

We look forward to the Campaign ahead and the momentum of our volunteers who will propel us forward with hope and enthusiasm for what is yet to come.

Sincerely,

Sherry Firestone Jeff Rosenthal
Chairs, United Jewish Appeal Campaign 2011


UJA FEDERATION
Alan Winer
Chair of the Board
Elizabeth Wolfe
Senior Vice-Chair of the Board
Ted Sokolsky
President & CEO
As the Jewish community continues to grow across the Greater Toronto Area, so, too, does the importance of our committed, passionate and knowledgeable volunteers.
Whether it's those who give of themselves to raise money at our annual UJA telethons, or the hundreds who spend their free time making UJA's Walk with Israel so successful year after year, the importance of volunteers simply cannot be overstated. They are truly the engine that drives our remarkable community, volunteering their valuable time and talents to UJA and our array of partner agencies, all of whom perform vital work to enhance our community.
As the great Jewish thinker, Rashi, said, "Naked a man comes into the world and naked he leaves it, after all his toil, he carries away nothing, except the deeds he leaves behind." This Volunteer Recognition Supplement is our way of acknowledging you for your ongoing commitment to tikkun olam, repairing the world; a mitzvah that each of you performs by giving your most valuable asset – yourself.
Thank you!
Sincerely,
Alan Winer
Chair of the Board
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
Ted Sokolsky
President and CEO
UJA Federation of Greater Toronto
UNITED JEWISH APPEAL OF GREATER TORONTO
TOMORROW campaign
JEWISH FOUNDATION OF GREATER TORONTO

Sustaining our people and our tradition

We travel the journey from Pesach to Shavuot every year. Freedom is not an end in itself in our tradition. Our people were released from bondage so that we might make a commitment to the Holy One. During the Omer period, these seven weeks, we are commanded to count our blessings. We recall that our people gave of their time and talent to create the "Mishkan," the symbol of holiness in an ancient wilderness.

The structures that house our communal life are much more permanent in our world today. We are sustained by the on-going contribution of volunteers, regardless of the physical premises in which they make their mark. Just as we count our days and our blessings, we acknowledge that giving of our time allows our community to thrive. Every volunteer is deserving of recognition.

Each of us who does our part helps to build and sustain our people and our tradition. These many seemingly small acts of caring and commitment make our communal life possible. Experience tells us that our true beliefs are those that we chose to act upon. Our tradition is based on covenantal responsibility. We each must make our mark.

However, we can do even more. We are taught (Talmud Bavli Y'vamot 20a), קדש עצמך במותר לך *Create holiness by going beyond obligation.* The volunteers, who show what each of us is capable of, set holy examples. When we tell their stories, we do more than acknowledge their contribution. We raise the bar for each of us to step forward and make a difference. May their work challenge us to work for the betterment of our people in our local community, in Israel, and around the world.

Rabbi Michael Dolgin is President of the Toronto Board of Rabbis.

Volunteer puts life on hold for Haiti earthquake victims

By Dan Horowitz

While billions of people around the world watched the horrific images of the January 12, 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti, for some, watching was simply not good enough.

Eilat resident Roy Rosenfeld, a 31-year-old businessman and former paramedic with Magen David Adom - Israel's national disaster, ambulance and blood bank service - volunteered his services to the people of Haiti as part of IsraAID: The Israel Forum for International Humanitarian Aid.

IsraAID is a coordinating body of Israeli and Jewish NGOs in Israel that provides humanitarian aid worldwide. United Jewish Appeal has previously supported its work following earthquakes in Peru and Pakistan, on the border of Darfur, and after Hurricane Katrina and the recent typhoon in the Philippines.

Just six days after the quake devastated Haiti and ultimately killed more than 230,000, while leaving over a million homeless, Rosenfeld landed in Port-au-Prince as part of IsraAID's second rescue team deployed to the region.

"No matter how much we were prepared for this mission, you really couldn't be ready to witness the amount of devastation, death, pain and suffering that awaited us," explained Rosenfeld in a phone interview. "We were looking down at the devastation on the ground as our small plane landed. It was an amazing scene with airplanes, helicopters, aircraft carriers and other military crafts filling every square inch of the field below us. What I remember the most was that on these aircraft were flags from all over the world. The whole world came to help these poor people. From up in the air, seeing these victims everywhere, it looked like a whole country was homeless."

Of all the tragic victims of Haiti, one young woman, in particular, touched Rosenfeld's heart, becoming a personal project for the Israeli.

"On our second day on the ground, I came across a young girl, around 18, named Alexandra Paul," recounted an emotional Rosenfeld. "She had been trapped under the ruins of her house for two days after the earthquake. Initially, she had been treated in a Japanese field hospital that diagnosed her with a crushed pelvis. The doctors told her that there was nothing they could do for her at that time."

But, for Rosenfeld, a self-confessed "stubborn Israeli," giving up was simply not an option.

Two days after first meeting Alexandra, Rosenfeld, along with Israeli actress turned volunteer Moran Atias, received an urgent message that a helicopter was about to land near Leogand, a small town approximately three hours from Port-au-Prince. It also sustained the majority of damage from the quake. The two of them raced to Alexandra's camp and rushed her onto a stretcher and to the landing zone.

"Unfortunately, the helicopter landed in the wrong zone," recalled Rosenfeld. "The following morning, Moran and I, accompanied by two more friends from the JP/HRO team, found a local volunteer with a pickup truck and drove to the Doctors without Borders camp in Leogand. We rigged the pickup with a mattress and stretcher, a shade canopy and an IV hanging clip. I established IV access for Alexandra so I could give her a shot of morphine if the trip was too painful." Rosenfeld sat with Alexandra in the back of the truck all the way to the airport, holding her hand for the entire three-hour drive on less than ideal roads.

At the airport, Alexandra was admitted to the MediShare Field Hospital where Rosenfeld was assured she would be evacuated the next day. As it turned out, the MediShare Hospital misplaced her records and they were never found.

"Still, I didn't stop looking for her even after I came home," said Rosenfeld. "Finally, on April 5, I tracked her down; she is back in Leogand in a camp. She had been evacuated to the USNS Comfort, the U.S. Navy medical ship where she underwent three unsuccessful surgeries and remains paralyzed from the waist down. I'm glad our efforts got her evacuated, but I wish we could have done more to get her walking again. I am currently reviewing options for getting her flown out to a medical center specializing in orthopedic surgery, specifically pelvic reconstructive surgery. We remain in touch and I hope to see her again soon."

Rosenfeld, as part of the IsraAID/Fast Israeli Rescue & Search Team (F.I.R.S.T), implemented new systems in Haiti that simply did not exist prior to their arrival. In the Petronville Refugee Camp, home to more than 100,000 victims, joining forces with the Jennings Penn Haiti Relief Organization, led on the ground by actor Sean Penn, Rosenfeld and others were split into five teams of three medical experts who performed exhausting tent-by-tent "house calls," seeing who needed attention and prioritizing their needs.

"We also set up an OBGYN tent and we built portable X-Ray and ultrasound machines from scratch for pregnant women," said Rosenfeld. "One of the late nights there, a guard came running to us screaming that a woman was about to give birth. And, just five minutes later, an 82nd Airborne medic and I – armed with only a flashlight – delivered her baby on a hill. It was amazing, but bittersweet, knowing that this baby's first night in the world would be in an improvised tent in the middle of so much destruction. But it was also something to know that, in the midst of all this death, we helped bring new life to the region." In all, Rosenfeld's team delivered six babies during his time in Haiti.

Rosenfeld's team also included a post-traumatic stress specialist who worked with Haiti's children on a daily basis, many of whom were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She treated more than 500 children and set up a psycho-social study among the refugee camp's 100,000 displaced people to ascertain their needs to better coordinate the relief efforts.

"Along with our team, she also helped created two new schools in Haiti for young kids," Rosenfeld said proudly. "Knowing that we did more than watch these people suffering on television, that we actually joined all these other incredible volunteers, all of whom left the comfort and stability of their own lives for a while to do something of this magnitude is really a wonderful feeling. Although I returned to Israel on February 11, my mind and soul are still very much with the people of Haiti."

Roy Rosenfeld, along with Israeli actress turned volunteer Moran Atias, comforts Alexandra, a victim of the Haiti earthquake, in a pickup truck he rigged with a mattress, stretcher and an IV hanging clip, as they drive her to safety.

Eilat resident Roy Rosenfeld poses with some Haitian locals.

Teens practice tikkun olam

Hundreds of GTA-area teens joined Jewish teens from across North America, Europe and Israel for J Serve, the Global Day of Jewish Youth Service. Thanks to funding from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, this was the first year the teens had the opportunity to participate in the international initiative that sees them volunteer at a variety of community service and improvement projects. Pictured above, GTA teens create blankets for displaced Haitian refugees who have been devastated by the recent earthquake that rocked their country.

Preparing tomorrow's volunteers today

By Alana Getzler

Since its creation in November 2008, UJA Federation's Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership - chaired by Glennie Lindenberg and Shawna Granovsky - has made good on its mandate to better prepare, guide and educate both present and future volunteer leadership across Toronto's Jewish community.

The Institute launched its inaugural program for incoming chairs with the intention of forming a strong group of leaders who would collaborate on behalf of the community, and who would look beyond their own agencies in order to see the larger picture of communal needs and the importance of partnerships.

While the Incoming Chairs Program recently completed its first year, the Future Volunteer Leaders Program has just begun, and is focused on developing a cadre of community leaders who will be ready to assume lay leadership roles in the near future.

Partnered with the Rotman School of Business Executive Programs, the two-year Future Volunteer Leaders Program, that began in January 2010, reflects the diversity of the Jewish community. Participants are between the ages of 30 and 40, and from different backgrounds and walks of life. The cohort includes men and women who represent a range of geographical neighbourhoods, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and religious denominations, and was gathered by a call for nominations to the community-at-large.

The group meets once a month with programs consisting of learning about UJA Federation, fundraising and philanthropy, outreach, engagement and increasing affiliation, Toronto's role in Israel and Jewish values – all underlying the importance of volunteering and tikkun olam – repairing the world.

The strengths and interests of the individuals are assessed throughout their participation and, in order to best utilize the skills honed in the Future Volunteer Leaders Program, participants are ultimately placed in volunteer positions at UJA Federation, its partner agencies and schools that are best suited for each participant's abilities.

"As participants progress through this program, and we learn where their passions lie, we are helping them find committee placements that resonate with them, and where they can make a real contribution to Jewish Toronto," said Zeeva Millman, Director of the Joshua Institute. "Only four months into the program, one member has joined a newly-created fiscal committee, two others are on the PJ Library committee, and another has been connected to a funded agency that needed expertise that this future volunteer leader can provide."

Participants in the UJA Federation Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership's Future Volunteer Leaders Program meet in the Lipa Green Centre.

Future of Jewish Toronto in good hands

It's been said that youth is wasted on the young. But, for a group of compassionate, generous and enthusiastic Toronto teenagers, that adage couldn't be more wrong.

The Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto's B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy initiative is an innovative program introducing Bar/Bat Mitzvah-aged teens to the nachas and rewards of tzedakah by establishing an endowment fund in their own name. Participants can designate a portion of their gift to a specific philanthropic project, learning about needs in Toronto and in Israel through discussions with staff at the Jewish Foundation.

Ariel Segal

Dani Palter

This year, for the first time, the prestigious Shem Tov Leadership Award is being presented to teens involved with B'nai Tzedek, Dani Palter and Ariel Segal, both of whom, despite their youth, personify tikkun olam – repairing the world. Dani has always had a strong desire to help others. In recent years, the Grade 11 TanenbaumCHAT student has dedicated a significant amount of time to community service. Whether building a house for Habitat for Humanity or bowling with children from Zareinu, Dani is committed to improving the lives of others. "I enjoy giving back to the community because I like knowing that I am making a difference in the world, however big or small it may be," says Dani.

In lieu of Bat Mitzvah gifts, Dani, through the Jewish Foundation, recently raised funds to build a playground in a low-income area in Acco, Israel.

Ariel, a Grade 12 TanenbaumCHAT student, will be spending a year in Israel on the Nativ Program, a challenging academic year dedicated to creating and inspiring the Jewish leaders of tomorrow, before returning to Canada to attend Queen's University. She is actively involved in the Beit Haminyan youth service. Ariel received the Student Canvasser Award from United Jewish Appeal for both the 2009 and 2010 annual campaigns. As a B'nai Tzedek participant, Ariel has opened a fund from which she donates to causes that are especially meaningful to her. "Teenagers have lots of options for how they spend their free time," explains Ariel. "Giving back to the community is an important value that I was raised with, and helping others helps me better appreciate what I have."

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VISIT: www.jewishtoronto.com and follow the link to *Doing Jewish*

Volunteer Excellence: The Community Honours Its Own

The men and women on pages B5-B7 have made tzedakah and community involvement constant priorities in their lives. Their unrelenting commitment to Jewish values helps enrich the lives of so many. They received their awards on May 17 at UJA Federation's Awards Night.

BEN SADOWSKI AWARD OF MERIT

UJA Federation created this award in 1960, the single most prestigious acknowledgement the Jewish community bestows upon a volunteer with outstanding leadership qualities and years of involvement in the Jewish and general communities. With his unwavering commitment to people, Ben Sadowski z"l, the first President of the United Jewish Welfare Fund (predecessor to UJA Federation), embodied the definition of a natural leader. This award is his legacy to the Jewish community.

WENDY EISEN

A passionate and selfless community leader, Wendy has demonstrated a strong personal commitment to the welfare of the Jewish people throughout her adult life.

Her involvement began as a young bride, assuming leadership roles in the Women's Division of Montreal's CJA campaign. After moving to Toronto in 1981, Wendy took on several leadership positions, including chairing various divisions of UJA Women's Campaign and UJA Top Gifts. In 1995, she co-chaired UJA's Annual Campaign.

For more than a decade, from the mid-1970s, Wendy was a passionate activist in the struggle to liberate the "Jews of Silence," repressed in the Soviet Union. She chaired both the Montreal and Toronto Group of 35 - Women's Campaign for Soviet Jewry and the Soviet Jewry Committee of Canadian Jewish Congress. With her extraordinary leadership skills and tenacity, rallies and demonstrations kept the plight of Soviet Jewry in the public eye, relentlessly pressing the Soviets to "Let our people go!" After the Iron Curtain parted in 1991, Wendy chronicled the efforts of the Canadian Soviet Jewry campaign, culminating in the 1995 publication of her book, *Count Us In — the Struggle to Free Soviet Jews.*

Wendy has led UIA Missions to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Argentina and Israel and has served on the Boards of UJA Federation, Canadian Jewish Congress, State of Israel Bonds and the United Way. She was the founding Chair of the Holy Blossom Temple Foundation and currently is the National Co-Chair of the Canadian Friends of the Israel Museum.

"Communal leadership has enriched my life immeasurably. I have developed skills, shared extraordinary experiences and formed life-long friendships. I truly believe that I have received much more than I have given."

Past Chairs Lederman Award

This award, named for Harold Lederman z"l, is presented to an outstanding philanthropic leader and volunteer who is also a past Chair of the United Jewish Appeal Annual Campaign. Lederman, driven by a keen social conscience and strong support for Jewish communal life, believed in the importance of continuity. His message to future generations was to be responsible, a legacy of a real philanthropic leader.

TODDY AND IRVING GRANOVSKY

Year after year, Toddy and Irving raise the bar when it comes to volunteerism and leadership within Toronto's Jewish community and the community-at-large.

With over four decades of philanthropic leadership, they embody the ideals of the word "tzedakah." They have always given selflessly and generously to every and all endeavours created to improve the lives of Jews in Toronto, Israel and around the world. A couple who has never sought personal tributes, and whose community participation and giving have always been the result of a deep, personal commitment to Jewish values and the State of Israel, they are grateful that their five children and their spouses all share their passion for Jewish philanthropy and Israel.

"One of the main tenets of our Jewish religion is to do tzedakah according to the gifts G-d has given. We feel very blessed to be able to give and actively participate with our children and grandchildren in our great community, country and in Israel."

Phil Granovsky Award for Campaign Excellence

This award honours individuals who exemplify the best in United Jewish Appeal campaigning. When it came to the welfare of world Jewry, few were more committed than Phil Granovsky z"l, who saw Israel and the Diaspora as an extension of his family. Granovsky's selfless legacy continues to help countless people in the community every single year.

BRUCE LEBOFF

Bruce, whose commitment to Jewish Toronto and Israel is evident in everything he does, embodies many of the same qualities of the late Phil Granovsky. A UJA Federation Leadership Development Award recipient in 1999, Bruce has continued to establish himself as a prominent community leader.

He is a member of the UJA Campaign Executive Cabinet for the fourth consecutive year, and is now in his second year as Top Gifts Co-Chair. Bruce was also a founding Co-Chair of the Campaign's Bay Street Cabinet. He regularly attends telethons with his three children and, together with his wife, Lianne, is chairing the annual Walk with Israel for the second year - an event which attracts thousands in support of Israel. Bruce also sits on the UJA Business and Finance Committee and serves on the Board of the Directors of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. In addition, he is a member of the Investment Committee of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University and is a past President of the Bathurst JCC. Bruce is a graduate of the prestigious Wexner Heritage Program.

"I am flattered and humbled to receive the Phil Granovsky Award. He was a great philanthropist and community leader. I feel a real sense of duty to help keep Klal Israel strong, and it is a privilege to play a role in helping to make this happen. Our community benefits from great professional leadership and many visionary philanthropists, which makes my role in UJA both enjoyable and inspiring."

Special Achievement Award

DR. GERALD HALBERT, O.C.

Gerry started his longstanding volunteer career in the early 1960s as a canvasser for the Dental Division of UJA. He went on to become the Chair of the division, but it wasn't until participating in a UJA Study Mission to Israel that Gerry understood how much Israel meant to him and, in turn, his Jewish community. The trip was a turning point for Gerry, who proceeded to chair the UJA Campaign Cabinet in 1973 (during the Yom Kippur War), chair the Annual Campaign in 1979, co-chair the Campaign in 1981-1982 (during the Lebanese war) and in 1991 (during Operation Exodus), all periods of global tension, but times where the Toronto Jewish community, under his strong leadership, soared.

Gerry received the Leadership Development Award in 1967, was the Negev Dinner honouree in 1986, and received the Ben Sadowski Award of Merit in 1990. Also involved with the community-at-large, he currently sits on the Governing Council and Executive Committee at the University of Toronto, and on the Board of Directors at the Toronto General and Western Hospital Foundation. A past President of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University and United Israel Appeal of Canada, Gerry received the Order of Canada in 2001.

"It is important that people get involved, particularly young people, because giving back to the community adds a great deal, not only to your life, but to those you are seeking to help. Ultimately, by giving to the community, you receive more than you give through the cultivation of life-long relationships and rewarding experiences. Wealth isn't always the root of giving; anyone can give back in their own way."

Volunteer Excellence: Leadership Development Awards

The awards, established to encourage young men and women to assume community leadership roles, are presented to those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary commitment and service.

ELYSE LACKIE

Elyse is a member of the Board of Governors of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, and a member of the Board of Directors of UIA Federations Canada. She has held several leadership positions within UIA and UJA, including Immediate Past Chair of the Young Leadership Division. She is currently a Vice Chair of the JFNA National Young Leadership Cabinet 2010, serving as the Co-Chair of Education/Leadership Development.

On staff at North York General Hospital and an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto, Elyse is a Governor on the NYGH Foundation Board and is involved in fundraising for a variety of other local and international organizations.

"I am lucky to live in a flourishing Jewish community in a democratic country. Tikkun olam is my way of living Jewishly, and of ensuring a vibrant Jewish life for generations, here and around the world."

ROBERT PALTER

Robert is a Board Member of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto, where he sits on the Governance, Human Resources and Strategic Planning committees. He was actively involved in the creation of the current five-year strategic plan for UJA Federation and is a member of the Cabinet. Robert is a former founding Board member of the Jewish Chamber of Commerce.

Beyond the Jewish community, Robert recently finished his term as a Board member of VOICE, an organization that provides advocacy and support for deaf or hearing impaired children and their families. A Senior Partner at McKinsey & Company, he was named one of Canada's Top 40 under 40 in 2006.

"I give back to the community because it reinforces my Jewish identity, strengthens my connection to the community, and makes me happy to be able to help others. I feel fortunate to be able to give back."

LAURIE SHEFF

Laurie has been a volunteer for UJA Federation for many years. She began her association as a canvasser and later co-chaired the ATID initiative to engage the next generation of philanthropic leaders. She is a member of the Executive of UJA's Women's Philanthropy, having co-chaired both the Pacesetter and Lion of Judah divisions over the past few years. Laurie, along with her husband Jonathon Cole, are the Vice Chairs of this year's Walk with Israel 2010.

In addition, Laurie is currently a Board member of Hillel of Greater Toronto.

"Being involved with UJA has given me the opportunity to be an active participant in our community. I've worked with many committed volunteers and dedicated professionals and I have seen the direct results of our collective efforts at home, in Israel and around the world. It is a privilege for me to be able to do this work and a responsibility that I hope my children will carry with them into their adult lives."

Professional Advisory Committee Award of Excellence

This award, from the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto, recognizes the outstanding contribution made to the Foundation by professionals in our community. It recognizes the long-term impact their contributions make to lawyers, accountants, estate planners and to the charitable organizations that reap the benefit of their efforts.

AKI CHENCINSKI

Aki is not a stranger to the world of charitable and community-focused endeavours. A member of the Professional Advisory Committee (PAC) of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto for over 25 years, his involvement dates back to the inception of this committee. Aki's extensive experience, knowledge, selflessness and tremendous people skills have made him an invaluable and committed asset within the Jewish Foundation and, by extension, to the entire community.

Aki is a past Board member and Treasurer of Adath Shalom Synagogue, and was recently named Ontario's "Gutsiest" by the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada for his ongoing fundraising efforts on their behalf.

"I've always tried to contribute in a quiet sort of way to causes that are important to me. If most people would just invest a little (more) time in community and charitable endeavours, our world would be a better place."

Gordy Wolfe Award in Jewish Communal Professional Leadership

This award honours the memory of Gordy Wolfe z"l, the consummate professional who served as Executive Director of Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS) for 22 years. The award recognizes a visionary professional communal leader who, like Gordy, has made a substantive difference in the life of Jewish Toronto.

MARK GRYFE

After chairing UJA's Student Campaign in 1977, Mark embarked on a professional career in Jewish communal life that has spanned 33 years and has seen him hold senior roles in three of Toronto's most respected organizations.

Mark rose quickly through the ranks of UJA and, in 1986 at the age of 30, became the youngest Campaign Director of a major North American city. He led Toronto's campaign for eight years before being named Executive Vice President of Canadian Friends of Hebrew University. In 2000, he became President of the Baycrest Foundation where he created initiatives that have resulted in a tripling of revenues during his tenure.

"Working for the community is a privilege not to be taken lightly. To do so for thirty plus years has provided me with unimagined opportunities and allowed me to work with incredibly talented and committed individuals in the act of community building. Gordy Wolfe was a giant in this regard and it is an honour to stand in his shadow."

Volunteer Excellence: Shem Tov Honourees

Shem Tov Awards are presented, in partnership, to leaders representing the highest level of excellence in volunteer service in Toronto's Jewish community.

KENNETH ALBERT
Mount Sinai Hospital

Kenny has been an integral member of Leadership Sinai since it began in 1993. His commitment to this group has helped develop it into one of Mount Sinai's most important and successful philanthropic programs. With his exemplary leadership, he has set a new standard for staff-volunteer relationships that breeds positive energy, genuine good will and success.

"My parents trained me through selling Cancer Society daffodils at eight and working at every Hadassah bazaar until I was 20. The outstanding research and work at Mount Sinai Hospital makes volunteering and fundraising easy."

ALLAN BROWN
Bernard Betel Centre

Allan is President of Bernard Betel Centre, having previously served on the Budget & Finance and Nominations committees. With his strong belief in strengthening the Jewish community as both a donor and volunteer, he was instrumental in helping establish the Harold and Shirley Lederman Palliative Care Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital and named a "Chair" in Palliative Care at the University of Toronto.

"Toronto is my community and my home. When you live in a community, you give back to it. My family and I believe that this is the centrepiece of what good Jewish values are all about."

TIANA KOFFLER BOYMAN
Koffler Centre of the Arts

Tiana has been a driving force behind the vision of parents, Murray and Marvelle Koffler, with the establishment of the Koffler Centre of the Arts. As President and Chair of the Board of Directors, she has led the Centre with great distinction, reshaping its mission and mandate to be a singular institution in Canada – the only contemporary Jewish cultural institution of its kind, bringing together so many aspects of the arts.

"Through the arts, I dedicate myself to organizations that enhance both our city and pride of place. Inspired by our legendary leaders, I focus my time engaging people towards a better understanding of the diversity of culture."

STANLEY KUGELMASS
Itanu Toronto, UJA Federation's Inclusion Initiative

Stan has been Chair of Itanu Toronto since its inception in 2003. With his guidance, the importance of the inclusion of people with special needs has permeated the Jewish community. A staunch advocate for people with disabilities, he has also served on the Reena Board of Directors and has lent his expertise to help frame government documents improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Stan is a passionate and dedicated volunteer. His commitment towards the community has been unwavering, and he has demonstrated strong leadership through his outstanding advocacy for the inclusion of people with disabilities.

TALI NIZIC
Reena

Tali has been Chair of Reena for the past two years. A committed and caring Board member devoted to the individuals supported by Reena, she is Chair of the Continuous Quality Improvement Committee and sits on the Family Involvement Committee. Tali is a graduate of UJA Federation's Joshua Institute for Jewish Communal Leadership.

"I believe that volunteer work is a great way to gain experience, have fun and make a difference. It is a privilege to learn some invaluable skills and find life-long friendships. My volunteer work gives me a better understanding about different people, the organizations they serve, my community and myself. I am thankful for the unique opportunity I have been given to help others."

S. RICHARD ORZY
Jewish Family and Child

Rick's term as President of the Board of Directors of JF&CS from 2007-2009 was characterized by a powerful mix of strong Jewish values, skill and determination. Under his gifted leadership, JF&CS continued to be there for clients and the community despite difficult economic circumstances and unprecedented challenges faced by the social service sector.

"To me, volunteering in our community goes beyond 'giving back'; it is a key component of our responsibility as Jews, free citizens of Canada and role models for others. It helps us achieve personal fulfillment, while enhancing the lives of others."

SUSAN STEINBERG
Israel Aliyah Centre

Susan established the Aliyah Committee of UJA Federation and the Toronto Aliyah Center in 2007. Her expertise in organizational building and her extensive community involvement have made her an important asset to the Center in Toronto. Her love of Israel and its people helped promote the Center's services and were partly responsible for a significant increase in the number of people making aliyah from Toronto.

"I feel a personal responsibility and obligation to partner with others in effecting creative change in our dedicated Jewish community, in pursuit of a more just, compassionate and better world."

HERB WATERS
JACS Toronto

For the past five years, Herb has been a dedicated volunteer for JACS (Jewish Addiction Community Service). Always making himself available to others, he has often been challenged with difficult and life threatening situations. He is instinctive and quick to act, always with a positive outcome. Making a visible difference in the community, many individuals feel blessed that he has been a part of their lives.

"JACS has given me so much over the years that it is an honour to be able to return what was freely given to me! To know that the help I received in my time of need could be translated into help for others is more than reward enough."

MARK ZARETSKY
JVS Toronto

Mark has a profound interest in JVS clients and a belief that everyone deserves an opportunity to become self-sufficient. Passionate about youth issues, Mark has become an avid fundraiser in support of programs for youth at risk. Mark introduced others to JVS, encouraged them to get involved, and continues be a mentor and role model. As past Chair, he remains an active member of various committees.

"By volunteering at JVS, I was given the opportunity to help those that are less fortunate. Giving back to the community makes me a better person."

WALK WITH ISRAEL 2009 More than 15,000 walkers, sponsors and volunteers, forming a sea of blue and white, took to the streets of downtown Toronto for United Jewish Appeal's annual Walk with Israel, the largest one-day Israel solidarity walk in the Diaspora. The massive turnout expressed the Toronto Jewish community's support of the people of Israel.

Many Faces... One Comm

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ISRAEL! Over 5,000 enthusiastic community members, reaffirming their unbreakable bond with Israel, came out to Mel Lastman Square to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's 62nd birthday on April 20. There was great fun for all - live entertainment, face painting, inflatables, roving performers, arts & crafts and delicious Kosher food! The evening would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of volunteers from UJA Federation and the Prosserman JCC.

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ANSWERING THE CALL! Over 750 dedicated volunteers participated in telethons during an exciting week in September (Super Sunday/Super Week) to raise funds for United Jewish Appeal's Campaign 2010. An amazing $4.9 million was raised from approximately 7,700 generous donors throughout the course of Campaign 2010 telethons.

nunity

ERING THE PAST More than 3,000 people attended nual Community Yom Hashoah Commemoration, it one of the largest single-day gatherings of its kind rael. Held under a tent at Earl Bales Park, participants of part in a program that honoured the memory of the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust.

SOUR GRAPES FOR ANTI-ISRAEL PROTESTORS
Shortly before Passover 2009, a group of anti-Israel protestors attempted to organize another in a long list of anti-Israeli boycotts; this time calling for Torontonians to boycott Israeli wines at the Summerhill LCBO. Upon hearing news of the proposed boycott, UJA Federation spread the word to the community and quickly the group of 30 pro-Palestinian protestors were met by hundreds of Israel supporters.
Within thirty minutes, the LCBO had sold out of its 1,500 bottles of Israeli kosher wines.

UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO
Across the street. Across the globe.

Many Faces ... One Community

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto expresses profound appreciation to the countless individuals who selflessly volunteer their time and talents through our many community agencies, schools, congregations and organizations. Through their efforts, these dedicated men, women and young adults help build a more cohesive Jewish community which, in turn, preserves and strengthens the quality of Jewish life in Toronto, Canada and Israel.

The willingness of Toronto's Jewish community to volunteer and help one another makes it a model community – one emulated throughout North America.

Adath Israel Congregation

Perpetuates and promotes Conservative Judaism and the Jewish way of life.
www.adathisrael.com

MOISHE GOTTESMAN
"I have always considered my shul to be an extension of my home. I am the second of three generations strongly connected to Adath Israel. I am volunteering to encourage new and young members to become involved so that shul life becomes an important part of their lives."

Ashkenaz Foundation*

A community-based non-profit organization dedicated to fostering an increased awareness of Yiddish and Jewish culture through the arts.
www.ashkenazfestival.com

SAMAHRA ZATZMAN
"I love volunteering with Ashkenaz because of the multiplicity of people I've encountered: bubbies/ twenty somethings; parents/ kids; Ashkenazim/Sephardim; observant/ secular. Ashkenaz strengthens our diverse Jewish community through the power of the arts."

Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto*

Provides students with an excellent Jewish and General Studies education based on Torah values in a safe and supportive environment.
www.associatedhebrewschools.com

MELISSA JOSEPH
"As a volunteer at Associated, I've realized that nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something. The Education Committee is a wonderful microcosm of how Associated runs – administrators, teachers and parents coming together to make a difference for students."

Association for the Soldiers of Israel – Canada

The only non-profit organization in Canada that supports Israeli soldiers on active duty, partnered with the Aguda Lemaan Hachayal. Funds social, education and recreational programs to ease the burdens faced by young soldiers on duty, their loved ones and, when the unfortunate need arises, their survivors.
www.asicanada.org

MARY & WILF SHIFF
"Without a strong army, Israel would not survive. By making their lives a little easier, we stand with the brave men and women of the IDF in solidarity, in spirit and in gratitude."

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Association of Jewish Seniors

Founded in 1970, AJS unites seniors groups and members-at-large within the Jewish community. With approximately 5,000 members, it is a collective voice to address issues concerning seniors.
ajs@circleofcare.com

JO LAVITCH
"AJS is an active, vibrant group of seniors with great ideas. I'm proud to serve on the Board on various committees, as I put my heart into everything I do. I gain new friends, new ideas and new direction."

Baycrest

Enriches the quality of life of the elderly, guided always by the principles of Judaism. www.baycrest.org

KEN & GERI STEWART
"Having the opportunity to do meaningful volunteer work at Baycrest through the SPARK PROGRAM is just a natural extension of tikkun olam and recognition of the importance of Jewish Service Learning that we have."

BBYO*

Through a proven model of exceptional identity enrichment and leadership development experiences, Jewish teens connect with one another, volunteer in the community, celebrate their Jewish heritage, and travel the world together.
www.bbyo.ca

MICHAEL BERNKNOPF
"I volunteer as a chapter advisor so that today's Jewish teens have the same unique opportunities for personal growth and connectedness that significantly impacted my life as a teen."

Beit Halochem Canada

Devoted to helping over 51,000 Israeli disabled war veterans and hundreds of victims of terror. The four Beit Halochem Centres offer state-of-the-art sports, social and rehabilitation facilities to wounded heroes and their families.
www.beithalochem.ca

MARK DODICK
"It is an honour to give my time to help the 51,000 disabled veterans and victims who have sacrificed so much for us. My contribution pales in comparison to what our heroes have done for Israel."

Beit Rayim Synagogue and School

A warm family-oriented Egalitarian Conservative Synagogue that seeks to enrich the Jewish life of members and Hebrew School students through a celebration of Jewish tradition and love of learning. www.beitrayim.org

TRACY HANDLER
"Volunteering is an important part of teaching my children tikkun olam and the value of being a part of the Jewish community. Volunteering gives my family a feeling of being connected to our growing synagogue."

Bernard Betel Centre*

A learning and wellness centre reflecting Jewish values committed to maximizing the quality of life for seniors in the community.
www.betelcentre.org

PAUL ARGINTARU
"I always wanted to help people after I retired; I had the time to volunteer. I'm blessed with good health and enjoy meeting people. If I can be of service to the community, it is a win-win situation."

" One glorious chain of life, of giving and receiving, unites all creatures."

- Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch

Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am

Dedicated to cultivating, developing and sustaining Judaism and Jewish living in accordance with the ideas and standards of the Conservative Movement.
www.bethdavid.com

LISA LEVINE
"Volunteering allows me to stay active and strengthen my ties with the Jewish community. Beth David is not just about religious services, it is about gathering the community, inspiring me to reach out and help others."

Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue

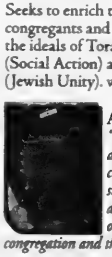
Fosters a full and joyous way of life proudly rooted in a heritage of traditional Conservative Judaism, and committed to Jewish values, education, spiritual well-being and community.
www.beby.org

ROSALIE SHADLYN
"Volunteerism is a privilege to serve others. I have had the good fortune to have parents who were leaders as role models. As a result, my life has been immersed in community endeavours. Now my children and grandchildren are carrying the torch of tikkun olam."

ZVI WAINSTEIM
"Volunteering gives me the opportunity to be close to the community I love. As gabbai at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue, I met some of the most wonderful people I know. This has enriched my life."

Beth Sholom Synagogue

Seeks to enrich the lives of our congregants and community through the ideals of Torah, Gemillut Hasidim (Social Action) and Achdut (Jewish Unity). www.bethsholom.net



ABE GLOWINSKY
"Working together with a group of dedicated, committed lay people, staff and clergy gives me a sense of fulfillment in our efforts to enhance our congregation and the community-at-large."

Beth Tikvah Synagogue

A vibrant forward-looking Conservative Synagogue dedicated to fostering spiritual and Judaic growth and fulfillment through meaningful rituals, activities and exciting educational programs. A sensitive and caring congregation attractive to all ages and responsive to the individual needs of members. www.bethtikvah.on.ca

GERALD ZIEDENBERG
"After enrolling in Graduate School, I made a commitment to further the education of others. I have helped institute our successful lunch and learn program now approaching our 7th year, often serving over 200 people weekly."

Beth Tzedec Congregation

Founded to preserve Judaism, to inculcate belief in G-d and reverence for our heritage, to translate Jewish spiritual values into terms of present day thought and action, to revitalize Jewish traditional practices in synagogue and home, and to cultivate Hebrew language and literature.
www.beth-tzedec.org

S. BLAKE TEICHMAN
"Serving our Beth Tzedec family has been a pleasure and my honour. It is especially rewarding for me to be able to 'pay forward' the benefits of what I have been taught to lead prayer services for the elderly and the bereaved of our community."

Bialik Hebrew Day School* PTA

Parent volunteers work to enhance the experience of students at Bialik Hebrew Day School.

DEANNA LUSTIG
"Showing my children support for their school has been my motivation for my 13 years of volunteer work at Bialik Hebrew Day School. My strong commitment to Bialik has given me wonderful opportunities and experiences."
www.bialik.ca

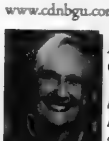
Camp Moshava

Camp Moshava, a Bnei Akiva camp, instills and nurtures in campers a life-long dedication to and love for a Torah way of life, the State of Israel and the Jewish people, while stimulating their intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth.
www.campmoshava.org

LARRY WOLYNETZ
"Attending Jewish overnight camp has had a profound effect on my life. It is a place to grow intellectually, spiritually and in leadership skills. But most of all you develop friendships that will last forever!"

Canadian Associates of Ben-Gurion University

Dedicated to the advancement of higher education and knowledge while contributing to the growth and vitality of Israel and the Negev.
www.cdnbgu.com



ANNETTE OELBAUM
"The Oelbaum family has been associated with Ben-Gurion University since its very inception. We are proud to have helped the University become a great institution of higher learning and, at the same time, pioneer the bringing of fertility and fruition to the Negev Desert."

Canadian Friends of Haifa University

Aims to bring the University of Haifa to the forefront of Canadian awareness; to cultivate collaborative programs between the University and Canadian institutions of higher learning; to promote overseas programs for Canadian students; to encourage cultural exchanges between the University faculty members and students; and, to assist the University achieving its financial goals.
www.haifa-univ.ca

DR. KAREN R. MOCK
"It is an honour and privilege to be able to support Israel in this way, and to learn from the example of the University of Haifa that commitment to academic excellence, peaceful co-existence, inter-cultural dialogue and working together for mutual benefit are the paths to peace and prosperity for all."

Canadian Friends of Herzog Hospital

Israel's foremost centre for Geriatric Medicine and Mental Health care, combining exceptional medical care with outstanding research achievements. Specializes in the full range of aging issues and its Psychotrauma Treatment Center has become an international resource centre.
www.herzoghospital.ca

MARGARET FLORENCE LUDWIG & DR. BERNIE LUDWIG
"Coming from a small Jewish community, one is driven to keep their religion alive: going to shul, joining Hadassah, buying Israel Bonds. Children strive to get into medicine to improve their status and the health of the world."

Canadian Friends of Israel Elwyn

To promote the independence and dignity of children and adults with special needs throughout Israel.
www.israelelwyn.org.il

JACK POLLAK
After visiting the organization's facilities in Jerusalem with his family and seeing the incredible services provided to the developmentally disabled throughout Israel, Jack and his family were honoured to be part of this important organization.

Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital

Serves over 250,000 people in Netanya, and is the only Israeli hospital with a no strike policy. Laniado's high standard of medicine is practiced with compassion and kindness.
www.laniado.ca

We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University

Develops and promotes awareness, leadership and financial support for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
www.cfhu.org

We would like to thank our Toronto Chapter Executive Committee and Board for their ongoing support and commitment to CFHU and IMRIC. Your efforts have made for a successful year. We could not be a vibrant presence in the community without you.

Canadian Jewish Congress*

Works to foster a Canada where Jews, as part of the multi-cultural fabric of this country, live in and contribute to an environment of opportunity and mutual respect. Advocates on behalf of Canadian Jewry and works in partnership with other Jewish communal organizations to improve the quality of life for all communities in Canada. www.cjc.ca

AMICHAI WISE
"As the grandson of four [Holocaust] Survivors, I believe that 'never again' must be meaningful and human rights must be universal. At CJC's Darfur Action Committee, of which I am Chair, our amazing volunteers and advocates like Mia Farrow inspire me. We are making a difference."

Canadian Shaare Zedek Hospital Foundation

Supports and promotes educational, research and patient care programs at Shaare Zedek Hospital Centre in Jerusalem.
www.hospitalwithaheart.ca

We wish to thank our volunteers for their invaluable support during our events and fundraising activities. The Foundation allows supporters to connect to a meaningful cause in Israel and the good work that is being done in the Hospital but, on a larger scale, to the ideology is represents: compassion for all human life, no matter the race, religion or political views.

Chabad Lubavitch Friendship Circle

A youth-oriented volunteer program that matches children with special needs with teenage/young adult mentors.
www.chabad.org

Thank you to all our 120 plus volunteers. It is with pleasure that we express our gratitude to Leedan Cohen, an outstanding volunteer, for her sensitivity and devotion to enhance the lives of others for the past six years.

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham

Non-judgmental and friendly philosophy, with the belief that, regardless of education, background or affiliation, it is the inalienable right of every Jewish person to learn and participate in our heritage.
www.chabadmarkham.org

DARON ODES
"The Jewish way of dealing with death is just one part of a larger philosophy on life in which all people are viewed with dignity and respect. This is why I decided to become a part of our shul's Chevra Kadisha. Since losing my grandparents, who were extremely special to my family and me, I have realized the importance of what a Jewish Burial Society is all about. Death and mourning are very hard and emotional, and to know that you have someone to help and guide you makes this process so much easier."

Chabad Torah Tots Pre-School

Offers a warm, friendly and creative Jewish environment where a child's unique style is valued and nurtured by caring teachers. Provides the excitement of new discoveries and development of responsible and independent thought. Children learn basic attitudes, skills and an ability to study that will always stay with them. www.chabadmarkham.org

ROBYN RUSKIN
"I volunteer because I believe it sets an important example to my kids that, by being involved, you support your community and you help make a difference not only in your community, but beyond it as well."

Chai Lifeline Canada

A not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping Canadian children suffering from serious illness as well as their family members. Devoted to alleviating the burden of those facing medical challenges.
www.chailifelinecanada.org

ALYSA BERGMAN
"Every hour of volunteering makes a difference in someone's life, including my own. At the end of each visit with Lauren, I know I have taken so much more than I have given. She inspires me to be a better, more caring, and selfless individual."

"The Jewish people, ever since David slew Goliath, have never considered youth as a barrier to leadership."
- President John F. Kennedy

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

CHW Toronto Centre
(formerly Canadian Hadassah-WIZO Toronto Centre)

Largest Zionist women's grassroots non-profit organization in Canada, dedicated to the support of Children, Healthcare and Women. Throughout Canada, enriches the lives of women, supports Young Judaea camps and, in Toronto, partners with the Sunnybrook Foundation to support a Neo-Natal Intensive Care Patient Room.
www.chw.ca
www.hadassahwizoto.ca

CONNIE MONSON KUSSNER
"My late mother, Jennie Monson, inspired me to become involved in CHW. This organization has enriched my life with such wonderful experiences as having my Bat Mitzvah in Israel at a CHW Convention. I am proud of the wonderful work that CHW continues to do."

Circle of Care*

Supports individual independence and sustains and enhances quality of life in the community.
www.circleofcare.com

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE
"We feel it is important for us and the community to support Circle of Care in its endeavour to assist Holocaust Survivors in need."

Congregation Beth Haminyan

Celebrating its 36th year as a vibrant and energetic shul in midtown Toronto, Tfilot are led by members and include a weekly D'Var Torah, children's service and program, and Kiddush. Offers traditional, participatory davening on Shabbat and all holidays, as well as an Egalitarian service held at various times throughout the year.
www.beth-haminyan.org

Beth Haminyan is a unique volunteer congregation. We have dozens of members without whom we could not function. For ritual education, special programs and services throughout the year, our volunteers ARE our congregation, and we recognize all of them for their individual and irreplaceable work throughout the year.

" Do not separate yourself from the Community."

- Pirke Avot

Darchei Noam The Reconstructionist Synagogue of Toronto

Blends traditional Jewish practice with innovative forms of Jewish expression. It is a place where love of tradition and appreciation of change meet. Weekly Shabbat services provide a range of opportunities to experience prayer, study and artistic expression.
www.darcheinoam.on.ca

LISA CHARENDOFF
"Volunteering enriches my connection to Judaism. It is pure pleasure to work with people who embody positive Jewish social values and who celebrate Jewish life as a source of joy."

Downtown Jewish Community School*

Provides Jewish students with a basis for Jewish identity in a pluralistic community. Students are taught the concepts and skills necessary to live a Jewish life and to feel comfortable within a Jewish setting. www.djcs.org

KEREN NAFTE
"As Jewish education is close to my heart, it is important for me to play a part in helping the DJCS continue to fulfill its role. By maintaining a strong presence in the downtown core, the school, the community and the children all benefit."

Eastern Canadian Region of United Synagogue Youth - (ECRUSY)

United Synagogue Youth and Kadima, of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, inspires Jewish youth to explore, celebrate and practice ethical values, Jewish living, Zionism and community responsibility based on the ideology of the Conservative Movement. www.ecrusy.org

STANLEY ROTH
"I volunteer for USY because it's an organization that I deeply believe in. I understand that USY has the capability of doing many good things, and influencing young Jews in a very positive way."

Emunah Women

Largest religious Zionist women's organization in the world, aims to strengthen religious consciousness, provide social care and religious and secular education for children and youth with selective vocational and academic training. Provides help to disadvantaged and abused children and provides counseling to dysfunctional families. www.emunahcanada.org

EILEEN KOBRIN
"Volunteering has always been an integral part of my life. In Emunah, I work with women who share the same values. We work to improve the lives of children in Israel to enable them to become successful adults."

Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies

A Canadian human rights organization dedicated to fostering tolerance and understanding through community involvement, educational outreach, and social action. www.fswc.ca

BRAD ASHLEY
"I am honoured to be part of such an incredible organization – whose goal is to make our society a more racially-tolerant one. This is the best gift that I can provide to my children."

Friends of Yiddish

Promotes the preservation of Yiddish language and culture, and fosters its continued contribution to Jewish life.

Friends of Yiddish would like to thank all their volunteer Board members, as well as their volunteer members-at-large for their dedication and commitment to support and promote Yiddish language and culture.

Habayit Shelanu Seniors Residences Corporation

A unique living environment designed and developed based on the recognition of the changing needs of older adults. Committed to providing an environment that fosters a positive Jewish identity and opportunities that facilitate the concept of aging in place.
afoss@circleofcare.com

We would like to recognize and thank all our volunteers for their hard work and commitment to Habayit Shelanu Seniors Residences Corporation.

Hebrew Club for the Vision Impaired

Provides social programs in a pleasant environment for its visually impaired members of all ages. The togetherness and camaraderie that comes from the unique membership of the club often leads to lasting friendships.

The Hebrew Club for the Vision Impaired wishes to acknowledge, with thanks, all our volunteers whose efforts enable the ongoing success of our organization.

Hillel of Greater Toronto*

Through exciting and creative programming and events, Hillel promotes Jewish identity, student leadership and religious and political diversity in a dynamic and inclusive environment for all Jewish students.
www.hilleltoronto.org

DANIEL FERMAN
Hillel-City Wide Student Chair
"Hillel is the centre for Jewish life on campus and our successes over my short four years here have truly made a difference in the lives of thousands of Jewish students."

KELSEY GOLDBERG
Hillel@U of T Mississauga Campus
"I volunteer because it's important for me to be connected with people who have a similar cultural background. It's nice to have to say 'yes, this is salmon on my bagel.'"

MATAN HAZANOV
Hillel@York
"I am involved in Hillel because I want to make a difference on campus and help build the future of the Jewish people."

MAIYA KEIDAN
Hillel@Ryerson
"I chose to get involved with Hillel because I appreciate the fact it's a pluralistic organization. I hope that it will continue to grow and adapt to fit students' needs. I have enjoyed my time working on the Board at Ryerson."

IRENA KRAMER
Hillel@York Glendon Campus
"University is a time for finding oneself. I found myself in a Jewish context and I want to help other students do the same, even at a small campus like Glendon."

JOSH ROSEN
President, Hillel @ U of T
"The Jewish community has largely defined my undergraduate career and contributed to my growth as a leader and a person. I take great pride in providing unique opportunities for my peers to engage their Jewish identity."

INBAL SHREEMOHAN
Hillel@Ontario College of Art and Design University
"I volunteer because I believe in people and I know they are the key to any change. If I can make a difference in one person, show him/her the world through my eyes, then all the hours of work pay off. Whether through a poster design, organizing an event about Israel or just talking to a fellow student on campus, the smallest step can start the change. Thank you for making me a part of it."

Holy Blossom Temple

A vibrant, liberal, religious synagogue community. www.holyblossom.org

SHELLEY MILLER
"There is tremendous satisfaction in volunteering with other like-minded people who are trying to make a difference. It is also important for me to be able to express myself in the culture I live in as a Jew."

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Israel Cancer Research Fund

ICRF continues to be one of the largest sources of private funds for innovative cancer research in Israel. ICRF has contributed nearly $35 million U.S. for over 1,600 research grants involving all major hospitals, universities and cancer research projects throughout Israel. Research results have a significant impact in Toronto, across Canada and throughout the world.
www.icrftoronto.org

CHERRY TABB
"It is very rewarding for me to use my business skills and influence to support critical cancer research - one of the best ways to support finding a cure."

JACS Toronto*

An organization led by volunteers dedicated to encouraging and assisting alcoholics, chemically dependent persons and their families, friends and associates to explore recovery in a nurturing Jewish environment. Provides support for Jews in recovery and is an information resource on the effects that alcoholism and drug dependency have on Jewish family life.
www.jacstoronto.org

TRACEY & GILAD ABRAHAMI
"We are grateful to have the opportunity to provide support, concrete advice and love to families looking to regain control of their lives, and to helping those in our community solve their addiction problems."

Jerusalem Foundation of Canada

An independent, apolitical community foundation that endeavours to respond to the changing needs of Jerusalem and all its residents. Established in 1966 by then Mayor Teddy Kollek, the Foundation has since invested nearly $1 billion in all spheres of life.
www.jerusalemfoundation.org

BARBARA SIMMONS
(TORONTO OFFICE)
"Volunteering with the JF has been my best decision since retiring. With its mission to enhance educational and lifestyle opportunities for all of Jerusalem's (marginalized) people, I have found true symmetry with my personal values."

JOSH ROSENBLATT
(MONTREAL OFFICE)
"Volunteering gave me a much deeper appreciation of Jerusalem's multi-culturalism. Also, knowing that I was playing a part in contributing to the social, cultural, and economic development of the city was gratifying beyond measure."

Jewish Canadian Military Museum*

Preserves our history and educates the public about the Jewish role in Canada's military. arwings1@rogers.com

ERIC LEVINE
"Through volunteering, I have the opportunity to make people aware that Canadian Jews served courageously in Canada's military since Confederation. Canadian Jewish men and women contributed to securing freedom and peace."

Jewish Centre for Learning and Living

Aims to increase the quality of living by inviting individuals and families to become actively connected to their local Jewish community and engage throughout the year in learning programs, social events and the collective celebration of Jewish Holidays. www.jcll.com

LAURI COHEN
"One of the objectives of the Thornhill Woods Shul is to promote Jewish family values, in which I strongly believe. I wanted to assist this young and vibrant community in meeting its objectives."

Jewish Family & Child*

Supporting the healthy development of individuals, families and communities in the Greater Toronto Area through prevention, protection, counseling, education and advocacy services within the context of Jewish values.
www.jfandcs.com

ALEX AMIGO
"I find it rewarding to see the development and maturing of the students over the years. It is satisfying to get a thank you and handshake from a teenage student at the Homework Club."

Jewish Family & Child – Chaplaincy Services*

www.jfandcs.com

ROSE SCHNEIDER & GAIL ROMAIN
"Visiting patients at St. Johns is our way of doing something for our community and one we can do together. Patients often get teary when we mention we're from JF&CS. They feel a connection and realize they are not forgotten. We know we make a difference and will continue to volunteer as long as we are able."

Jewish National Fund of Toronto

A non-profit organization founded in 1901 to serve as the caretaker of the land of Israel. Since Israel's creation in 1948, JNF has dealt with addressing her most pressing needs in development, environment, afforestation, desertification, education and water.
www.jnf.ca

HOWARD DAVIDSON
"Being a JNF volunteer has been a wonderful experience. My first trip to Israel, seeing JNF projects and seeing young Jewish soldiers giving of their lives, was emotional."

Jewish War Veterans of Canada – Toronto Region

The Jewish War Veterans of Canada are citizens, residents and landed immigrants of Jewish faith who served in the wars of Canada and/or its allies, who have formed an association in order to be of greater service to our country and to one another.

We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Jewish Women International of Canada

JWIC is a force for social change dedicated to ending violence against women. www.jwicanada.com

SAMARA MILLER
"I believe that JWIC is a leader in the field of combating domestic violence. Being part of the JWIC team has afforded me the opportunity to give back to my community through outreach, advocacy and education."

Jews for Judaism*

Dedicated to keeping Jews Jewish by counteracting the multi-million dollar efforts of numerous missionary and cult groups that target Jews for conversion, and offering an extensive array of preventive education programs, materials and specialized counseling services. www.jewsforjudaism.org

MARTY ABELES
"I consider Jews for Judaism's vital counter-missionary work to be extremely worthwhile. But you really should honour Julius Ciss and Rabbi Skobac. They do the real life-saving work. Just volunteering is honour enough for me."

JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto*

Welcomes, supports and integrates new immigrants today in order to build a strong Canada and a strong Jewish community of tomorrow.
www.jiastoronto.org

ERIC KAPLOVITCH, DAVID WARSHAFSKY & ALL THE SERVE4SUCCESS VOLUNTEERS
"At Serve4Success, we teach tennis for free to newcomer youth. Teaching the kids has shown us that involvement in our community not only helps other kids like us but enriches our lives as well."

JVS Toronto*

Working in strong partnership with government and business for over 60 years to assist people to achieve their educational and employment potential.
www.jvstoronto.org

RUBY WONG
"Meaningful work equals dignity and personal empowerment. JVS Toronto paves the way for its clients to access meaningful work. I can't think of a more fulfilling way to serve."

Kehilla Residential Programme*

Identifies and champions affordable housing initiatives responsive to the needs of the Jewish community. The Agency's mandate is fulfilled through research and education, project sponsorship, development consultation and property management.
www.kehilla.ca

PAUL BRAUN
"Not everyone recognizes the plight of the Jewish poor in our community. By working with Kehilla to provide and create affordable housing, I feel that I can help those individuals in our midst who require it most."

Kehillat Shaarei Torah

Serving the Bayview-York Mills area, this modern Orthodox synagogue prides itself on providing an open and welcoming setting where all feel at home. www.shaareitorah.com

ESTHER SCHWARTZ-LUFT
"Working with the individuals of the shul and the Board on common goals has been highly motivating and I am most fortunate to be part of this Kehilla - this family. Our members are committed to the shul and to each other and this inspires us all to create a warm and inviting environment for others to join. Of course, when you are volunteering in an atmosphere like this, you inevitably get in return much more than you give."

"...the greatest reward for doing is the opportunity to do more." - Dr. Jonas Salk

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Kolel: The Adult Centre for Liberal Jewish Learning*

A pluralistic, Egalitarian progressive community adult education and outreach centre that, through the study of traditional texts, gives students an opportunity to enhance their identity and understand their heritage.
www.kolel.org

Kolel congratulates and thanks all the wonderful volunteers who enrich our community at our High Holy Day services and at our year-round programs and courses. Your participation and commitment are invaluable. Kol hakavod!

L'Chaim Cancer Support Group for Jewish Women

A confidential peer support to Jewish women undergoing cancer treatment, with an understanding of both the cancer experience and issues specific to Jewish women. Committed to raising cancer awareness through educational programs for both its members and the community. A project of National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto Section.
www.lchaim@ncjwc-ts.org

BRENDA BASKIND
"After my cancer diagnosis, I felt devastated. I was lucky to find L'Chaim and receive peer support from Jewish women cancer survivors. Through L'Chaim, I made many friends and can now provide support to others."

Leo Baeck Day School*

A Reform Jewish Day School where families, professionals and Board members strive together to create a child-centred learning environment in which each student experiences a multi-faceted educational program. Students are prepared to be practicing liberal Jews and to participate effectively in a complex, ever-changing Canadian society. www.leobaeck.ca

JEFF MEILACH
"I wanted to get involved and contribute, not only in my child's school helping out where I could, but also to be engaged with the Jewish community."

Maccabi Canada

Promotes Jewish identity and cultivates future leadership and support for Israel through the passion of sport.
www.maccabicanada.com

TEDDY MILLER
"Maccabi Canada has allowed me to reconnect with the State of Israel and to share this experience with hundreds of Canadians as part of the world's third largest amateur athletic event and the largest single gathering of world Jewry."

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

MAZON Canada

Raises funds primarily from within the Jewish community and distributes those funds, on a non-denominational basis, to Canadian organizations battling hunger on the front lines. Based on the tradition of tikkun olam (healing the world), the organization strives to link public awareness about the issue of poverty and hunger with the mitzvah of tzedakah.
www.mazoncanada.ca

GAYLE GOLDMINTZ
"Giving back to the community gives me great satisfaction. I feel a sense of personal fulfillment working with an organization that helps to feed the hungry across Canada."

Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre*

Dedicated to serving the cultural, educational and recreational needs of downtown Toronto through programs and services guided by Jewish values. Open to all members of the community regardless of race, ethnic origin, or religious affiliation.
www.mnjcc.org

The Miles Nadal JCC would like to thank all the volunteers who have been through our doors and have given selflessly of their time. Whether you have helped to keep our children engaged, assist with our many special events or sit on a Board or Committee, you are truly making a difference. Volunteers with your passion and dedication are so hard to come by, and we wanted you to know how much we appreciate your service.

MERCAZ-Canada

Zionist membership organization of the Conservative Movement and the voice of Conservative Jewry within the Canadian Zionist Federation, World Zionist Organization, and Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael. www.mercaz.ca

We would like to thank and acknowledge all our volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Mount Sinai Hospital

A world-class health care facility discovering and delivering the best in patient care, teaching and research with the heart and values true to our heritage. www.mtsinai.on.ca

ISABEL FREEMAN
"Mount Sinai Hospital has played a big role in my life. I was a nurse with the Dentistry Department for 19 years. When I retired six years ago, I wanted to be able to give back to my hospital using my caring and skills to continue to help patients in a different way. The staff in the Wasser Pain Clinic and the hospital are part of my family."

Na'amat Canada

The first to embrace feminist ideals, the women of Na'amat continue to be innovative leaders in meeting the needs of an ever-changing world.
www.naamat.com

RONI MADERER
"Na'amat chose me! The support and assistance that we provide to women and children worldwide are the reasons that I belong to this amazing organization. The passion and commitment of its members are an inspiration."

National Council of Jewish Women of Canada – Toronto Section

A non-profit organization committed to enhancing the lives of individuals within our community and in the broader multi-cultural community through education, service and social action.
www.ncjwc-ts.org

DEBBIE WASSERMAN AND KAREN FENWICK
"As Coordinators of the Passover Food Drive, it has been a life-changing experience. Working in the Jewish community as a volunteer is rewarding in so many ways - helping others individually or collectively, making friends, gaining new skills and enriching our lives. We thank you for this recognition on behalf of the numerous hard-working volunteers at Council."

Netivot HaTorah Day School*

An Orthodox Jewish Day School striving for excellence in a full program of Judaic and General Studies, incorporating the Zioni Dati philosophy and Halacha and Halachic principles. www.netivot.com

ALAN LITWACK AND MICHAEL LAX
"We have a strong commitment to our Jewish educational system because it instills and reinforces our heritage and culture in our children. It molds the future leaders of our community and is vital for our continuity."

One Family Fund

Provides direct financial, legal and emotional support to the thousands of victims of terror in Israel on a daily basis. It is at the forefront in providing long-term support for physical and emotional health, education, housing, income maintenance and other needs.
www.onefamilyfund.org

ELANA WALDMAN
"We cannot forget people in Israel continue to suffer long after a terrorist attack. One Family Fund is there for the long term and it is my honour to help in any way possible."

ORT Toronto

Helps people help themselves. Provides state-of-the-art technology, teacher empowerment centres, science labs, vocational and other assistance to disadvantaged students in Canada and around the world. www.ort-toronto.org

FLORENCE WEINSTOCK
"ORT's motto is 'Educating for Life.' For 130 years, ORT has provided skills-training and education in 60 countries worldwide, giving people a chance for a better future. I feel privileged to work with ORT."

Paul Penna Downtown Jewish Day School*

Committed to academic excellence in a dynamic, supportive environment with a distinctive program that integrates Judaic and General Studies while encouraging artistic expression and social action as tools for learning.
www.djds.ca

NONI RABINOVITCH
"It's never difficult to give of your time and energy when you are passionate about certain things. Volunteering to help support our children's education or cultivating a sense of our Jewish heritage within the larger Canadian context are easy and the payback is immeasurable."

Pomegranate Guild of Judaic Textiles

Encourages participation and fosters interest in the study and creation of textile art and needlework based on Jewish themes.
www.pomegranateguild.ca

KAREN SANDERS
"As a founding member, I have volunteered for 28 years to help fulfill the mission of the Guild. We have learned and taught and beautified the Jewish community with our textile art."

Prosserman JCC*

A community organization providing quality programs and services that meet the social, educational, cultural, recreational and citizenship needs of our constituents.
www.prossermanjcc.com

PETER DIAMANT
"It is very rewarding to review the week's news with a group of individuals who are so knowledgeable and who care deeply about events happening in this country, Israel and around the world."

REENA*

Enables people with developmental handicaps to realize their full potential by forming life-long partnerships with individuals and their families within a framework of Jewish culture and values.
www.reena.org

SYDNEY SEIDEL
"Volunteering at Reena means so much to me because I love to see the smiles on the kids' faces. The children make me feel great inside and bring happiness to my life."

Robbins Hebrew Academy*

(formerly United Synagogue Day School)

Through an integrated General and Judaic Studies Program, students at the Miriam and Larry Robbins Hebrew Academy engage in meaningful relationships with educators, parents, peers and the community, as they acquire critical thinking skills to open their minds to a future of lifelong Jewish learning; academic excellence; global responsibility; and, respect for themselves and others' creative and healthy lifestyles.

ROBERT SANDLER
"There are amazing things happening at RHA and it's great to be part of the team to help communicate the benefits of the school. You know you are helping a special place when you can watch your children skip to school every morning."

SAR-EL Canada (CVI)

Encourages and facilitates Canadians in volunteering as civilians on Israeli army supply and repair bases.
www.sarelcanada.org

SARAH TESSIS
"I believe in the objectives of SAR-EL and want to keep it alive and active."

Schwartz/Reisman Centre*

Committed to developing a vibrant community in York Region, characterized by its diversity, unity, compassion, generosity and commitment to Israel and Jewish values. SRC enriches lives, provides opportunities for social, cultural, spiritual, educational and physical activities. Open to people of all ages and backgrounds, it is welcoming, accessible and inclusive.
www.srcentre.ca

AVI BOGLER
"It has been a passion of mine over the past many years to reach out to the Israeli community in Toronto. Volunteering at Schwartz/Reisman Centre has enabled me to pursue this passion of bringing the Israeli community closer to the folds of the Jewish community and make it one."

Shaar Shalom Synagogue

Provides for the spiritual, intellectual and social lives of the Conservative Jewish community through religious services and educational, cultural, social and recreational activities.
www.shaarshalom.ca

SHELLEY ROTHBERG
"I have been fortunate to help organize and administer many successful fundraising events and projects for Shaar Shalom. Recently we fulfilled a long term dream of redesigning the Ark in our sanctuary. Since its completion, it gives me great pleasure to experience the enjoyment and appreciation from the congregants."

Shaarei Shomayim Congregation

A modern Orthodox synagogue passionately committed to Torah, to Israel and to providing its members and the Jewish community-at-large with unique opportunities for spiritual development through learning and prayer. www.shomayim.org

DALYA HAKIMI
Dalya is an extremely talented volunteer who spearheaded the creation of Shaarei Shomayim's Chessed Committee. This has made a significant difference to the lives of many. Thank you Dalya for your sincere devotion to our community.

State of Israel Bonds

Provides a steady source of investment capital for the development and expansion of Israel's essential industry and infrastructure. www.israelbonds.ca

FELICIA POSLUNS
"As Chair of Women's Division, I am dedicated and proud to be educating our community about the importance of Israel Bonds as an investment that helps build our most beautiful, state-of-the-art country of Israel - an investment for Jews worldwide."

TanenbaumCHAT*

Striving for excellence in all aspects of education, TanenbaumCHAT provides each student with a Judaic and General Studies education in a co-educational pluralistic community setting.
www.tanenbaumchat.org

SUSY BOGLER
"The TanenbaumCHAT family is a model of tolerance, inclusiveness and excellence in our community. It has been an honour to have worked with other dedicated volunteers, staff and administrators for the benefit of the students."

Teatron Toronto Jewish Theatre

Produces Jewish-themed plays from Canada and the world's communities, unveiling the treasures of Jewish tradition, enriching and inspiring the Jewish experience of all theatregoers, leading to better understanding and harmony, while maintaining Jewish values. www.teatrontheatre.com

KIVI SHAPIRO
"I volunteer for TEATRON because it's a Shomer Shabbat theatre group with a community-wide focus. Everyone can participate, and we have given our audiences great Jewish-themed shows for over six years."

Temple Emanu-El

A Reform congregation committed to perpetuating Judaism within the home and the synagogue through worship and study, emphasizing the celebration of Shabbat, Jewish Holy Days, and life-cycle events through innovative and diverse programming within a caring and supportive community.
www.templeemanuel.ca

Temple Emanu-El is blessed with many talented members who contribute to the running of the Temple. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers. May you maintain the strength and good health to continue your excellent work.

Tiferes Bais Yaakov*

Instills the joy and excitement of Yiddishkeit and a deep understanding of, and commitment to, Torah, Mitzvos, Middos Tovos, and Ahavas Yisroel in all students so that they are fully equipped to function successfully in today's society and become contributing members of their community and Klal Yisroel. www.tiferesbaisyaakov.com

HEIDI FINE
"I am honoured to volunteer my time to TBY, to show my appreciation to an exceptional school. I am very grateful that my daughters have the opportunity to thrive and benefit from this wonderful environment. Thank you to the warm and dedicated staff for being such incredible role models for our daughters."

Toronto Heschel School*

Low pupil/teacher ratio, a curriculum based on well-founded research and a staff of active learners help children learn how to learn for life. Students learn how to think critically, ensuring that the next generation of innovative Jewish leaders will be successful and contributive. www.torontoheschel.org

JACOB GALPER
"Soon after joining Heschel, we were inspired by the excellent education and warm and caring environments of the school. It is unique in so many ways, a great school with great education, why wouldn't I volunteer?"

Toronto Jewish Film Festival*

A window to and a mirror of the Jewish experience throughout the world. TJFF screens films of artistic excellence and thought-provoking subject matter to educate and strengthen our Jewish identity while building bridges with the communities in which we live.
www.tjff.com.

PORIA HEISEL
"My interest in TJFF springs from my days as a production manager and assistant director in the film industry. Whether as guest relations or venue volunteer coordinator, being involved with interesting and topical Jewish films is most rewarding."

Toronto Jewish Free Loan Cassa*

Provides interest-free loans to members of the Jewish community for personal, educational and economic opportunity Start-Up Business needs.
www.tjflc.com

HAROLD KLESMER
"My involvement with TJFLC has provided an opportunity to help others help themselves. It has been a privilege to work with our dedicated, talented volunteers whose contributions have enhanced the quality of our clients' lives."

Weizmann Canada

Expresses commitment of the Canadian Jewish community to help the Weizmann Institute of Science maintain its standards of excellence and its significant scientific contributions to Israel and the world.
www.weizmann.ca

DR. LOU SIMINOVITCH
"I enjoy and I am proud to be responsible for selecting high school candidates for the prestigious international summer school science program at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. It is not a chore – I thoroughly enjoy it!"

Zareinu Educational Centre of Metropolitan Toronto*

Believes that every child has potential and deserves united efforts in providing therapies and learning strategies that will improve the quality of life for both the child and their family; strives to battle prejudice and encourages inclusion through opportunities for supported integration whenever possible; and, works towards increasing acceptance of children with special needs in the community. www.zareinu.org

LINDA SONE
"It is unbelievable what Zareinu does for kids with special needs. I have seen so many successes, so many miracles. I am proud to volunteer for Zareinu; a place like no other in our community."

* Denotes 2009-2010 partner agencies of UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

UJA Federation of Greater Toronto

Committed to preserving and strengthening the quality of Jewish life in Greater Toronto, Canada, Israel and around the world through philanthropic, volunteer and professional leadership.

www.jewishtoronto.com

United Jewish Appeal of Greater Toronto Annual Campaign

DAVID WEINBERG
"A meaningful life is about looking after those around you. We all share this responsibility and UJA is a great facilitator bringing our local community together to support those in need here and overseas."

UJA Israeli Outreach Team

Developing the future of the Israeli-Toronto community

NURIT BARR
"When my parents arrived in Canada from Israel in 1952 there was no agency helping them integrate into society. There was virtually no communication with their families left behind and almost none with the community here in Toronto. Today, I am actively involved in UJA that funds and implements many programs available to Jewish immigrants when they arrive here in Canada and specifically the GTA. It is especially exciting to be involved in programs geared towards integration of the Israeli community with the broader Jewish community."

YAEL KAROL
"As a mother, it is important for me to instill in my children the value of giving back to the community we live in. UJA is an organization dedicated to ensuring a strong inclusive Jewish community in Toronto and to supporting projects in Israel."

Birthright Israel Alumni Community

Through grassroots programming and community partnerships, BAC helps alumni develop Jewish community and identity on their own terms by providing them with opportunities to expand their knowledge, meet new people and contribute to the world around them. www.bactoronto.com

ELISSA GROSSMAN
"In order to appreciate your community, you must give back to it, and giving back is exactly what I'm trying to do. Out of all the causes, this one, in particular, stood out."

Jewish Information Service of Greater Toronto

Reaches out to individuals and community organizations and serves as a link and point of access to Jewish community life in the Greater Toronto Area.

PAM BEILES
"As a JIST volunteer, I feel privileged to serve members of our community in need of assistance. I am able to do this using our comprehensive data base and with the support of an incredibly knowledgeable and caring staff."

Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre

Through education and remembrance, the Centre safeguards the lessons of the Holocaust in order to nurture an inclusive society. As custodians of memory, the Centre is dedicated to preserving the past, honouring the legacies of those who survived, and educating future generations.

JOYCE RIFKIND
"It has been an honour and privilege to volunteer with such excellent role models as the survivors of the Holocaust. Their passion and dedication for educating everyone about the dangers of antisemitism and hate have truly been an inspiration for me."

Ontario Jewish Archives

Established in 1973, the OJA is responsible for acquiring, preserving and making available documentary sources related to the Ontario Jewish community.
www.ontariojewisharchives.org

LES SINGER
"The OJA provides a perfect opportunity to contribute to the community while working with local history, a major personal interest. It's been made even better working with a great group of dedicated staff and volunteers."

UJA walk with Israel

United Jewish Appeal thanks the hundreds of volunteers participating in this year's Walk with Israel. With over 15,000 expected to attend, it is your enthusiasm and energy that will help make the Diaspora's largest one-day Israel solidarity event so special.

Kol Hakavod!
Speciál thanks to Lianne and Bruce Leboff, a dynamic team who are completing their second consecutive year as Chairs of the Walk. Their vision, commitment and exemplary leadership have taken the Walk to new heights.

You, too, can volunteer!

You can assist us in so many ways, from registration, to Walk Route Marshalls, to the RioCan Festival following the Walk.

Volunteering at the Walk is a great way for high school students to earn community service hours!

To volunteer, visit walkwithisrael.com/volunteer

It's fun! It's rewarding!

We gratefully acknowledge the support and generosity of *The Canadian Jewish News*. The Volunteer Recognition Supplement is coordinated by UJA Federation of Greater Toronto.

Alan Winer
Chair

Elizabeth Wolfe
Senior Vice Chair

Ted Sokolsky
President & CEO

Volunteer Recognition Supplement
UJA Creative Team:
Ina Glick, *Managing Editor*
Dan Horowitz, *Editorial Director/Senior Writer*
Steven Palmer, *Graphic Designer*
Alana Getzler, *Contributing Writer*
Lil Nobel and Shelly Rotman, *Administrative Assistants*

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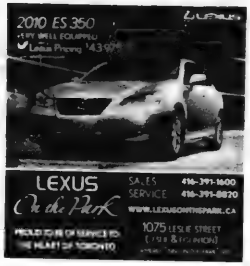

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CIC urges Elvis Costello to rethink cancelling concerts in Israel. *Page 35*

Heebonics

CFL commish Mark Cohon advises young Jews. *Page 37*

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Celebrating 60 years of friendship

This archival photo shows Israel's prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, centre, being greeted by Canadian prime minister John Diefenbaker, left, in Ottawa in 1961. It was the first visit by an Israeli prime minister to Canada. Subsequently, prime ministers Levi Eshkol, Golda Meir, Menachem Begin, Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin also paid official visits to Canada. Next week, Israel's current prime minister arrives in Canada. He will be the seventh sitting Israeli prime minister to visit Ottawa. Please see related stories on pages 8, 9, 19, 20, 21.

[*Photo courtesy of the Canada-Israel Committee*]

Netanyahu to kick off Toronto's Walk With Israel

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to talk with Toronto's Jewish community.

On Sunday, May 30, one day before his working visit to Ottawa, Netanyahu plans to speak to thousands of Toronto Jews and supporters of Israel to kick off the city's annual Walk With Israel celebration.

The walk commences at 10 a.m. at the Direct Energy Centre, on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition, and ends at the energy centre.

Speaking to *The CJN* last week, Mark Regev, spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, said Netanyahu anticipated a "good, productive" trip to Canada.

He said Netanyahu and the entire Israeli delegation were all "very much looking forward to this visit and to our meetings with the leadership in Canada, specifically with Prime Minister [Stephen] Harper, who is a friend of Israel. And, of course, we're looking forward to meeting the Jewish community."

This is the first working trip by an Israeli prime minister to Canada in 16 years. Yitzhak Rabin was the last premier of the Jewish state to visit this country, in 1994.

"It's been too long since we've had an official visit," Regev added. "We are glad that we're now able to rectify that situation."

The idea to address the Toronto community and participate in the walk originated with Netanyahu himself, according to Amir Gissin, Israel's consul general to Toronto and Western Canada.

A planned address by Netanyahu to the Toronto community "was in discussion ever since the visit became known, but many issues had to be addressed before approval was given. It should be noted that participating was his personal request," Gissin said.

Beha'alotcha
Candlelighting: 8:31
Havdalah: 9:37
Greater Toronto Area

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This issue of The CJN went to press on Friday, May 21.

The News in Brief

Canada

Hearing Delayed

OTTAWA — The extradition hearing for an Ottawa sociology professor accused in the 1980 bombing of a Paris synagogue that killed four people was postponed after the Crown disowned handwriting evidence that had been discredited by the defence. A three-week hearing for Hassan Diab was to start June 14, but it has been put off because French authorities plan to bring evidence from a third handwriting expert who says there's a "strong presumption" Diab is the author of a hotel registration card that links him to the bombing, Canwest News reported. The Lebanese-born Diab became a Canadian citizen in 1993.

Ashley Founder Dies

TORONTO — Tillie Abrams, the Jewish woman who founded the iconic William Ashley china store in downtown Toronto in 1947, died May 18 at 98. Abrams came to Canada from Poland as a baby and started working in her parents' paint and wallpaper shop when she was 13. She decided on the made-up name for her store because it was British – like many of her high-end china wares – and gave the impression that a man was behind the business. Her grandson is the company's current CEO.

No Pride Sign Vetting

VANCOUVER — The Vancouver Pride Society won't vet signs in its Aug. 1 Pride Parade, president Ken Coolen said. He told the gay and lesbian paper *Xtra* that such a move would run counter to the parade's "celebration of diversity." Coolen made the comment in response to Pride Toronto's statements that it won't let anyone march under the banner of Queers Against Israeli Apartheid, which happened in 2009 and provoked Jewish protest. In Toronto, "it was perceived as a racial slur," he said, adding he would consult his board, as well as other groups, if the issue arises in Vancouver.

World

Madoff Play Pulled

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A Jewish theatre in Washington cancelled the world premiere of a play about Bernie Madoff after objections by Elie Wiesel, who was a character in it. Theater J said it pulled its first play of next season, *Imagining Madoff*, by Deb Margolin, slated for the end of August. The play portrays the convicted Ponzi schemer sitting in his jail cell recalling a fictional, all-night discussion with Wiesel. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity lost all its assets, $15.2 million, invested with Madoff, and Wiesel personally lost millions. Margolin nixed the play after getting a letter from Wiesel describing it as "obscene" and "defamatory" and threatening to stop it via legal means, the *Washington Post* reported. Margolin said she used Wiesel in the play because "his name is synonymous with decency, morality, the struggle for human dignity and kindness."

Toronto Federation Builds Student Dorms

EILAT — UJA Federation of Greater Toronto dedicated the first student dorms on the campus of the Eilat branch of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev earlier this month.

The dorms were built at a cost of $4.5 million, including an initial $2.3-million grant from the federation, which is twinned with the Eilat region through the Jewish Agency's Partnership 2000 program. Additional funding came from the Rashi Foundation, Ben-Gurion University and the Eilat municipality. About 1,100 students are enrolled at the Eilat branch of BGU. About 75 per cent of them come from outside the city to study.

The first group of 72 students is slated to move into the dorms for the fall semester. In the summer, the dorm rooms will be rented out to tourists. Several more residential halls are planned, with a total capacity of 500 students.

The Toronto federation has been supporting educational and public health projects in Eilat for many years. The organization initiated the dormitory project after students complained about difficulties in finding affordable housing in Eilat. It's hoped that the new dorms will help to attract more students from outside Eilat to the university as well as to provide a campus atmosphere.

A delegation of 32 major donors and community leaders from Canada came to Eilat for the May 10 dedication ceremony. During the visit, the federation said it was providing scholarships to 303 university students in Eilat.

"Through the construction of the dorms, and providing a roof for students, we complete the circle of aid to the students in Eilat. We provide more than 500 scholarships for students on campus," federation president Ted Sokolsky said.

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Azrieli to give $1 billion to charitable foundations

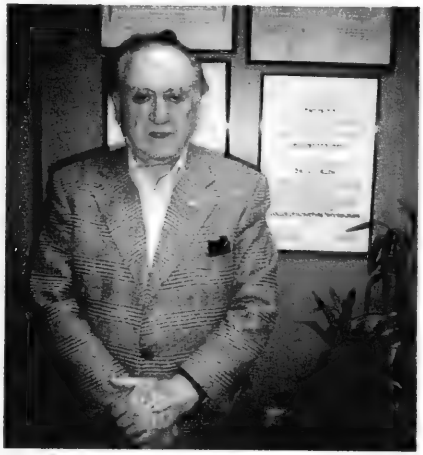
Part of company to be offered for public sale on Tel Aviv Stock Exchange

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

MONTREAL — Charitable foundations in Canada and Israel will benefit from a billion-dollar infusion of capital as a result of David Azrieli's restructuring of his Israeli-based business.

For the first time since its founding 27 years ago, part of the Azrieli Group Ltd. will be offered for public sale. The huge commercial real estate conglomerate, which built Israel's first enclosed shopping mall in 1985 and whose flagship is the triple skyscrapers in Tel Aviv, is about to list 25 per cent of its shares on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange.

The company hopes to raise $728 million (US) at $25 a share, bringing its worth to almost $2.9 billion, which would make it Israel's largest public real estate company.



David Azrieli

The other 75 per cent will be owned by Azrieli and his four children, three of whom live in Canada.

It is the largest initial public offering ever on the Tel Aviv exchange, and 13 underwriters are handling the transaction. If successful, the Azrieli Group will be the ninth-largest firm on the blue-chip Tel Aviv 25 index, bigger – its founder points out – than the Israel Discount Bank.

The prospectus was approved by the Israel Securities Authority on May 11. Institutional investors will be able to buy as of May 31, and the general public by June 3.

Azrieli's current personal stake is 40 per cent, and that of his son, Rafi, 15 per cent, which together are currently worth about $1.2 billion. When the public shares are sold, Azrieli, as chairman of the board, will retain 30 per cent of the company's equity, while his four children will each own 11.25 per cent.

The offering's prospectus states that Azrieli and his son intend to donate all or most of their holdings to charitable foundations.

Azrieli, who turned 88 this month, said he expects the transfer to be made in his lifetime, in an interview at his office in the historic Dominion Square building, which he owns.

Continued on page 29

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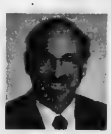
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Greater Toronto Area

Responding to BDS

From the editor's desk...

John Greyson, the Toronto filmmaker, last month urged Margaret Atwood, the renowned Toronto writer, to decline the prestigious literary Dan David Prize in Tel Aviv as a way of supporting "the growing boycott movement which is trying to achieve peace in the region."

That the boycott movement is growing is, sadly, very true. That it is trying to achieve peace in the region is also, sadly, true. But the peace that the BDS proponents envision is the tranquillity of soul they would experience without the existence of a Jewish state called Israel. It would be the peace that follows death.

Only the Jewish state is not willing to die so that the boycott hopefuls should feel good.

The official name of the website is Global BDS Movement: Boycott – Divestment – Sanctions *for Palestine*. (Their emphasis)

The website asserts: "Building and strengthening a global BDS movement has become a core aim for many involved in today's solidarity work for Palestine."

The website further elaborates: "A clear majority of Palestinian civil society called upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel, *similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era*." (My emphasis)

They leave no doubt about their ultimate objective: to dismantle Israel after the fashion and for the same reason that Apartheid South Africa was dismantled.

Thankfully, Atwood refused to be cowed by Greyson. She boycotted the boycotters.

The BDS movement for which Greyson is a piquant advocate is growing.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks places that movement in the context of a "world turned upside down" since the turn of the millennium. In his most recent work, *Future Tense: Jews, Judaism and Israel in the Twenty-First Century* (Schocken Books), he writes: "The peace process foundered, to be replaced first with an intifadah, then with an almost ceaseless wave of suicide bombings, then with missile attacks from Lebanon in the north, Gaza in the south. Israel found itself surrounded not just by enemies – that much it has always known – but by terrorist groups, themselves funded by and proxies for states committed to Israel's destruction as a matter of non-negotiable religious conviction.

"Nor was the attack merely physical: it was political as well. Israel found itself at the receiving end of a vastly ramified, international campaign of delegitimization, instigated by non-governmental organizations, academics and sections of the media, becoming the only nation among the 192 making up the United Nations to find its very right to be and to defend its citizens called into question."

Supporters of Israel in Geneva two years ago

Leslie Susser wrote in the April 26th issue of *The Jerusalem Report* about what Rabbi Sacks so aptly describes – the vastly ramified, international campaign of delegitimization.

In last week's column, I brought readers' attention to the existential repercussions, according to Susser, of the expanding international campaign. In this week's column, I touch upon some of the possible responses to the campaign that Susser evoked from a variety of experts.

Eran Shayshon, one of the authors of a seminal report written on the subject by the non-partisan think-tank, the Reut Institute, calls upon Israel's decision-makers "first to internalize the fact that the country is facing a challenge with potentially existential repercussions."

The problem, Shayshon says, should be addressed by the national security establishment. He also calls for the complete overhaul of Israel's Foreign Service. He recommends building "anti-delegitimization networks based on Jewish and Israel groups abroad, including NGOs."

Shayshon is also a strong advocate of the "rebranding" effort, despite its rather obvious marketing connotations. Echoing the oft-quoted comments and thinking of Amir Gissin, the consul general of Israel for Toronto and Western Canada, Shayshon told Susser: "Israel is an excellent product with terrible branding. Anyone who comes here will immediately see it is not an apartheid state. We need to close the perception gap by showing people what Israel really is."

Noam Lemelshtrich-Latar, dean of the School of Communications at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Centre, told Susser that the government should create a new media operations centre, operated by an NGO or a research institute to grapple with the burgeoning networks of cyber advocates who place all sorts of vile material about Israel in cyberspace.

Susser canvassed a number of experts for their respective approaches in dealing with Israel's delegitimizers.

They all agreed that the problem is urgent. Shrugging one's shoulder – in indifference, apathy or as an act, simply, of acknowledged personal helplessness – is not an option.

The time is now. For all of us.

– MBD

SeeJN

BIBLE CONTEST

Eight Bialik Hebrew Day School students participated in this year's Bible Contest. All of the students were strong performers at the Nationals for grades 5 and 6, where Jordan Mamalek ranked in the top 10 and Adam Cockburn took first place. From left are Jordan, Hannah Rosenberg, Reese Daniel, Danielle Clasky, Adam, team adviser Hannah Isaac, Shelley Mayer, Benjamin Eisen and Joshua Unger.

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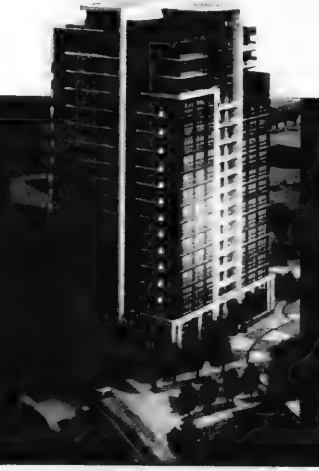

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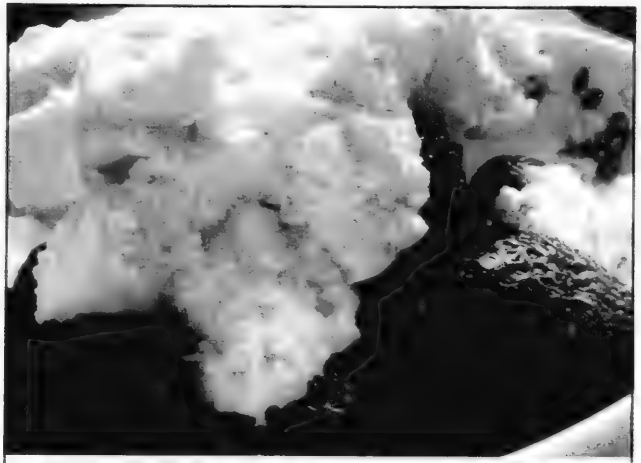

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Greater Toronto Area

Refugee claims from Israel lowest since '01

By RON CSILLAG
Special to The CJN

Israel's oft-repeated pleas to Canada that the Jewish state does not produce refugees may be getting through.

Figures obtained by *The CJN* from the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) reveal that Canada's acceptance rate of refugees from Israel in 2009 was the lowest in nine years.

Of 293 refugee claims from Israel finalized last year, just 15 were approved—an acceptance rate of five per cent, the lowest since 2001.

The IRB rejected 198 claims from Israel last year. The rest were either abandoned or withdrawn. A further 921 claims from Israel are still pending.

Ottawa's acceptance of claimants from Israel has been dropping steadily since 2005, when the approval rate was 31 per cent.

Canada's acceptance of those who claim a "well-founded fear of persecution" in Israel has been a sore point between the two countries since the early 1990s, when the first waves of Jews leaving the former Soviet Union began arriving in Israel under the Law of Return.

Many of these émigrés then springboarded to other countries, including Canada, claiming they were persecuted in Israel. Typically, the asylum-seekers alleged that while in the Jewish state, they faced discrimination and were denied jobs and housing, and even threatened and harassed because of mixed marriages or questionable status as Jews.

Israel has always argued that as a democratic, multicultural nation, it does not produce refugees. The Israeli argument has always been that claimants' stories of persecution are spurious and designed simply to gain entry to other countries.

In 2005, Israel's absorption ministry reported that nearly nine per cent of immigrants from former Soviet republics leave Israel, with Canada being a favourite destination.

The IRB does not track the reasons, whether political, religious or personal, for granting asylum. Neither does it keep records of the birthplace of claimants.

Edward Corrigan, a London, Ont.-based immigration lawyer who has handled several claims from Arab-Israelis, says the "bulk" of refugee claims from Israel are no longer from ex-Soviets but from Palestinians and Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship.

He said some claimants have alleged they were pressured into spying for Israeli intelligence agencies, putting them at great risk. Some of his clients, Corrigan noted, have alleged they were "coerced" and "blackmailed" into spying for Israel.

Over the past five years, he said he has won five cases and lost seven involving refugee claims by Arabs with Israeli citizenship.

Corrigan said he "has not heard of any" Israeli Arabs whose claims failed and who faced grave danger on their return to Israel, though "there have been consequences." Those, he said, have included Israel's refusal to renew Israeli passports and travel documents.

Corrigan stressed that Israel has many "strong and vibrant" human rights organizations advocating on behalf of Jews and Arabs alike.

He said he's currently representing a refugee claimant who is a conscientious objector to Israel's mandatory military service. The man is a Russian Christian who came to Israel under the Law of Return and fears returning.

The IRB has a separate category of claimants from "Palestine," who are technically stateless under international refugee statutes. These claimants may have resided in the West Bank or Gaza, or filed claims against their country of residence.

IRB numbers on Palestine show that in 2009, 62 per cent, or 39 of the 63 cases finalized, were granted asylum. The success rate the year before was 79 per cent.

Corrigan said claimants from the West Bank and Gaza often face danger of persecution or worse if they were even suspected of collaborating with Israel.

A spokesperson at Israel's embassy in Ottawa had no comment on the latest IRB numbers for Israel.

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important!

Admission is limited to sponsored Walkers and their immediate family and is on a first-come, first-served basis. Advanced online registration* is urged prior to May 28th at walkwithisrael.com. Register to fundraise online today at walkwithisrael.com and start collecting donations and you too can be part of this once in a lifetime event.

* a minimum of $20 in sponsorships per household is requested to attend this event.

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Israel-Canada ties: 'deep, vital, constant'

On April 7, 1962, on the occasion of the granting of the Histadrut Award for humanitarianism to then-Canadian prime minister John Diefenbaker, Israel's eloquent, insightful and scholarly ambassador to Canada, Yaacov Herzog spoke about the friendship between Canada and Israel. He speculated about the source of the friendship in terms that resonated with Diefenbaker.

The Jewish state had been founded barely 13 years earlier. The remarkable conditions surrounding Israel's birth were still fresh in the mind. Not too many people had given the Jewish state much of a chance of surviving the onslaught of five Arab armies.

Not too many people had given the Jewish people much of a chance of emerging whole - in any meaningful sense of the word - from the devastation of the Shoah.

Herzog understood the modern rebirth of Jewish sovereignty in large, historical and theological terms. "The inner significance of [Israel's] revival is related to a vindication of the spiritual over the material factor in human survival," he said.

And he knew that Diefenbaker and a large swath – if not the majority – of the Canadian people also understood it on that basis.

"The Prime Minister of Canada," Herzog said, "has over decades shown a deeply sensitive appreciation for the spiritual motives of Israel reborn, its rise and onward progress."

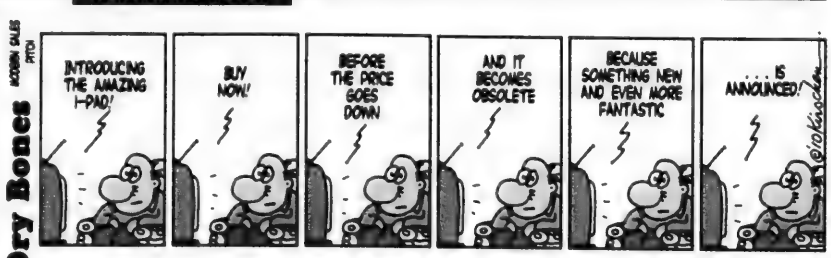
Herzog then added: "How else can one explain the consistent friendship between two parties so disparate in area, in resources, in capacity, a link sustained neither by defensive alliance, by powerful economic stakes, by geography, by common experience, yet [is] nonetheless deep and vital and constant?"

On the eve of the visit to Canada in a few days by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, it is important to be reminded of these words and of the life-affirming values that underlie them. His visit is a definitive affirmation of the Canada-Israel friendship. In a world where interests trump friendships, this very special friendship is worth celebrating. It reaches higher than merely good bilateral relationships. It is a heartening testament in a world of frequently occurring disheartening developments – especially in relation to the only Jewish state on earth – of two democracies standing side by side. The Harper government has repeatedly affirmed the strength and the permanence of that testament.

Ambassador Herzog poignantly described the link between Canada and Israel as being "deep, vital and constant." It was a depiction of the relationship as he saw it nearly half a century ago. His words ring true today. They are our aspiration, if not quite a promise, for the future as well.

25 years ago in *The CJN*

The first round of bilateral talks between Israel and Egypt ended in Cairo with progress on most issues, such as the creation of joint teams to search for the bodies of Israeli soldiers missing in Sinai since the 1973 Yom Kippur War. A sticking point was Taba, the strip of beach on the Gulf of Aqaba near Eilat, which was claimed by both sides. More talks were planned before sending the dispute to international arbitration, as demanded by Egypt.



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Brandeis distorted and misrepresented

The editor of *The CJN* was correct when he wrote that there was a protest at Brandeis University against the selection of Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren to deliver the commencement address on May 23 ("'A devastatingly sad day,'" Editor's desk, May 13). But he was wrong in his assessment of its significance, and mistaken in his generalizations about the academic culture and attitude toward Israel at Brandeis. He wrote: "A great many students and faculty were upset" and implied that the campus was in an uproar. That was not the case.

Here are the facts: as reported by the *Jerusalem Post* and JTA, about 150 students, faculty and others signed a petition protesting the invitation to Oren. More than 5,000 signed a petition supporting his appearance. Some members of the faculty objected to Oren, but a suggestion floated in the university senate to register public displeasure at the invitation got nowhere.

You said students who defended the invitation to Oren were "cravenly cautious," in their defence and that the author of the pro-Oren petition could not bring himself to utter the name "Israel." Here is that student's explanation of why he started the petition, as published in the *Jerusalem Post*: "I wanted [Brandeis] President [Jehuda] Reinharz to know that there are students who are happy to have Oren come. Brandeis is a very friendly campus to Zionism and Israel."

Brandeis is not exceptional in the diversity of opinion among its faculty and students. One can imagine a similar level of content and discontent about representatives of the Israeli government at Israeli universities, including my former institution, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev.

Brandeis' Schusterman Center for Israel Studies has created a successful paradigm for how an academic institution can combat ignorance and malice by exposing complexity of information and diversity of views. The Brandeis Summer Institute for Israel Studies has attracted senior and junior faculty – Christians, Muslims and Jews – from more than 140 universities. These rigorously scholarly efforts have spawned hundreds of courses on Israel, literally around the world.

There are conflicts over Israel and its policies on and off campus, in Israel and across the world. But you have done readers a disservice by distorting and misrepresenting the situation at Brandeis. Our campus can in no sense be characterized as hostile, or even cool, toward Israel.

Ilan Troen
Stoll Family Professor of Israel Studies
Director, Schusterman Center for Israel Studies
Brandeis University

* * *

Anti-Semitic crime stats

Federation CJA and Quebec Jewish Congress spokespeople do a disservice to the community with their suggestion that B'nai Brith – which has had a formidable presence in Quebec for the past 130 years – has no profile or credibility ("Anti-Semitic crime stats refuted by Jewish leaders," May 13). We work daily with law enforcement and grassroots Quebecers on issues concerning the safety and welfare of the community. Our services to the elderly and disadvantaged – affordable housing, holiday food baskets and other supports – have made a difference in the lives of many vulnerable individuals, while our League for Human Rights builds bridges with other communities in the fight against all hatred and bigotry.

Regardless of what *The CJN's* anonymous "highly placed source" claims, the recent crime wave in Montreal was no trivial matter. B'nai Brith was approached by numerous members of the community concerned for their safety. They reached out to us for assistance and we responded. And this is where our strategy differs. We feel it is necessary to address issues head on, rather than prevaricating. We were the first Jewish organization to point to the growing problem of anti-Semitism in the guise of anti-Israel agitation on campus. We are still the only mainstream Jewish organization in this country to sound the alarm on radical Islam, and the threats to freedom and democracy it poses.

We feel it is counterproductive for one community organization to denigrate another, and wonder why a newspaper like *The CJN* would encourage such divisiveness. We should all be focusing on the same objectives – working cooperatively to promote the best interests of the community. We regret that some seem to have lost sight of such goals. For our part, we stand ready to meet with Federation CJA in Montreal to discuss how to repair the serious breach in community unity that this unwarranted attack on B'nai Brith represents.

Allan Adel, B.C.L., LLB, MBA, National Chair, B'nai Brith's League for Human Rights; Nicole Allio, B.Sc., Quebec Chair, B'nai Brith's Institute for International Affairs; Eric Bissell, Vice President, B'nai Brith – Quebec Region; Ted Greenfield, CA, Senior Vice President, B'nai Brith International; Moïse Moghrabi, LLB., Quebec Chair, League for Human Rights; Heidi Oppen, B.C.L., LLB, Quebec Regional Director; Steve Slimovitch, LLB, Member, Legal Committee, B'nai Brith – Quebec Region
Gerry Weinstein, Chair, B'nai Brith House, Montreal

LET THEM GO...

Ron Arad, Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, Guy Hever, Yehuda Katz, Gilad Schalit

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Perspectives

Canada is a true ally of Israel

By SHIMON FOGEL

"Did you hear the news? Guess who's coming to town." The buzz surrounding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's upcoming visit to Canada has been the focus of much animated conversation throughout the Jewish community. Why is that? After all, the vast majority of those caught up in the excitement are not privy to the specific agenda that will dominate the bilateral discussions during this brief, official visit. Indeed, even the upward of 20,000 participants in the UJA Walk with Israel in Toronto who will greet and be addressed by the Israeli premier will not have an opportunity to engage directly with him. Yet the excitement prevails, not just in Toronto, but also across the country. What is it about this cameo appearance that prompts such an emotional reaction among Canadian Jews?

In truth, as welcome as "Bibi's" visit is, the passionate and heartfelt reaction expressed by the pro-Israel community is related to something larger than the force of one individual's personality. It is about something much more fundamental. It is about Israel, and it is about Israel and Canada. In many respects, the Canada-Israel relationship has served as a zeitgeist of the Jewish condition in Canada – how "safe" we feel, the extent to which we as a community are accepted as a valued contributor to Canadian society, and the legitimacy attached to our collective narrative.

Nowhere is that reality check more acutely evident than within the political sector. Canada's relationship with Israel, its policies toward the Jewish state, its pronouncements on the conflict, the positions Canada adopts within the myriad of international forums, and the level of bilateral co-operation – taken together, all of these things have served as an essential scorecard for Jews regarding their place within this great country. So on the eve of Netanyahu's visit, it is not out of place for us to ask ourselves: how are we doing? Have we made progress? Is it "safe"?

The short answer is "yes." Despite all of the difficult challenges out there, the Canada-Israel bilateral relationship is stronger, more vital and promising than at any time in the 60 years since we first established formal diplomatic relations. Canada was instrumental in facilitating the rebirth of the Jewish state, and in all the subsequent decades, successive Canadian governments have nurtured the friendship and helped it grow in depth and scope. The milestones are many and they chronicle the maturation of a relationship that has evolved into a complex, multi-layered kinship that speaks to mutual strategic interests, shared values, synergistic economic growth and common aspirations for ourselves and the family of nations.

Yet for all that has been achieved – the space agency agreements and the trade missions, the joint projects in the developing world and the health-care partnerships, the co-operative efforts of the two Supreme Courts and the academic exchanges – often, what has had the most enduring impact are the words. The words of praise and criticism. The words of support and those of isolation. The words of understanding and the words of indifference, and sometimes, the absence of any words.

> *'Perhaps the most important pronouncement came from then-prime minister Brian Mulroney during the most intense period of the first Palestinian intifadah, when he confronted the canard of dual loyalties'*

We have all learned that, unlike the childhood rhyme, words do have power. They can hurt and harm as well as comfort and heal. They can also validate or undermine, and as we cast an eye back to an assessment of the bilateral relationship, we discover that more often than not, the words of Canadian political actors have served to validate Israel and Canadian Jewish support for Israel rather than contribute to Israel's isolation within the international community.

Ironically, even though polls suggest that politicians are not held in the greatest of esteem, their words and the opinions they articulate carry substantial weight. In a way, politicians have served as the ultimate "third party validators" – providing a "hechsher" of sorts for Israel's supporters in Canada.

Perhaps the most important pronouncement came from then-prime minister Brian Mulroney during the most intense period of the first Palestinian intifadah, when he confronted the canard of "dual loyalties" and proclaimed that Canadian Jewish support for and love of Israel complement their commitment to and pride in Canada. It was a seminal moment in the Canadian Jewish experience and has coloured the public policy debate ever since. It provided a new context in which to understand the historic address by then-Israeli president, Chaim Herzog, to a joint session of Parliament. A survivor who had rebuilt his shattered life in Canada after the Holocaust – my father – sat in the gallery during that address. More than 20 years later, he still regards that event as the highlight of his life: a Jew who received sanctuary in Canada, sitting in the Canadian icon of freedom and democracy, listening to the president of the Jewish state share words with Canadian parliamentarians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper in New York last September. ***[Photo courtesy of the CIC]***

There have been other words, too. Then-opposition leader Jean Chrétien called the Canada-Israel Committee at 1 a.m. on the night the first scuds rained down on Israel during the First Gulf War in 1991, expressing his distress and pledging, even in opposition, that Canada would always be a source of support for her sister democracy in the Middle East. Following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Mulroney, who established the extraordinarily successful high-tech partnership between Israel and Canada, Chrétien made good on his word and established a free trade agreement with Israel – the first between Canada and any country outside North America.

Many have been the politicians who have added their words of support and solidarity – too many to chronicle here. Leaving aside the much-valued contribution of Jewish parliamentarians over the years, a few bear particular mention, because they speak to crucial dimensions of the relationship or special aspects of our experience:

- Current Treasury Board President and former Canadian Alliance leader Stockwell Day, whose purity of support for Israel reassured Jews about a new political phenomenon that was entirely foreign to their experience.
- Liberal MP Joe Volpe, who cut short a trip to China during the worst days of the second intifadah in order to stand in solidarity with Canadian Jews confronting the violence that had erupted in the Middle East and had spread unprecedented and vitriolic hatred to Canada.
- Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard and his successor, Gilles Duceppe, whose words of understanding and friendship forever dispelled the myth that support for Israel was inimical to passionate Quebecers.
- Former prime minister Paul Martin, who publicly enshrined the idea of shared values between Canada and Israel, along with his foreign minister, Pierre Pettigrew, who validated our fears about the Iranian regime and who served as the first western politician to draw a linkage between Iran's nuclear program and its threats to annihilate the Jewish state.
- Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff, who eloquently but unequivocally stripped Israeli Apartheid Week promoters of any credibility in his public condemnation of that toxic, anti-Israel initiative.
- And the courageous members of the NDP caucus, individuals such as Deputy Leader Thomas Mulcair, who have consistently challenged the radical element that has sought to capture the soul of their party.

All of these words and the many, many other people they represent have been welcome. The validation and friendship they stand for are cherished reminders of our place in Canada.

But of all the words spoken in 60-plus years, none have been so needed or so valued as those articulated by the current government. In Israel's darkest hours, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered comfort and courageous leadership. In a time of political correctness gone wildly awry, his ministers have consistently chosen integrity over expediency. This government has established a new benchmark for the bilateral relationship, one that established Canada as a true ally rather than a "fair-weather friend," and in a fundamental way, one that has captured the essence of all the good words spoken over the last 60 years.

It is a good time for a visit. It is a good time to celebrate the nature of the Canada-Israel friendship – both for what it is and what it promises to be.

Shimon Koffler Fogel is CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee.

Opinions

A first in Israel

Israel's formal celebration of its Independence Day always begins with a ceremony on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem, in which distinguished citizens light 12 torches representing the biblical 12 tribes. This year, one of the torches was lit by a Reform rabbi – a first in the history of the Jewish state.

Rabbi Dow Marmur in Toronto

Rabbi Asher Richard Hirsch came to Israel from his native United States in the 1970s. His distinguished career in the American Reform movement includes the founding of its now famed Religious Action Center in Washington D.C. When he became the executive director of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, one of his conditions was that its headquarters be moved to Jerusalem.

Though it may have been more expedient to run the organization out of New York, Rabbi Hirsch was determined to help shift the focus of Reform Judaism to the Jewish state. He believed that this symbolic act would make a strong point. His dual aim has always been to bring Zion to Reform and Reform to Zion.

With this in mind, he brought the World Union into the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and was instrumental in creating ARZENU, the international organization of Reform Zionists, of which ARZA Canada is a constituent and influential member. (Most of the ARZENU presidents have been Canadians. The current incumbent is Joan Garson of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, a past president of ARZA Canada.)

Rabbi Hirsch retired more than a decade ago and is now the organization's honorary life president. His achievements in Israel include being instrumental in establishing the two Reform kibbutzim and building the Centre for Reform Judaism in Jerusalem.

He has also held important positions in the WZO and is currently, for a second time, the chair of its general council.

To soften the potential blow of a Reform rabbi lighting one of the torches, the powers that be wanted it to be known that his honour was due to his place in the WZO hierarchy. Perhaps as a further concession to opponents, the organizers partnered Rabbi Hirsch with a young woman from the Jewish National Fund.

However, none of this fazed Rabbi Hirsch. At the ceremony, he spoke about his Reform career and his role in bringing Reform Judaism to Israel. For whatever the Israeli establishment would like to think, and however much Orthodox politicians and their secular accomplices seek to claim a franchise on Judaism, religious pluralism is there to stay, and Reform will continue to play a growing part in it.

The symbolism of Rabbi Hirsch's participation in the ceremony has many dimensions and important implications for Israel.

New limb, new growth

I recently travelled to Minsk, Belarus, to consult for my former employer, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. The event was an annual team gathering of the JDC group that works in the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU). I remember when, in 1989, that team had six people. Now, there there were more than 60 souls at the three-day set of meetings. It brought back memories and a great deal of warm nostalgia. It also evoked some perspective and the concomitant analysis.

Seymour Epstein in Toronto

When glasnost and perestroika allowed the Jews of the Soviet Union to be reunited with their sisters and brothers around the world, there were already at least three organizations in place ready to provide assistance. The liaison bureau of the government of Israel was already there, quietly. The Jewish Agency for Israel was ready to immediately absorb all three million (more or less, depending on which demographer you follow). And the JDC had been waiting for decades to re-enter and do its work openly. We had been there before the revolution. A variety of religious groups, from Chabad to the World Union for Progressive Judaism, also set up shop very quickly.

Of course, there were reports of overlap, duplication and conflict, but in retrospect, all the organizations at work in the 11 time zones of the FSU had one common goal: to help these Jews re-unite with their Judaism. For most, thankfully, that meant aliyah to Israel. Others took longer to decide and wished to re-create Jewish life, mostly ex nihilo. Others would never leave due to age or infirmity. These last two categories were the domain of the JDC mission. There were some who opted for emigration to yet another part of the Diaspora – hopefully a kinder one.

That early period of the 1990s produced many poignant moments of Jewish history. More Jews learned Hebrew in that time than in any other period of Jewish life. Thousands of Russian-speaking children were absorbed into the Israeli school system in a very brief period of time. Indeed, Israel absorbed a population equivalent to the United States taking in all of Canada and Australia. Within 10 years, the tiny Jewish population of united Germany grew to become the second-largest group of Jews in continental Europe. As significant and as miraculous as the re-birth of the Hebrew language at the beginning of the 20th century was the re-attachment to the body of the Jewish people of an old/new limb of three million souls at the very end of the same century.

So there I was in Minsk, in April 2010 watching a small community of Jews re-engineering itself into religion, culture, welfare, education, memory and hope. The new limb is no longer new to a young Jew born in 1990. She has Russian-speaking Jewish brothers and sisters living in Israel, Germany, Sweden and America – in Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Almaty, Bishkek, Khabarovsk and even Thornhill. And he's comfortable in his skin.

There was a time when all of us were concerned about what we could do for FSU Jews – how we could help them through the trauma of re-attachment. Now we should be more excited about what these new Jews can do for us in the 21st century. They have a rich tradition of Russian culture in literature, music, dance and the plastic arts. They know more Hebrew than most of us. They bring a fresh outsider's perspective to our ancient tradition. They have more family connections in Israel than most of us, and are thus intimately connected with the Jewish state. They come from a region that gave us the Zionist revolution and modern Hebrew.

If we open ourselves to them, they can contribute profoundly to whatever twists and turns our Judaism will take in this new century. Those of us who find Jewish continuity an inadequate prescription for the Jewish future should look to our Russian-speaking siblings for the creative force that has kept us flourishing from generation to generation.

Midrash Rabba: Jewish tradition and women rabbis

The headline of this column is a play on words. Midrash Rabbah is the name of an early compendium of midrashim, or narrative commentaries on the Bible. But I intend it also to signify a midrash, or commentary, on rabba, the proposed title for female Orthodox rabbis, were there to be such an entity.

As many readers are aware, an Orthodox yeshiva in New York headed by Rabbi Avi Weiss has been training women to take on rabbinic functions under the title of maharat. While modern Orthodoxy contains a wide range of views on the potential religious role of women, the consensus appeared to tolerate this expansion of possibilities.

Sara R. Horowitz in Toronto

However, when, earlier this year, Rabbi Weiss conferred upon the first woman to complete the program the title of "rabba" – a feminization of the word "rav" – he outraged many Orthodox rabbis who saw this as going too far. Under pressure from his rabbinic colleagues, Rabbi Weiss agreed to revert to the title maharat, although without removing the title of rabba from the sole woman upon whom it has been conferred.

It was in response to the rabba controversy that the Rabbinic Council of America, the largest body of Orthodox rabbis in North America, issued its "Resolution on Women's Communal Roles in Orthodox Jewish Life." Passed without dissent at the RCA's annual conference, the resolution made clear the organization's view on the issue, saying that "we cannot accept either the ordination of women or the recognition of women as members of the Orthodox rabbinate, regardless of the title."

Given the many strong reactions against the title rabba, this conclusion was not surprising. But equally noteworthy, the resolution carried language strongly affirming the religious accomplishments of women, both as scholars and community leaders. "The flowering of Torah study and teaching by God-fearing Orthodox women in recent decades," the resolution begins, "stands as a significant achievement." It goes on to encourage "a diversity of halachically and communally appropriate professional opportunities for learned, committed women."

About a century ago, the Bais Yaakov movement revolutionized the Orthodox world by establishing centres of serious Jewish learning for women, something deeply controversial in its time. The RCA resolution affirms the rightness of that sea change and of its consequences to the shape of the Jewish world and gendered roles today. "Young Orthodox women are now being reared, educated, and inspired by mothers, teachers and mentors who are themselves beneficiaries of advanced women's Torah education."

"How ya gonna' keep them down on the farm after they've seen Paree?" an old song asked. Indeed: how ya gonna' keep them down in the shul after they've seen Baba Kama?

While the RCA resolution falls far short of embracing the ordination of women, it didn't slam the door on that possibility. Many readers were struck by what the resolution didn't say: that the ordination of women as rabbis is absolutely forbidden by Halachah. Instead, it explained the resolution's conclusion as an outcome of the RCA's "commitment to sacred continuity." To invoke the terms used by American novelist Cynthia Ozick to think about women in Orthodox Judaism, the matter is treated as "sociological" (and so open to change) rather than "theological" (and hence, immutable).

The Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance (JOFA) pointed to another resolution passed at the RCA convention that affirmed the diversity of ideologies and halachic opinions within Orthodoxy, casting them in the same language that the Talmud uses to describe the legitimacy of the divergent religious opinions of the houses of Hillel and Shamai: "*eilu ve-eilu divrei Elokim Chayyim*" – these and these are the words of the Living God. Such valuing of diversity, JOFA notes, keeps alive the possibility for "learned, God-fearing women to become authoritative, communal religious leaders."

In fact, although they are, thus far, in the minority, some Orthodox rabbis have issued detailed responsa about the halachic viability of ordaining female rabbis, pointing to biblical, talmudic, and historical precedents for women assuming the functions and authorities of a rabbi.

Perhaps a century from now, we'll take for granted the presence of the rabba – a tikkun olam in our time.

The Kirshner File

A life tragically cut short

The words are heartbreaking, so simple yet so shattering. On Dec. 24, 1943, less than eight months before she and her family were betrayed by an anonymous caller informing the German security police that Jews could be found in hiding at 267 Prinsengracht, Anne Frank wrote this entry in her diary: "I long to ride a bike, dance, whistle, look at the world, feel young and know that I'm free."

Sheldon Kirshner in Amsterdam

Precocious, feisty and fiercely intelligent, Anne was a slip of a girl when she set down these yearning thoughts. Doomed by the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands and Adolf Hitler's racist fantasies, she would never live long enough to translate her wishes into realities or become a full-fledged woman. Probably the most famous victim of the Holocaust, Anne was one of more than one million Jewish children whose fate was irretrievably sealed when Germany invaded the Netherlands in May 1940 and proceeded to marginalize, persecute and deport its Jewish minority.

The gabled house in Amsterdam where she lived for about 25 months, from July 6, 1942 until Aug. 4, 1944, has been converted into a shrine and a museum. Toured by millions of visitors since its opening on May 3, 1960, Anne Frank House – Anne Frank Huis in Dutch – perpetuates the memory of a remarkable teenager whose diary has been published in scores of countries and whose fleeting life has been the subject of an avalanche of biographies, plays, movies and television dramas, the latest of which was broadcast on the PBS network just last month.

The faces of Anne Frank

Adjacent to a canal and close to the imposing Westermarkt church at the corner of the street, Anne Frank House is in a gentrified neighbourhood dotted with cafes, restaurants, boutiques and art galleries. Before the war, however, this charming district was rather drab and unprepossessing. Anne's father, Otto, set up his new business here shortly after the German army marched into the Netherlands.

An assimilated German Jew, Otto left Frankfurt – where Anne and her sister, Margot, were born – in the wake of Hitler's accession to power in 1933. Thousands of Jews like the Franks immigrated to the Netherlands after Nazism took hold in Germany. Having established himself in Amsterdam, Otto sent for his wife, Edith, and their two daughters. The Franks lived in a flat in a four-storey beige brick apartment building at 39 Merwedplein. In a small park opposite the building stands a stylized statue of Anne, her feet resting on a maroon marble pedestal. The Buitenveldert neighbourhood where Otto and his family settled is full of such faceless cookie cutter buildings. Since many Dutch Jews live here today, the Shalom seniors home, the Maimonides High School, the Rosh Pina elementary school and a kosher butcher shop are all within walking distance.

Otto and his family went in to hiding as the deportation of Jews began. The building on Prinsengracht where they found refuge was originally a 17th-century private residence and then a warehouse and a household appliances plant.

The offices and warehouse of Otto's companies, Opekta and Pectacon – which sold the fruit extract pectin as well as herbs, spices and pickling salts – were located on the ground floor. The secret annex, or back part of the building, was where the Franks hid from the Nazis and their Dutch collaborators. Concealed from view by houses on all four sides, it was a seemingly perfect sanctuary. The annex itself was covered by a bookcase.

No one but Otto's most trusted Christian employees – Miep Gies, Bep Voskuijl, Johannes Kleiman and Victor Kugler – were privy to the arrangement. They provided the Franks and their boarders – Hermann, Auguste and Peter van Pels and Fritz Pfeffer – with food, newspapers and books.

Though Anne described the space in which they all lived as relatively luxurious compared to other hiding places, it was really a cramped and dim haven, with a floor space of about 500 square feet.

Anne, an aspiring journalist, started keeping a diary in a red-and-green plaid cloth autograph book her father gave her on her 13th birthday on June 12, 1942. Her last entry was on Aug. 1, 1944. She used the diary to examine her relationship with her family and reflect on her isolation and fear of discovery. As she put it on July 11, 1942, "We're very afraid the neighbours might hear or see us."

Anne Frank House in Amsterdam
[Sheldon Kirshner photos]

As you enter Anne Frank House, the first objects in your line of vision are four large photographs of Anne. She looks forward, smiling sweetly, in two photographs. She glances sideways in another one. In the last photograph, she plays with her fingers.

An entry from her diary, dated April 9, 1944, is inscribed on a wall: "The time will come when we will be people again and not just Jews." A picture of Anne gazing out from a balcony then appears.

The dimly lit rooms have been picked clean of furniture, clothes and personal belongings, all of which were seized and distributed to families in Germany.

When the Franks left their flat for the secret annex, they deliberately left it in a state of disarray so that the Nazis would think that they had emigrated. A postcard written by Otto to his relatives in Basel, Switzerland leaves that impression.

To prevent his companies from being confiscated by the Nazis, Otto transferred them to his employees. A letter attests to this transaction. In a video, Gies recalls the day when Otto asked her for help.

A staircase leads to a scale model of the secret annex, while a rare photograph depicts a razzia, a German roundup of Dutch Jews. The book case concealing the secret annex leads to a very steep staircase.

A small room contains Margot's Latin lessons and Otto's map of the Allied Normandy invasion. Pencil marks on a wall, drawn by Otto, enabled him to keep track of his daughters' growth. The walls of Anne's bedroom are plastered with pictures and cuttings.

The kitchen is bare, with only a counter and a sink. The window in the closed-off attic reveals the sky and branches of a tree.

An Oct. 9, 1942 entry from Anne's diary reads, "The English radio says they're [Jews] being gassed. I feel terribly upset."

The arrest and deportation of the hapless inhabitants of the secret annex are chronicled at length in a separate room. Anne's formal name, Anneliese, chillingly appears on a Nazi deportation list. A rare film clip of a transport leaving the Westerbork camp for Auschwitz foreshadows their fate.

Margot contracted typhus and died in Bergen-Belsen in March 1945. Anne succumbed a few days later. Edith died in Auschwitz, while Otto survived. Hermann van Pels was gassed in Auschwitz. His wife died en route from Bergen-Belsen to Theresienstadt. Their son died in Mauthausen's sick bay.

Toward the close of the self-guided tour, an overhead monitor continually replays a video in which Otto expresses surprise concerning the depth of Anne's feelings. "Most parents don't know really their children," he intones sombrely.

Near the exit door is a glass case inside which is a facsimile of Anne's diary. After she was deported, Gis and Voskuijl retrieved it among personal effects. When Otto returned to Amsterdam after the war, he was given Anne's diary and notebooks. Published first in Dutch in 1947, the diary was initially published in English in 1952.

The building that houses the museum was originally slated to be demolished, but a public relations campaign saved it from the wrecker's ball. Refurbished in 1999 and reopened by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, Anne Frank House, with its exhibition space, bookshop and cafe, is a poignant testament to a sensitive and lively young woman whose life was tragically cut short.

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Jewish Life

A candle of God is the soul of man

By RABBI TZVI HERSH WEINREB

Guest Voice

I was visiting an Israeli artist colony where various types of paintings were on exhibit. In the corner were postcard-sized miniatures. In every painting, a candle predominated.

The artist was obsessed with the image of the candle. Somehow, each candle evoked the picture of a person.

The memory of the candles bedecking his workroom walls has remained with me. As long as I can remember, I have been fascinated by candles and their human-like quality. In my early teens, I was taught to meditate in front of a burning candle and to associate my meditation with the biblical phrase, "A candle of God is the soul of man."

"What are some ways that human beings resemble candles?" This question was assigned to us by the old rabbi who was my first spiritual guide. It was our task to gaze at a burning candle and imagine the affinities between candles and men. At the end of the month, we were to report on our findings. I never returned at the end of that month. Without that closure, it is no wonder that I still reflect, 50 years later, on the resemblances between people and candles.

This week's Torah portion speaks of the candles that Aaron lit in the ancient Tabernacle. The Bible speaks not of the "lighting of" the candles, but of the "raising up" of the candles. The commentaries point out that it is not sufficient to kindle the candle – one must see to it that the flame will continue to burn on its own.

The candle thus becomes a metaphor for the teaching process. It is never sufficient to merely touch the child with the flame of knowledge. One must "raise up" the flame so that it will grow and nurture the student for a long time. The task is to ensure that the flame will continue to burn on its own, that acquiring knowledge will be a lifetime process.

Another traditional Jewish saying that inspires me is: "A little bit of light can dispel much darkness." The little candle teaches us how much good a single person, or even a single act, can accomplish. If all one can do is light a match, that act can achieve unforeseen illumination.

Finally, there is a talmudic dictum, "A candle for one is a candle for 100." There are certain things in life – an item of food, for example – that can only meet the needs of one person. But one candle can benefit the single individual who needs illumination, and it can shed equal illumination for many others in the room.

And so it is in the human realm. There are things we can do that will benefit not only a single other, but an entire community, an entire world. If we teach lessons that are useful practically and spiritually uplifting, those lessons can benefit many unseen others in addition to the one being taught.

Candlelighting symbolizes the teaching process – a single act can have massive consequences.

The opening verses in this week's Torah portion render the candle image so central to the Tabernacle and Temple service because the Torah wishes us to think about the candle, to meditate on it, and to discover for ourselves the manifold analogies that lie embedded in the candle image.

"Behold the candle," the Torah exclaims. It is one of the oldest, and certainly one of the simplest, human tools. But it can be a metaphor for the power and the potential of the human soul, which is no less than the candle of God.

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb is the executive vice-president emeritus of the Orthodox Union.

Is the Internet kosher?

Jewish & Digital
By Mark Mietkiewicz

Is the Internet kosher? That question has concerned many people who are worried about the ease with which the Internet can expose users to pornography, of course, but also to scenes of violence, unbridled gossip, or to just be a temptation to waste precious time. Over the years, different solutions have been proposed.

A 1999 article in *Ha'aretz* reported on a ban on Internet use by the haredi Orthodox Council of Torah Sages, which said the Internet threat "puts the future generations of Israel in grave danger in a way that no other threat has since Israel became a nation." For professionals who are dependent on the Internet for their livelihood, the council imposed the obligation "to seek every possible way to reduce usage," and then only to use it at the workplace. **[http:// bit.ly/jweb01]**

Apprehension of the web is not limited to Israel. In 2005, the Cleveland Jewish News wrote about the school Mosdos Ohr HaTorah, which required parents to sign a guarantee that they have no home access to the Internet. "We feel that the filth the Internet has is just a click away, and it is against what we stand for," says Rabbi Shmuel Berkovicz, the school's Hebrew principal. "Therefore, we ask parents to pledge that their children will never be on the Internet." **[http://bit.ly/jweb14]**

Opponents of the Internet would not be comforted by the results of a 2007 survey of Israeli youths.

- 24 per cent said that they had a face-to-face meeting with a stranger they met online.
- 60 per cent have visited pornographic websites, the majority said accidentally.
- 35 per cent had seen violent images.
- 19 per cent report they were accidentally exposed to websites advocating hate crimes. **[http://bit.ly/jweb03]**

Over the years, solutions about what to do about the web have become more nuanced. In a 2007 talk titled How Open Is Too Open? Halachic Guidelines For Internet Use, Rabbi Hershel Schachter does not minimize the risks but feels that simply saying "don't!" doesn't realistically address the problem. He warns that an outright ban of Internet in the home can create a temptation to surreptitiously seek access elsewhere. Rabbi Schachter recommends placing the computer in a public area in the house so that use – by children and adults – can be monitored. **[http://bit.ly/jweb15]**

What else can you do to protect yourself and your family? Suggestions range from better communication to the use of technological controls.

- Speak to your children about safe surfing and agree on rules for online safety. **[http:// bit.ly/jweb16]**
- Follow advice found at U.S. Department of Justice's Parent's Guide to Children's Online Safety. **[http://bit.ly/jweb17]**
- Install software that regulates or monitors Internet use. **[http://bit.ly/jweb18]**

Commercial services such as thejnet.com and Yeshivanet.com provide limited access to the web.

So far we have been talking about kosher surfing, but what about running a website? Back in 2000, Wired.com carried the article, Ban the Web? Not Lubavitch Jews. In it, Rabbi Zalman Shmotkin said he was sympathetic to concerns about the Internet. At the same time, Chabad has been a pioneer in setting up sites about Jewish learning, holidays and explaining its own philosophy. "It's not the medium itself that is kosher or not kosher. It's how it is utilized," he said. **[http://bit.ly/jweb20]**

In the World Wide Web's prehistoric years (circa 1996), I came across an "unofficial" English-language website for a chassidic sect, which I would have assumed would want nothing to do with the Internet. This piqued my curiosity, so I spent some time looking through the site and its entries about the group's chassidic dynasty, its saintly leaders and good works. I then came across a sole page in Yiddish – with no pictures or graphics – that presented a different message. It said: "If you can understand this, you shouldn't be here."

Mark Mietkiewicz is a Toronto-based Internet producer who writes, lectures and teaches about the Jewish Internet. He can be reached at highway@rogers.com.

Jewish Life

AEPi Ottawa has new president

On Campus
By Justin Dahan

Exams are over and the majority of students are focused on finding summer jobs so they can afford to pay for school next year. As for Robert Rinkoff, he is focusing on Alpha Epsilon Pi (AEPi).

AEPi is the Jewish fraternity for students across Canada. In Ottawa, the chapter consists of students from the University of Ottawa, Carleton University and Algonquin College. Rinkoff is the new president of the chapter. He replaces Jason Friedman, who headed AEPi in the 2010-11 school year.

Rinkoff is excited about the opportunity to help grow AEPi in Ottawa, both on campus and in the Jewish community. He spoke to me about the importance of keeping a strong connection with the Jewish community.

"As the only growing Jewish fraternity in Ottawa, I believe that it is essential that we incorporate ourselves with the community, as well as many Jewish philanthropy events, so we get the Jewish people that are in need what they need," he said. "With that being said, I will be working very close with our philanthropy chair and national [AEPi] to see what and when we can do."

Philanthropy has always been a major concern for the Ottawa chapter of AEPi. It has set up various blood drives and helped to raise money for cardiac research, among other events. Rinkoff hopes to continue these events, as well as add others, for the upcoming year.

When Friedman was president of AEPi, he helped to build strong ties with other organizations in the Jewish community. Rinkoff hopes to continue this and build on it. "In continuing to build a stronger relationship with Chabad and Hillel, we can have a greater effect on campus," he said. "I believe that we have a great bond with both of them currently. I just want to make sure it's only going to get better.

"We have members on each of their boards, so we are able to communicate easier about events that each are going to be hosting and support them. Also IAC [Israel Awareness Committee] is growing, and we will be there for them on any occasion that is needed."

The current president of the IAC, Mark Klibanov, has an executive position with AEPi. This helps AEPi to have an instant partnership with IAC and allows for both organizations to support each other.

Rinkoff makes one thing clear. "Where I want to see Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity this year is making sure that the Jewish community knows we are there for anything that they need us to be and as well make sure our presence is out there, and make sure that people know AEPi is here to stay and grow even larger [and] to make sure the Jewish community is recognized and seen in a positive light," he said.

With clear goals set for the upcoming year and early preparation for September, AEPi and Rinkoff are poised to have a great year to grow in the Jewish community. Considering the past attacks on Klibanov and his roommate, Nick Bergamini, who was part of the Carleton Student Organization and an avid Israel supporter, and the annual nature of Israeli Apartheid Week, we need AEPi and IAC to stay strong and play a big role.

Torah 2.0

Class Act
By Daniel Held

The Internet, like most media, began as a unidirectional source of information. One could design a website, publish it online and millions of people could access and read the content.

Web 2.0 transformed the Internet from a monologue into a dialogue. Sites such as Wikipedia, Twitter and Facebook changed the direction of the flow of information by allowing users to interact with one another, rather than exclusively with the site author. Through collaboration and information-sharing, users generate not only the content but also the manner in which it's shared.

All too often, our teaching of Torah is stuck in the world of web 1.0. We read a text, learn the Rashi and commentaries, and move along. I remember all too well tests in elementary school asking me to regurgitate a commentary's question and answer without reflecting on its meaning or significance. Excellence in teaching Torah is achieved only when the learner and teacher are in dialogue with the text and commentaries.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in his work *And From There You Shall Seek*, offers a beautiful description of this dialogue across the generations.

"When I sit down to learn Torah, I find myself immediately in the company of the sages of the masorah. The relations between us are personal. The Rambam is at my right, Rabbeinu Tam at my left, Rashi sits up front and interprets, Rabbenu Tam disputes him; the Rambam issues a ruling, and the Rabad objects. They are all in my little room, sitting around my table. They look at me affectionately, enjoy arguing and studying the Talmud with me, encourage and support me."

For the last few months, the Jewish Publications Society has been beta testing the Tagged Tanach, and in celebration of Shavuot, the anniversary of the giving of the Torah, JPS is launching the full version of the website at www.taggedtanakh.org.

The Tagged Tanach brings Rabbi Soloveitchik's style of learning to life. Using web 2.0 technologies, it empowers users to write their own commentaries on the Torah, read those of others and create a dialogue. While sitting in front of a computer screen, to the left can be a Torah scholar from Israel, to the right a high school student from France, and behind a college student from New York. Through the website, one can interact with thousands of other learners, learn from their insights and challenge their commentaries.

The system isn't perfect. The Tagged Tanach doesn't bring classical commentaries into the dialogue, uses only the JPS translation as its base text, and, still in its infancy, lacks the critical mass of users to truly shape the web 2.0 nature of the endeavour. Over the course of time, and as the number of users grow, each of these challenges can be addressed.

What the Tagged Tanach *does* do is empower the user with a commentator's voice. The learner in the Tagged Tanach can find his own links between the Torah and his world, finding new connections between the text and the modern context. The system also encourages dialogue, questioning and personalization. As web 2.0 did for the Internet, it changes the direction of the flow from unidirectional to conversational, and transforms a passive learner into a teacher and commentator.

Rabbi Soloveitchik concludes his story by writing: "Torah study is not solely an educational activity. It is not a merely formal, technical matter embodied in the discovery and exchange of facts. It is a powerful experience of becoming friends with many generations of Torah scholars, the joining of one spirit with another, the union of souls. Those who transmitted the Torah and those who received it come together in one historical way-station."

If all of our Torah study followed the model of Rabbi Soloveitchik and the Tagged Tanach, we would find ourselves immersed in a far richer world of Torah scholars.

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The New Israel Fund claims to love Israel, but gives millions of dollars to groups that delegitimize it.

NIF CLAIMS :

"If... [an NGO] denies Jews the right to self determination, that organization would not receive a grant from us."
- Rachel Liel, NIF-Israel Executive Director, April 2010

"We deeply disagree with the use of 'apartheid' in the Israeli context."
- Daniel Sokatch, NIF CEO, March 2010

"None of our organizations appeared before the UN [Goldstone] commission." - Rachel Liel, April 2010

"NIF opposes the BDS movement... [and] believes these tactics to be unproductive, inflammatory and ineffective." - Daniel Sokatch, March 2010

"We...firmly oppose attempts to prosecute Israeli officials in foreign courts..." - NIF Website: FAQs

There's a line between legitimate criticism of Israel, and support for groups that delegitimize it.

But NIF FUNDS Groups :

Attempting to Erase Israel's Jewish Framework
NIF grantee Mada al-Carmel ($200,000 in 2008) calls for a "change in the definition of the State of Israel from a Jewish state," and the implementation of the Palestinian "right of return", meaning the end of Jewish self-determination.

Campaigning to Equate Israel with Apartheid
NIF grantee B'Tselem's ($357,569 in 2008) Jessica Montell: "I think the word apartheid is useful for mobilizing people because of its emotional power. In some cases, the situation in the West Bank is worse than apartheid in South Africa."

Aiding Goldstone and UN Demonization
8 NIF grantees (combined total $2.2 million in 2008) submitted a joint statement to Goldstone alleging "human rights violations for which Israel must be held accountable." Officials from one grantee, PCATI, gave anti-Israel testimony before Goldstone.

Promoting Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions
6 NIF grantees (combined total $477,974 in 2008) successfully petitioned the Norwegian Pension Fund to divest from Israeli firms.

Helping to Prosecute Israeli Officials Abroad
NIF grantee Adalah ($510,150 in 2008) submitted a legal opinion to a Spanish court in support of a lawfare case against Israeli officials.

NIF has Crossed the Line.

NGO MONITOR

For detailed information on NIF-funded delegitimization of Israel, visit: **www.ngo-monitor.org/nif**

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu kicking off UJA's Walk with Israel

Participants urged to arrive early at Direct Energy Centre

By Daniel Horowitz

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is kicking off UJA's annual Walk with Israel on Sunday, May 30th. Prime Minister Netanyahu will be delivering a live address at the CNE Direct Energy Centre barring unforeseen circumstances.

The special kick-off event is limited to sponsored walkers and their immediate family members, and is a first-come, first-served event. While the Direct Energy Centre holds approximately 5,000 people, special rooms will be equipped with a live audio/video feed to ensure that thousands more can share in what promises to be an unforgettable experience.

Those hoping to see Prime Minister Netanyahu live are urged to arrive at the Direct Energy Centre early as registration and security checks begin at 8:00 am. Advanced on-line registration is urged prior to May 30th at walkwithisrael.com.

"Having the Prime Minister of Israel with us, in person, for our annual Walk with Israel, reinforces our connection with Israel," said Lianne Leboff who, along with husband Bruce, is back at the helm of the Walk for the second consecutive year. "As Jews in the Diaspora, this is an extraordinary opportunity to show our support for the people of Israel, and to demonstrate that support in front of Prime Minister Netanyahu is incredible."

"The presence of Benjamin Netanyahu in our community is both a privilege and an honour," said Bruce. "I strongly encourage the entire community to participate in this year's Walk with Israel, and show him just how supportive our community is of Israel and that we will stand against those who seek to demonize and marginalize Israel. This is an opportunity not to be missed."

Funds raised by the 42nd annual Walk with Israel - the largest one-day Israel solidarity walk in the Diaspora - presented by Metropia - will help Bat Yam's children, with proceeds being allocated by UJA to United Israel Appeal Canada for which authorized organizations will deliver services.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will kick off UJA's Walk with Israel on Sunday, May 30th.

Located just south of Tel Aviv, Bat Yam has historically faced a number of challenges, including unemployment, housing conditions and the educational system. The city is also home to a large population of Ethiopian immigrants striving to integrate into Israeli society. UJA's assistance is transforming Bat Yam's educational and social situation.

The vice chairs of this year's Walk with Israel are Jonny Cole and Laurie Sheff.

"There's no better time or place than at the Walk with Israel to come out and make a statement to the world that we support the people of Israel," said Sheff. "With thousands of us flooding the streets of Toronto and waving Israeli and Canadian flags, that message simply can't be ignored."

"We have learned in the past that we are truly stronger when we stand together for a cause, or against an injustice," said Cole. "It's imperative that we, as Jews, participate in this year's Walk with Israel; a day when we, as a community, not only come together, but walk together, for and with our beloved Israel."

The Walk with Israel, which will commence following Prime Minister Netanyahu's address, ends with the RioCan Festival, at The Direct Energy Centre, and features carnival rides and games; the Spin Master Play Zone, a petting zoo; the Teen Zone with Guitar Hero; The IBI Group Israeli Art Centre; The Gluskin Sheff Kosher Barbecue, and much more.

For more information about the Walk with Israel, or to register and raise funds online visit: walkwithisrael.com or call 416.631.5700.

The PJ Library pilot project launched in York Region

UJA hopes to bring initiative to entire GTA

For a parent, some of the most unique and fulfilling moments we share come via the bedtime story.

Seeing the looks of joy, excitement and anticipation on the faces of our children as they wait for the page to turn, revealing a new and colourful illustration in their favourite book, is something neither they, nor we, will ever forget.

Now, thanks to a new pilot project - the adventure of the bedtime story has been taken to a higher level.

Dubbed The PJ Library (PJ, as in pyjamas), this award-winning outreach program to residents of York Region, chaired by Elisa Morton Palter, is designed to develop the identities of Jewish families and strengthen their relationships to the Jewish community.

Parents who reside in York Region with children ages 6 months to 5½ years are eligible to register their family for The PJ Library at www.pjlibrary905.ca or by calling 416.621.56PJ (5675). Each month, the families will receive in the mail, free of charge, a book or CD on Jewish themes including such time-honoured classics as *Bagels for Benny* and exciting new books like Howard Schwartz's *Before You Were Born*.

Started in 2005 by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, The PJ Library is already a success in Calgary, Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg, and is active in more than 125 American communities, bringing Jewish-themed children's books and music to young Jewish families. But the books and CDs are only the beginning. Through innovative programming, The PJ Library in York Region will offer participants programs as a way to connect them with other young families to create a true sense of community.

"Throughout my volunteer and philanthropic career, I have primarily focused on issues concerning either education, or reaching out to our community's unaffiliated," says Morton Palter. "If you combine that focus with my voracious appetite for reading (I keep Chapters in business!) and my business background in publishing, involvement with The PJ Library seemed like the perfect situation. The opportunity to use all elements of my background to engage unaffiliated, under-affiliated and interfaith families in the Jewish community through books and family-friendly programs was simply too good for me to pass up."

Each book and CD comes with a reading guide for parents created for The PJ Library by Jewish educators and early childhood educators. The guides list other books to explore and family-friendly ways of bringing lessons and feelings engendered by the books and CDs into each home.

The PJ Library in York Region is a free, no strings attached pilot project that is made possible through the generous support of Gabi Weisfeld, the Weinbaum Family Foundation, Phyllis and Ab Flatt, the Community Fund of the Jewish Foundation of Greater Toronto and UJA Federation of Greater Toronto. UJA is committed to seeking funding so that the program can expand across the entire Greater Toronto Area.

PJ Library in York Region families will receive Jewish themed children's books, music and innovative programming, connecting them to the Jewish community.

Speakers encourage unity among faiths

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Canadians should accept different cultures in society while standing together as one people, said Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl at the 24th annual Neighbourhood Interfaith Dinner.

"We must learn to accommodate and recognize distinctiveness [in our society]" he said at the dinner, held on May 6 at Temple Sinai.

"The world has much to learn from the biblical affirmation of being created in the image of God, which gives universal dignity to all," he said. " We have to cultivate the dignity of difference, where each of us walks in the path of our particular covenant of faith while we also seek ways to march together."

The interfaith dinner, which is chaired by Bryan Beauchamp, brings together members of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities and aims to open up a dialogue between the communities. Keynote speakers alternate each year to include all three faiths, with the first imam speaking in 2008.

Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl

In his address, Rabbi Frydman-Kohl questioned how far a society should go to accommodate different religions and cultures, such as in allowing or prohibiting head covers.

"It seems to me that if [head covers] are prohibited, so would a ski mask in winter," he said. "Perhaps a reasonable accommodation might be to decide what activities absolutely require positive identification and mandate that only in those circumstances wouldlimited facial exposure be required."

The rabbi also focused on the moral similarities each religion shares.

"Duty, obligation, sympathy, solidarity, these we share by virtue of our humanity," he said.

Rabbi Frydman-Kohl spoke alongside Toronto Centre MP Bob Rae, who stressed the importance of connecting as a community.

Bob Rae

"I think perhaps, generations ago, we would not have understood how much we are connected. [Now] we can't turn around and say there is any corner of the globe that is alien to us," he said. "We can't say that the devastation which is occurring in the eastern Congo… where over the last 20 years, we estimate that 20 million people have been killed. We can't say that's far away anymore."

Rae went on to speak about the United Nations 'millennium development goals, which include ending poverty, universal education and combating HIV/AIDS.

"The millennium goals… are not complicated. First of all, we want mothers to be able to give birth to children without dying. We want children to be able to grow up without dying. We want to be able to eliminate the big diseases in the world that are killing people at a great rate," he said, adding housing and climate change to his list.

"And in every one of these instances, religious faith has something to tell us," he said.

"We also have to recognize that unless people of different religions can actually talk to one another – religious faith itself has been a source of great conflict," he said. During his talk, Rae emphasized the importance of events such as the interfaith dinner.

"I suspect when it first started, people lived next door to each other and didn't really understand – what is it you do on Saturdays and what is it we do on Sundays?" he said.

"The greatest thing we have in this country… is that we have learned to look into the eyes of the other and see something of ourselves, and we know that's the key to being able to live in peace."

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Ukrainians, Jews unite to identify righteous gentiles

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

A project to identify and recognize Ukrainian Christians who assisted Jews during the Holocaust has been launched by Canadian and Ukrainian organizations.

The project is a joint venture between the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) in Toronto and the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter Initiative and the Judaica Institute in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine.

Started by Leonid Finberg of the Judaica Institute, the project has the support of the Ukrainian Jewish Encounter Initiative, a privately organized, multinational group whose goal is to deepen scholarly and broader public interest in the complexity of Ukrainian-Jewish relations.

The UCRDC, founded in 1983, is a non-profit, non-governmental community organization that collects, catalogues and preserves material documenting Ukrainian history.

The Ukrainian government has no involvement, either in funding, planning or implementing the project, said Orest Zakydalsky, a researcher affiliated with UCRDC.

Zakydalsky said the Judaica Institute will conduct research in Europe and elsewhere, while the UCRDC will be responsible for collecting more material on Ukrainian-Jewish relations during WoHld War II. The UCRDC has been amassing material on this topic for many years.

"The primary goal is to collect eyewitness oral history testimony about Christian Ukrainians who helped save or hide Jewish Ukrainians," said Zakydalsky, a graduate of the University of Toronto's Centre for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies.

He added, "While there is a lot of information on Ukraine at both Yad Vashem and the Shoah Foundation in Los Angeles, our goal is to look through this information, systematize it and supplement it with new material. It is strictly an academic, non-governmental project."

Orest Zakydalsky, centre, is seen with fellow researchers Raya Shadursky, left, of the Kiev-based Ukrainian Jewish Encounter Initiative and Iroida Wynnyckyj, right, the project co-ordinator of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre in Toronto.

Of Ukraine's prewar population of 1.5 million Jews, 900,000 to one million perished in the Holocaust. Currently, 103,000 to 200,000 Jews live in Ukraine.

According to Zakydalsky, Yad Vashem has conferred the title of Righteous Among Nations on more than 2,000 Ukrainian Christians who helped Jews during the Holocaust.

"In this respect, Ukraine is fourth out of 33 countries," said Zakydalsky. "However, since a large part of what is now Ukraine was under Polish rule until 1939, and other parts of Ukraine were occupied by Hungary and Romania during World War II, many Ukrainians are actually listed as Righteous Among the Nations under Poland or other misleading labels."

Of Ukrainians who have not been formally recognized as Righteous Gentiles, the most prominent is Metropolitan Andrey Sheptycky, the primate of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church during the Nazi occupation, said Zakydalsky.

His name notwithstanding, there are no precise figures as to the number of Ukrainian Righteous Gentiles who haven't received formal recognition from Yad Vashem.

"But recently, we have taken our project to the Ukrainian community and have had quite a bit of feedback from people who want to share information about this topic," Zakydalsky said. "We are in the process of speaking with these people and documenting and reviewing their testimony."

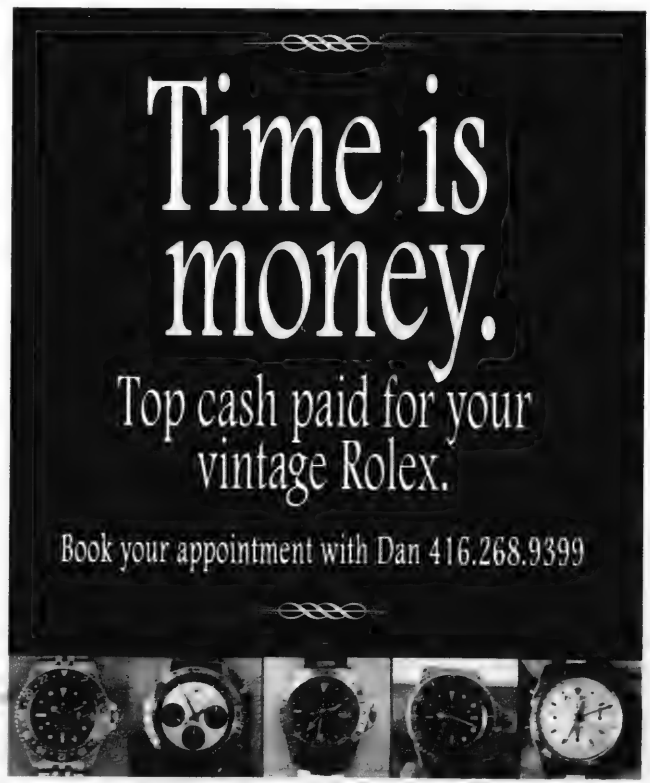
Zakydalsky said it is important to recognize the heroism of Ukrainian Righteous Gentiles in order to honour them and show that there were positive relations between Ukrainians and Jews, even during "a period of deep crisis and pervasive violence."

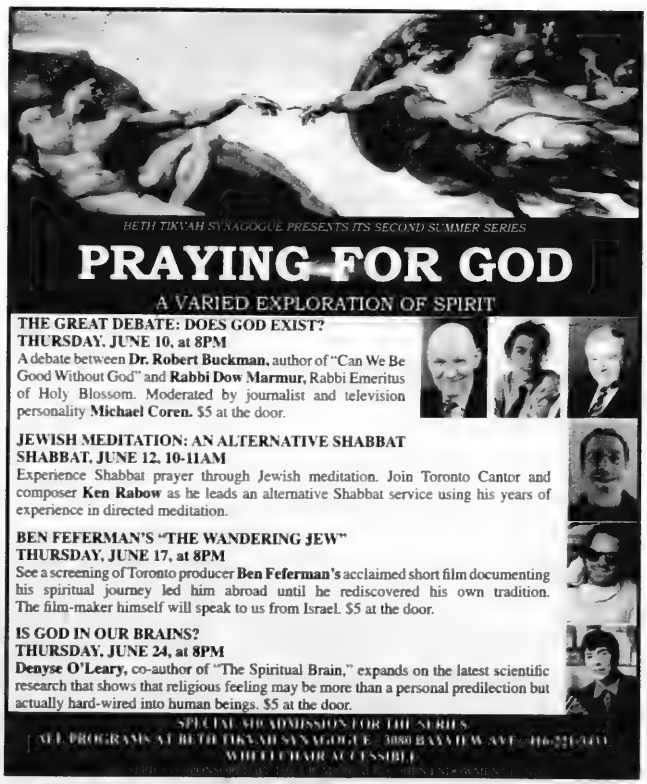
The UCRDC will focus on identifying and documenting cases that have a Canadian connection, said Zakydalsky.

In an appeal to Jews and Christians of Ukrainian ancestry, he asked members of both communities to provide information that might be helpful in finding Ukrainians who may have saved Jews during this era.

The degree to which Ukrainians collaborated with the Nazis is a complex subject, since the former Soviet Union demonized Ukrainians who opposed Soviet power, Zakydalsky said.

For more information, call (416) 966-1819 or email orestzak@gmail.com.

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Orthodox girls' school turns 10

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

Orthodox girls' high school Tiferes Bais Yaakov celebrated its 10-year anniversary this year at a ceremony earlier this month by honouring the people who built the school.

Hersch Kanner was one of the people who received an award at the May 10 celebration, for his role as a founder of the school, though he continues his involvement in the daily operations. He also helped in physically building the school's current on Stormont Avenue and former locations.

He said he got involved when he tried to find a high school for his youngest daughter, explaining he wanted a school that focused on individual attention and self-growth.

The school began 10 years ago with 19 students, and the upcoming 2010-11 school year will have more than 170, said Simi Grosman, president of the board of the directors for the school.

"It shows that our vision was correct, and that our concept of what education should be was accepted by the community much more quickly than we ever would have imagined," said Rabbi Yitzchak Feigenbaum, principal of the school.

His students and co-workers describe him as the soul of the school, and a passionate man with a special talent in bringing the lessons beyond academia and into the realm of personal growth.

"He has a very key understanding of the needs and the strengths and weaknesses of each girl, and plays on that to achieve the best possible outcome," Kanner said.

Rabbi Feigenbaum said the school aims to give the girls an intellectually challenging but honest program, teaching them a combination of Jewish and secular studies, so that they can find their talents and eventually give back to their community.

Students who spoke to *The CJN* at the anniversary celebration demonstrated their understanding of Rabbi Feigenbaum's goals.

Chaviva Posner, from the graduating class of 2007, said: "Our principal's motto that he would say all the time is, 'You're not a grade on a piece of paper. You're not a hairstyle. You are the moral decisions that you make.'

"I think that really encompasses the values that we learned," she added.

Grosman said most of the Tiferes Bais Yaakov students spend at least a year in Israel after high school. From there, they take many different paths, such as continuing with their education at a university level or pursuing careers such as teaching.

Rabbi Aharon Hersh Fried, a professor at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women and the guest speaker for the evening, said Tiferes Bais Yaakov's success is due to its authenticity.

"Many schools go through the motions, but *chinuch* [education] has got to reach the heart," he said.

His primary message was that children should be taught to avoid accepting knowledge simply because it came from a credible source, but to question everything.

"Teach them to think," Rabbi Fried emphasized, describing an event at which he spoke with a group of illiterate people who couldn't solve logic problems in their heads but ony understood what they could see.

It is these kinds of experiences that reinforced his understanding of the necessity of learning, he said.

It is only through education, he added, that children can learn to truly understand.

Speaking at Tiferes Bais Yaakov's anniversary celebration, Rabbi Aharon Hersh Fried said, "Teach them to think."

Canada and Israel: 60 years of friendship

By MIRIAM ZIV

Canada and Israel share a deep friendship based on common interest, shared values and mutual trust. As ambassador of Israel to Canada, I have the unique opportunity of seeing this special friendship at work every day.

Guest Voice

Our shared journey began in 1947, when Canada played a central role in the drafting of the UN Partition Plan and voted in favour of establishing a state for the Jewish People in their national homeland. From the outset, it was apparent that common values provided the foundation for the fledgling friendship – it was Canada's strong commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights that led it to support Israel's creation.

Six decades later, the two countries enjoy a friendship that is marked by close economic, social, cultural and political ties.

Since the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement was implemented in 1996, trade between the two countries has tripled. Programs like the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation have resulted in extensive technical and commercial exchanges between the two countries and have led to lucrative breakthroughs in many sectors, including software development, waste management, biotechnology and medical research. Different projects have also been initiated to strengthen ties between Israel and the provinces. Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's visit to Israel this week is a case in point.

Relations have been reinforced by collaboration in a variety of other fields, including social security, public safety, telecommunications and international aid. Canada and Israel have also embarked on significant joint legal ventures, resulting in a close relationship between our two supreme courts.

The last 60 years have also witnessed numerous cultural and academic exchanges between the two countries. Influences of Israeli art, dance and literature can be readily seen in Canada and vice versa. The convergence of our cultures has played an important role in bringing Canada and Israel even closer.

As ambassador, I have been a first-hand witness to the benefits of this co-operation and was eager to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Canada-Israel relations in an important way. The launch of the Canada-Israel joint commemorative stamp last April was the perfect culmination of this celebration. Thanks to the devotion and enthusiasm of all those involved in this project, Canadians and Israelis can proudly enjoy this stamp as an everlasting symbol of the deep friendship between our countries and our peoples.

Relations have been reinforced by collaboration in a variety of fields, including social security, public safety, telecommunications and international aid

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and accompanying RCMP officer lay a wreath at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem in 2000.

While the relationship fostered between Canada and Israel over the last 60 years will continue to bear many fruits, its foundation runs far deeper than economic and cultural agreements. As countries strongly dedicated to human rights and democracy, Canada and Israel found a strong ally in each other from the start. Canada has firmly supported Israel's right to live in peace and security, while Israel has always welcomed Canada's involvement in the Middle East.

In just a few days, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be meeting with Prime Minister Stephen Harper in Ottawa. This visit is an opportunity for Netanyahu to express his gratitude and appreciation for the government of Canada's unwavering support. Israel will not forget that Canada was the first country to pull out of the 2009 anti-Semitic Durban II Conference, nor will it forget that Canada has often stood alone in voting against UN Human Rights Council resolutions that have singled Israel out time and time again. Canada was also vocal in expressing its condemnation of the deeply flawed Goldstone report on the war in Gaza.

In spite of the changing dynamics of international politics over the last decade, Canada has proven its friendship to Israel and has demonstrated that the power of common values and ethics transcend the transient pressures in the international arena. Ultimately, it is these shared values that guarantee that Canada's close friendship with Israel will continue to flourish.

Miriam Ziv is Israel's ambassador to Canada.

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Portraits of a relationship

From the earliest days of Canada's relations with Israel, Canada demonstrated an understanding for the fundamental issues underlying Israel's conflict with the surrounding Arab states and with the Palestinians. The following is a statement by Lester Pearson in the House of Commons on Jan. 24, 1956:

"It seems to me that an essential, indeed, a first requirement, is that the Arab states should recognize the legitimate and permanent existence of the State of Israel. That, as I see it, necessitates abandonment by them of the impractical stipulation that we must return to the United Nations resolutions of 1947, which provided for a divided Palestine. The Arab states took up arms to prevent these resolutions becoming effective, and I do not see how they can claim the right to have them accepted now as the price of peace in that area. The people of Israel have the right to know that their national existence is not at stake. That seems to me to be fundamental. Efforts to bring peace and all its benefits to the Middle East will be of no avail unless Israel and the people of Israel are released from the overhanging fear which naturally envelopes the country as a result of the threats of destruction and of the political and economic warfare directed against it by its neighbours. Deep fear leads to desperate acts which, though they cannot be condoned, may at least be understood. Surely it is essential, therefore, that this basic cause of fear must be removed if there is to be a solution of the Arab-Israel dispute."

Reproduced from Canada-Israel Friendship, Comité, Canada-Israel Committee, 1979

Photos, clockwise from top left: then former prime minister Lester Pearson visits then former prime minister David Ben-Gurion in Sde Boker in 1968; prime minister Levi Eshkol speaks with Pearson in Ottawa in 1968; Israel's president, Chaim Herzog, reviews an honour guard during a state visit to Ottawa in 1989; prime minister Yitzhak Rabin chats with prime minister Jean Chretien in Chretien's Ottawa home; Herzog in the company of prime minister Brian Mulroney in Ottawa in 1989; prime minister Menachem Begin engaging prime minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau in conversation in Ottawa and prime minister Golda Meir being greeted at the airport in Ottawa by foreign minister Mitchell Sharp.

[Photos courtesy of the CIC]

Canada - Israel 60 Years

Canada readies itself for Netanyahu

By ANDY LEVY-AJZENKOPF
Staff Reporter

On Monday May 31, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will visit Ottawa to meet with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper and other officials.

In a statement of welcome earlier this month, Harper said he looked forward to the visit and that it would "further strengthen" the bonds between the two nations.

Netanyahu will be the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit the country since Yitzhak Rabin in 1994.

A planned speech by Netanyahu, then Israel's former prime minister, in 2002 at Concordia University in Montreal was cancelled after students protesting the speech held a protest that turned violent.

Canada and Israel have a 61-year history of bilateral relations – formal diplomatic relations were established on May 11, 1949 – and the ties between the two countries have grown tighter since the Harper government came to power in 2006.

Speaking to *The CJN* last week, Peter Kent, minister of state of foreign affairs (Americas) and MP for Thornhill, reflected on the relationship and what it has meant to Canadians.

Peter Kent

"We haven't been blessed with all that many [Israeli] prime ministerial visits over the years, but this meeting is going to reinforce and highlight for Canadians the many dimensions of our relationship," he said, adding that the meeting would not solely focus on subjects such as "foreign policy and the defence of Israel's right to exist [but] also the cross-pollination of our people… the Israeli Diaspora and the Jewish people in Canada, and the significant number of Canadians who live in Israel."

The government estimates that approximately 20,000 Canadians now live in Israel.

Kent said he hoped Netanyahu's visit would also serve to remind Canadians of Israel's diverse contributions to the world.

"On my visits to Israel, I'm always reminded of the things that aren't covered often by Canadian media, such as the country's arts, sciences, academia, archeology. There are great things happening in Israel in terms of technology transfer and development," he said.

Kent cited the success of the countries' "mutually beneficial free trade agreement" – referring to the Canada–Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) signed in 1996.

Bob Rae

Since the implementation of CIFTA, bilateral trade between the countries has more than tripled – from $507.3 million in 1996 to a high of $1.8 billion in 2008, according to the Canadian government's latest figures.

Additionally, Kent said Canada views Netanyahu's visit as coming at a "critical time" in the Middle East peace process.

"[Canada] recognizes the continuing threats from groups and countries which remain committed – either through their specific pronouncements or actions – to the elimination of the state of Israel or of a Jewish presence in the Middle East," he said.

"Canada has made its position very clear on this, but we also have to be encouraging and reassuring to the citizens of the Palestinian Authority that we support their aspirations for viable coexistence and peace."

For its part, the Liberal party views the six-decade relationship in a similar vein.

Toronto Centre MP Bob Rae said he believes the ties between Canada and Israel transcend partisan differences.

"It's a relationship shared by the whole country, not just one political party, particularly in the context where the [Conservative] government is trying to appropriate the entire relationship," he said.

Rae said the links between Israel and Canada go back to Ivan Rand – the Canadian Supreme Court justice who was the country's appointee to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine following World War II and who would later support the UN's partition plan for Palestine and the creation of Israel.

Despite "moments of political difference" over the years, Rae said that, overall, Canada's relationship with Israel has always remained very strong.

"Canadians of all backgrounds have deeply appreciated the ties with Israel," he said, adding that trade, research and academic relations between the countries continue to grow.

He said the Liberals take pride in the relationship, and that to his knowledge, members of all federal parties "have good political ties" with Israeli politicians. "We talk to them on a regular basis."

Rae noted that he's scheduled to be honoured by University of Haifa later this year.

"Our ties are very, very deep and profound. And that's something that members of the Jewish community should be proud of."

With regard to Netanyahu's visit and schedule, Rae said although he wasn't privy to the Israeli prime minister's agenda, because his party has always had "good access" to Israeli dignitaries, he assumed that Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff would end up meeting with him at some point during his stay.

Oy! I'm kvelling!

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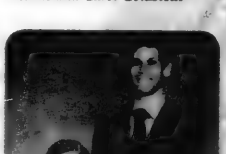

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Class Acts

GRAD TRIP TO OTTAWA: Robbins Hebrew Academy (formerly United Synagogue Day School) Grade 8 students, from left, Mitchell Wolfman, Sagi Kahane-Rapport, Logan Gottfried, Brent Marks and Matthew Altberg relax outside of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, with the famous bronze statue *Women Are Persons,* which depicts Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby and other women whose tireless efforts gave Canadian women the vote and made them eligible for a seat in the senate. Each year, the Robbins Hebrew Academy Grade 8 classes go to Ottawa for their graduation trip. They visit sites such as the Supreme Court building, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian War Museum, along with the Parliament Buildings. Students also take leadership roles throughout the trip, leading tfillah and *Birkat Hamazon.*

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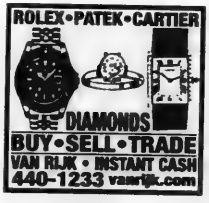

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בשנה האחרונה עלתה רמת החיים בישראל בשבעה אחוזים, הרבה יותר מכל מדינות העולם המפותח. בימים אלה ממש עבר התוצר הגולמי הישראלי בפעם הראשונה בהיסטוריה את שלושים אלף הדולאר בשנה, ושם את ישראל ברמה של בריטניה והרבה לפני מדינות רבות באירופה. נכון שחלק מזה הוא תוצאה של נפילת הדולאר לעומת מטבעות אחרים, אבל חלק שני מכובד הוא הישג כלכלי ישראלי אמיתי.

בניגוד לאירה"ב ובריטניה-לא עברה ישראל את משבר בועת הנדל"ן והבנקאות, דבר שהגדיל משמעותית את הערכת העולם המפותח לכלכלה הישראלית.

וממש ממש לידם ההולדת התקבלה ישראל כחברה ה 32 בארגון לשיתוף פעולה כלכלי (OCED- Economic Cooperation and Development) שהיא תשדיל כבוד חסרת תקדים.

זה אומר שבעוד שכל טרוריסט שילמי חולם על איך לפגוע בישראל, וידב של מדינות העולם רואים בנו קרן מסריד- הישראלי עובד קשה ובשקט- בקו היצור, בהיי טק, בתעשיות הבטחוניות, ביצוא לכל העולם. וגם אלה שאוהבים להשמיץ את ההנהגה בישראל חייבים להודות שיש לממשלות האחרונות תפקיד מכריע בכוון הנכון. אבל שישאר בינינו.

לראות את היופי

תודה לגלית על הקטע הבא:

לא פעם יצא לי לראות אמן רחוב מבגן בצורה מפליאה, וחשבתי לעצמי שהוא-היא יכלו לבגן בכל תזמורת סימפונית. עכשיו עשו בדיוק תרגיל הפוך:ג'רשוע בל, אחד הכוכבים המובים בעולם עמד בתחנת רכבת ובגן שש יצירות של באך במשך 45 דקות. כאלפיים איש עברו לידו בדרכם לעבודה. מעטים בלבד האטו את צעדיהם, ובימו המשיכו.

והמסקנה:כמעט הכל תלוי בקונטקסט, בנסיבות. אם אין לנו רגע אחד כדי לעצור ולהקשיב למוזיקאי הגדול בעולם, מבגן את היצירות הטובות ביותר שנכתבו אי פעם, עם כינור ששווה מליוני דולארים-כמה דברים אחרים אנחנו מפספסים במרוץ החיים?

אבל שישאר בינינו.

Class Acts

THE HEALING TREE

Sherri Mandell, from the Koby Mandell Foundation in Israel, views *The Healing Tree*, created by Grade 4 Netivot HaTorah Day School student Myriam as part of her Project Give Back fundraiser for the Koby Mandell Foundation. Project Give Back is a program in which each Grade 4 student chooses a charity, researches it, presents it to their class and then raises money for it. [Rebecca Ansel photo]

WHOLE LOT OF LEMONADE

Amanda Belzowski, right, and her 12th annual Lemonade Stand, together with her brother Joshua's, left, second annual Cookie Counter, raised more than $16,000 on May 16 for the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario's annual Becel Heart & Stroke Ride for Heart, to be held June 6. Since starting her annual lemonade stand a decade ago, Amanda has raised more than $151,000. Registration for the 23rd Annual Becel Heart & Stroke Ride for Heart takes place online (www.rideforheart.ca) until June 1 at 11:59 p.m.; by phone (416-486-RIDE (7433)); or by fax (416-932-1620).

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FAMILY MOMENTS

Mazel Tov
The Canadian Jewish news

Wishing you a happy 50th wedding anniversary! Love, your children and grandchildren, Mark & Bonnie Schwartz, Lori & Perry Zosky, Spencer, Melanie and Lesley.

Parents Barbi & Avi, sister Julia, announce Jaime Koifman, 19th Iyar, 5770. Grandparents Judy & Frank Wilson, Rebeca & David Koifman. Great-grandmother Jenny Wilson.

Lynda & Jeff Peters and Susan & Neil Kendal are pleased to announce the engagement of Mariam & Jason.

Mazel tov Eli Ifrah & Miriam Levin on your upcoming wedding. From your parents, siblings and extended families.

Welcome Daniel! Parents Rana Rosen, Darren Ishaky, brothers Liaam, Gil. Aunts Tamar, Ronite, Uncle Harris. Grandparents Ellen & Peter, Great-grandmother Fanny are ecstatic!!

Wishing a hearty mazel tov to the Spivack and David families on the birth of Nya Madeline on Febuary 12. We love you!

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS!!

Email your digital photos to cblackman@thecjn.ca or go online to WWW.CJNEWS.COM and click the Family Moments button!

JNF
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What's New

By LAURA STRICKER

Our regular columnist, Leila Speisman, is away on medical leave.

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www.bluebananamarket.com

What's New deadline for June 10 issue is May 31. Deadline for June 17 is June 7. Phone 416-391-1836. Fax 416-391-0829. E-mail cjnwhatsnew@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 27

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Dialogue between **Father Raymond De Souza** and **Rabbi Michael Dolgin**. "The Religious Significance of the State of Israel – Catholic and Jewish Perspectives." 7:30 p.m. at Temple Sinai. Members $8, guests $10. Register: Marcie, 416-487-4161.

Saturday, May 29

SHABBAT SERVICE

B'Nai Shalom Congregation of Halton-Peel invites the public to its monthly Shabbat service in Oakville. Kiddush following. Conservative egalitarian congregation. Info, bnaishalom.ca, 905-901-9889.

Sunday, May 30

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

Blessed is the Match is about **Hannah Szenes**, who parachuted into Europe in 1944 to save Jews from Nazi persecution. 7 p.m. Temple Emanu-El. $10 at the door.

SPRING CONCERT

Toronto Jewish Folk Choir's spring concert. Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park Cres. Honouring **Emil Gartner**. With cellist **Esther Gartner**. 3 p.m. $25, students and seniors $20. Under 12 free. Tickets, 416-789-5502 (until 5 p.m. May 27). tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

Monday, May 31

BRAVO

Can volunteering boost brain health? Learn about BRAVO, a Baycrest project. 1:30-3 p.m. Wortsman Hall, Baycrest. Free. Register: 416-785-2500 ext. 3374, lkamenitz@baycrest.org.

SUPPORT GROUP

Circle of Care support group for adult children caring for parents. Facilitated by **Sara Morin**. Mondays, May 31-July 19. 6:30-8 p.m. 416-635-2900 ext. 413. 530 Wilson Ave.

DOCTORS AGAINST RACISM

Doctors Against Racism and Anti-Semitism. **Dr. Steve Samuel** and **Dr. Jeffrey Fialkov**: "Doctors Without Morals: How Hate Has Infected Medicine." 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Sisterhood Hall. All welcome. Members free, guests $2.

Tuesday, June 1

GOLF TOURNAMENT

"Fore the Future" golf tournament benefits Pride of Israel Synagogue and Na'amat Canada. The Carrying Place, 16750 Weston Rd. Shotgun start 12:30 p.m. $190, includes kosher meals, silent auction, prizes and two Hole-in-One Challenges – one for 2010 GMC Terrain, one for $20,000 cash. Golfers wanted. Spots also for dinner only. 416-226-0111 ext. 10 to register.

SATELLITE AT SINAI

"Food on the Tube: How TV Shapes the Way We Think About Food." **Padma Lakshmi**, **Amanda Hesser**, **Kathleen Collins**, **Charlie Trotter** speak about if watching culinary shows makes better cooks. Temple Sinai. $10 members, $15 non-members. Coffee & cookies 7:30 p.m. Program 8 p.m. 416-487-3281, education@templesinai.net.

Wednesday, June 2

CHABAD ISRAELI DINNER

Spirit of Community Dinner honouring Markham **Mayor Frank Scarpitti** and **Dr. Dan Farine**. Riviera Parque Centre, 2800 Hwy 7 W. Benefits Chabad Israeli Community Centre. 905-709-7770.

RELIGION AND JUDAISM

Beth Emeth Continuing Education Committee: "Is Religion Killing Judaism?" with **Rabbi Michael Skobac**. 7:30 p.m. Free.

BOOK TALK

Anna Porter discusses her book *Kaszner's Train*. 8 Bridle Heath Gate, 7:30 p.m. $40. Wine & dessert buffet. **Lynda**, 416-785-2500 ext. 2020, tealaw@sympatico.ca.

Continued on page 27

Greater Toronto Area

Art teacher believes everyone has creativity

By FRANCES KRAFT
Staff Reporter

As an art and computer teacher at an Orthodox girls' high school, Shayne Hyman Train has to be creative – not just because of the content of her courses, but to meet Ontario's educational guidelines without breaching the school's standards of Halachah (Jewish law).

Train – who earlier this month received a general studies teacher award from Tiferes Bais Yaakov, where she has been teaching for six years – steers clear of art textbooks, for example, favouring handouts instead.

Art texts tend to contain nudity or *avodah zarah* (idolatry), she explained in an interview in her classroom, where long tables are covered with paint-spattered plastic. Colourful artwork – as well as a message from a student, proclaiming "We (heart) Mrs. Train!" – adorns the walls.

"There are some restrictions," she acknowledged, "but there's so much students can still learn about."

In addition to studying topics like Renaissance art and impressionism, Train – who teaches Grade 10 computers and Grades 9, 11 and 12 art – said she wants her students "to see that they are creative, because I believe everybody has creativity within them."

She wants them to have fun too.

A lesson from the teacher: *"People should be lifelong learners, and not just in the classroom. But I realize also it's not just about the learning. It's sharing what you learn... There's a lot of times when we'll sit around. [Students] are working, but we'll also shmooze about different topics."*

Outside of school, Train enjoys playing piano in a klezmer band, The Shpeelers. Her husband, Leslie – a dentist who also plays bagpipes and reads Torah – is in the band too, on the saxophone and clarinet.

"My family is very renaissance and eclectic," said Train, a mother of four. She noted the influence of her parents: Ruth Hyman became a nursery school teacher when her children were in school, and Train's father Gurion Hyman, a pharmacist, also went back to school, earning a master's degree in Aramaic, and later teaching Yiddish at the University of Toronto.

Train, 55, who grew up "Conservadox" and attended United Synagogue Day School (now Robbins Hebrew Academy), became more Orthodox when she got married, she said.

An active member of Shaarei Shomayim Congregation, she has served as the shul's acting youth director and taken on various volunteer roles. But joining the school six years ago was "another step," she said. "Now I cover my hair, and I don't wear pants."

As well, she said, being at the school – and seeing the respect and kindness shown by her students – has changed her thinking in some ways. Once, she said, a girl ran into a computer class to ask her classmates to "drop everything" to pray for someone who was ill. "That was really, really nice," Train recalls. "It was a bit of a realignment in the way I thought about education."

Train received her bachelor of arts in 1977 and her bachelor of education in 1978, both from the University of Toronto. As well, she has qualifications in special education from York University, a diploma in computer programming from Humber College, and has completed more than half a dozen computer-related programs including advanced web design.

But after she graduated as a teacher, she recalls, she didn't feel ready to actually teach. "I was so young."

Instead, she worked in advertising, spent a year in Israel living on a kibbutz, and then decided to go into the computer field.

"I was thinking it could be used for educational purposes," she said. But, she added, virtually no one was doing that type of work at the time.

Shayne Hyman Train *[Frances Kraft photo]*

In the classroom, she noted, her students have a variety of learning styles, and she's convinced that she has "learning differences" herself.

"I don't like to take that as an excuse. If something's not working, you approach it differently." In fact, she noted, the visual and auditory components of computers can be just the type of approaches that make a difference.

Overall, Train believes that, as a teacher, it is important to stay positive. "Instead of saying what [students] did wrong, I say, 'Here's what you might want to try next time.' "

Train's enthusiasm for her work is evident. "I really love what I do," she said.

Continued from page 26

Thursday, June 3

SPRING LECTURE SERIES

Shaarei Tefillah's Spring Lecture Series. **Rabbi Michael Skobac**: "Introduction to Jewish Meditation." 7 p.m. Free. Register, 416-789-0020.

ANNUAL CONCERT

Beit Halochem Canada's Celebration of Champions concert: an international duet of singers, Beit Halochem wheelchair dancers and violinist **Sanya Kroitor**. 7:30 p.m. Toronto Centre for the Arts, 5040 Yonge St. $65+. 905-695-0611.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

"The Dead Sea Scrolls and Genizah Treasures: How do They Compare," with **Dr. Stefan Reif**, professor of Medieval Hebrew Studies at Cambridge. 7:30 p.m. Beth David Synagogue. Free.

OTHER NEWS

FACING CHALLENGES

Canadian Friends of Laniado Hospital's Dr. Joseph Weil Memorial Lecture. June 17, 8 p.m. Shaarei Shomayim Congregation. **Dr. Marla Shapiro**: "Life in Balance: Facing Life's Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles." $10. $15 at door. Reserve, 416-785-8946.

WEEKEND SEMINAR

"Beyond Tradition – Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism," with **Rabbi Adam Chalom**. Includes Shabbat dinner, lectures, lunches. June 11-13. 18 Wynford Dr. and 575 Van Horne Ave. RSVP, **Roby**: 416-385-3910, roby@oraynu.org.

BENEFIT CONCERT

"Take my Hand" benefit concert, proceeds to Alli's Journey – organization that raises funds for people 18-35 with cancer. **Jully Black**, **Amanda Martinez** and others. June 9, 7:30 p.m. Royal Conservatory, 273 Bloor St. W. $99. Tickets: 416-408-0208, tickets.rcmusic.ca/public.

A.D.D.A.P.T.

Attention Deficit Disorder Awareness Program Team: "All Grown Up and Starting a Job: Strategies for Transition to the Workplace." **Carter Hammett** speaks. June 7, 7-8:30 p.m. Donation appreciated. 30 Drewry Ave., 2nd floor. 416-395-1727 to register.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Hospice Thornhill needs people to plant and garden its memorial garden. July 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. **Joy Levy**, 905-764-0656, ext. 224, jlevy@bellnet.ca.

GALA FUNDRAISER

Deb McGrath and **Colin Mochrie** co-host **Larry Librach** Tribute Gala. June 7, 8 p.m. Al Green Theatre, MNjcc. **Jaffa Road**, **Linda Kash** and others. Dessert reception. $250. Tickets, 416-928-3537 or 2010tributegala@djds.ca.

WINE AND CHEESE EVENING

22-36ish year olds are invited to a wine and cheese evening. June 6, 7 p.m. "Ancient Jewish Erotica: Reimagining the Song of Songs," with **Rabbi Benjamin Segal**. 1700 Bathurst St. RSVP: 416-781-3514 ext. 234. Free.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE

Join One Family Fund Canada for a ride through the countryside north of Toronto June 6. Raising money for victims of terror in Israel. $36 to register, minimum $500 in sponsorship required. **Noah**, 416-644-4955, noah@onefamilyfund.ca.

FILM SCREENING

Screening of *The Peretzniks*. June 10, Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto, corner of St. George and Sussex Ave. 7:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Pri Adamah CSA: people receive local, organically grown produce. June 1 to Oct. 26. Weekly pickup: Temple Sinai. **Daniel**, 647-388-7444, daniel@thecuttingveg.com.

SUMMER SESSION

Melton Adult Mini School is taking registration for its summer session: "Israeli Society Seen Through Modern Hebrew Literature." Knowledge of Hebrew not necessary. Five Wednesday mornings starting July. 416-789-7400.

CCCS CONVENTION

The Canadian Council of Conservative Synagogues convention June 11-13, Beth Emeth. Accommodations available. **Prof. Jack Wertheimer** speaks. 647-367-9351 to register or for more info.

PRIDE SHABBAT SERVICE

Congregation Shir Libeynu invites you to their inclusive Pride themed Shabbat service: Going to Shul with Pride! June 5, 10:30 a.m. Michael Bernstein Chapel, MNjcc. Free child care during service, Kiddush follows. 416-465-5488, shirlibenyu@yahoo.ca.

CHORALAIRS CONCERT

The Choralairs of North York end- of -season concert. June 6, 1:30 p.m. Earl Bales Park, 4169 Bathurst St. Free. New members welcome. **Sally**, 416-636-8247 or **Brian**, 416-631-0029.

SINGLES EVENTS WILL RETURN

What's New

MUSICAL EVENING

Join Darchei Noam for musical entertainment and silent auction with **Julie Michaels**, **Lenka Lichtenberg** and **Diane Flacks**. June 6, 7-10:30 p.m. $60. Tickets: 416-638-4783, caroldn@bellnet.ca. Some proceeds to Save a Child's Heart.

CHILD SAFETY

"The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander: Breaking the Cycle of Violence," with **Barbara Coloroso**. June 8, 7 p.m. Beth Emeth. $15, $20 at door. **Kim**, 416-993-9900 or **Rochelle**, 416-450-7531. leobaeck.ca/barbara for tickets.

JF&CS GROUPS

Shawna Sidney, 416-638-7800, ext. 6215, www.jfandcs.com. Registration required for all programs.

Healing Service: June 6 3-4 p.m. Lipa Green. Free. Ext. 6287.

One Family, Two Homes: For families experiencing separation & divorce. May 27, June 3 and 10. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Promenade, Suite 313.

Surviving Divorce: Avoiding Financial Disaster: financial mistakes made in divorce and how to avoid them. For those thinking of divorce, currently in the process, or whose divorce is final. June 16, 7-9 p.m. Lipa Green Building.

FOR SENIORS

Active Seniors Miles Nadal JCC. June 3, 1:30 p.m. The Life and Music of **Jerome Kearn**. With **Jordan Klapman**. 416-924-6211 ext .155.

Adath Israel Congregation. Wednesday social afternoons for men and women. Bridge, mahjong, cards, refreshments. $2. **Pearl**, 416-635-6317 or **Marcia**, 416-932-1229.

Earl Bales Seniors Club in the Park. Casino Rama June 16, departs 10 a.m. Father's Day dance, June 20, 7-10 p.m. Line dancing Thursdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Social bridge Thursdays, 12:30-3 p.m. Bingo Tuesdays, 12:30-3 p.m. **Valerie**, 416-395-7881. Non-members welcome.

LZA Senior's Cultural Club. Tuesdays 10 a.m. Discussion group at Borochov Cultural Centre, 272 Codsell Ave. 416-630-9444.

Association of Jewish Seniors. To Our Good Health seminar. Theme: Memory Fitness with **Dr. Kelly Murphy.** June 15, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Earl Bales, 4169 Bathurst. Free for AJS members, $10 for guests. Includes lunch. **Tammy**, 416-635-2860 ext. 458 to reserve space.

Bernard Betel Centre, 1003 Steeles Ave. W., 416-225-2112.

Lecture: "The Great Romantics: **Mendelssohn, Schumann, Chopin.**" June 1, 10-11:30 a.m. $3 members, $6 non-members.

June 2: Bingo Bonanza, 1-3 p.m. 2 cards for $1.

Wellness lecture: "Non-Classical Homeopathy for Different Chronic Conditions." **Dr. Peter Shopov,** Institute of Alternative Medicine, speaks. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free.

Wagman Centre, 55 Ameer Ave., 416-785-2500 ext. 2267.

Billiards Club Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-4 p.m.

Mondays in June, 1-3 p.m. Origami in Creative Arts Studio. Flower pressing: June 8 and 22, 1-2:30 p.m.

Creative Arts Studio programs from May to July include painting and stain glass. **Meital**, ext. 2939.

Pamper your tastebuds with fresh strawberries and ice cream. June 3, 3-4 p.m. $3 members, $5 guests. Register at Service Desk.

June 8, movie at Promenade Mall. 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $2 transportation for members, $5 for guests. Bring money for lunch and/or a movie.

PROSSERMAN JCC

Sherman Campus, 4588 Bathurst St. 416-638-1881, www.prossermanjcc.com.

Learn to speak Hebrew. Tuesdays and Thursdays, July 6-29. 7:30-9:30 p.m. $170, $100 for students/seniors.

Ryerson/Chang courses at Prosserman. Reverence and Regard: The Many Faces of Women in Hollywood Movies, Wednesdays, June 30-July 28. Latin dance, Wednesdays, June 30-Aug. 18. 8:30-9:30 p.m. Beginner mah-jong, Wednesdays, June 9-July 28. Ext. 4235.

Mind, Body & Soul program offers opportunities for health and wellness from a holistic perspective. Ext. 4036, naomig@prossermanjcc.com.

MILES NADAL JCC

750 Spadina Ave., 416-924-6211, www.mnjcc.org.

Michael Bernstein Chapel services Sundays 8 a.m. and Thursdays 7:15 a.m. **Coleman Bernstein**, 416-968-0200.

May-June, Jacobs Lounge Visual Arts Space hosts *Fragments: Survivors* by **Jason Schwartz**. visualarts@mcjcc.org.

Jewish Community Choir and Women's Chorus perform June 2 and 3. 8 p.m. $10. ext. 0.

June 30 is deadline for submissions to Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition. Winner gets $1,000 and public play reading in Between Stages reading series.

What's New is now online, for subscribers only. You can find it at cjnews.com

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OBITUARIES
and Related Notices

BENJAMIN'S PARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL

David Sweet	May 7/10	24 Euphrasia Drive
Beana Lovi	May 7/10	147 Elder Street
Reuben Psek	May 10/10	88 English Ivyway
Diana Farro	May 9/10	200 North Centre Road
Ibi Marton	May 12/10	1 Liszt Gate,
Wilma Kwinter	May 11/10	311 Richview Avenue
Sidney Racko	May 12/10	120 Promenade Circle
William Isenberg	May 11/10	7601 Bathurst Street
Michel Goldstep	May 12/10	11 Towngate Drive

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
AMOS RUBIN ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, June 6 at 11:30 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Cemetery
Beth Zion Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend.

The unveiling of a monument to the memory of the late
DORA WOZNICA ז"ל
will take place
Sunday, May 30th at 11:00 a.m.
Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park
Zaglembier Section
Relatives and friends are invited to attend.

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The *Economist* finds the right balance

According to Reports
By PAUL MICHAELS

This column has recently criticized major elements of the mainstream media for failing to deal adequately with the complexity of the Middle East "peace process" by, foremost, placing all or nearly all of the onus for progress on Israel while ignoring the responsibilities on the Palestinian side.

Some exceptions to this pattern, however, have come from unusual quarters. Take, for instance, the influential magazine. In an editorial in its May 11 issue, while asserting the well-known expectations of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu concerning (then) pending indirect or "proximity" negotiations, the publication also turned its attention to certain, rarely heard, expectations of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Referring to an interview Abbas gave on Israeli TV (Channel 2 on Apr. 25), the *Economist* noted that he spoke directly to the Israeli public and "conceded" that, with respect to borders, one of the final status issues, he is willing to consider land swaps instead of insisting on what is a deal-breaker for Israel – a return precisely to the Green Line, the 1949 armistice line with Jordan (which, in any event, was never an official border, although it is often incorrectly discribed as such).

Regarding a land swap, the *Economist* wrote that in the highly charged issue of Jerusalem, for instance, "some of the [Jewish] suburbs in what is occupied Palestinian territory could go to Israel, along with three or four of the main settlement blocks… If this were agreed to early on, it would draw much of the poison out of the recent row over [the city]."

Such swaps were reportedly on the table long ago at Camp David in 2000 – the deal that then-PA president Yasser Arafat rejected. So this is not a new idea. Yet Abbas' apparent willingness to be flexible on this matter is not insignificant. (Also not insignificant is the British magazine's willingness to term Jewish housing in east Jerusalem "suburbs" instead of, as is often the case in its pages, "settlements.")

The *Economist* was forthright on another deal-breaker for Israel – the longstanding insistence by the Palestinians that the refugees among them have an inherent "right of return" to Israel. Without any equivocation, the editorial argued the following: "The logic of having two states requires that Israel can be sure of keeping its large Jewish majority. Hence Mr. Abbas will have to accept that the Palestinians can have no actual right to return to the homes they lost after Israel was created in 1948."

(While the *Economist* wrote pointedly about what Abbas "will have to accept," it did go on to write that Israel "could acknowledge" what it called "the theoretical right of Palestinians to return" and then "accept a small symbolic number who would not alter [Israel's] demographic balance." However, as a great many Israeli and other international law experts have noted, contrary to popular misconception this "right of return" does not exist. What is feasible, and what Israeli leaders have spoken about, is accepting a small number of Palestinians on an individual, not group basis, as part of its long-standing humanitarian "family reunification" policy. But what would also have to be discussed is the wholly overlooked matter of compensating the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who were evicted or had to flee from Arab countries around the time of Israel's establishment.)

While Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Salam Fayyad recently signalled, in an interview in *Ha'aretz* on April 2, that the Palestinians would have to confine a return of refugees to a Palestinian state (a position for which he encountered stinging rebukes from various PLO factions, such as the PFLP, and from Hamas), Abbas avoided making any similar statement when asked about the "right of return" during his Channel 2 interview. Unless Abbas and the main body of Palestinians are prepared to yield on this, their rejection of Israel as a Jewish state will remain the main impediment to a two-state solution.

At the moment, many Israeli and foreign analysts are pessimistic about the prospects for substantial progress in "proximity" talks, to say nothing of getting back to direct negotiations over final status issues discussed above. Nonetheless, in addressing tough issues pertaining to the Palestinians as well as to the Israelis, the *Economist* editorial represents a more even-handed approach that is generally all too lacking in media coverage of the Middle East.

Paul Michaels is communications director for the Canada-Israel Committee.

NHL's Senators sponsor federation

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Ottawa is definitely a hockey town, with love for the hometown Senators crossing all demographic boundaries.

Many of the team's biggest fans and supporters are Jewish, and now the Senators are poised, in turn, to become supporters of the Ottawa Jewish community.

Ottawa Senators Sports and Entertainment has agreed to become a corporate sponsor of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa's annual fundraising campaign.

The sponsorship will involve the donation of five boxes and the "founders' box" (a large box on the fourth level that seats 75 people) at Scotiabank Place for each of two years with a monetary value of approximately $25,000.

The box will likely be used to host an event for the federation's Young Leadership division, and there will be an attempt to "monetize" the use of the boxes with some creative programming ideas, said Jack Silverstein, executive director of the federation's annual campaign.

Silverstein said the sponsorship came about as a result of a number of personal links between the two organizations.

Ian Sherman, a partner in the accounting firm Ernst & Young, is one of the team's most loyal fans and a longtime friend of Cyril Leeder, president of Senators Sports and Entertainment. They share an accounting background – Leeder obtained his CA designation at Clarkson Gordon, which is now Ernst & Young – as well as a love of hockey, and both men are also longtime, dedicated community workers.

"This is a story about relationships, and it is a story about both parties giving back to the community, which is a wonderful thing," Sherman said. "First and foremost, it's no surprise to me that the Senators Foundation would become a sponsor, because they are a first-class organization and they do so much for the Ottawa community at large."

"I've developed a very close relationship with [Leeder] over the years… and with many members of his senior executive team and management team, both within the hockey organization and the Senators Foundation," Sherman said. "When I approached Cyril, there was no question that they were prepared to do something."

Leeder lauds Sherman as one of the team's biggest fans. "He is at every event. He travels with his family to see games," he said. "There are lots of people like that in the Ottawa Jewish community… it's really our turn to reciprocate… we are happy to be involved. We are very appreciative of all the support."

Anti-Semitic graffiti found in Victoria park

By LAUREN KRAMER
Pacific Correspondent

VICTORIA — The Jewish community in Victoria, B.C., was stunned to learn that vandals had spray-painted anti-Semitic graffiti on the slides and climbing apparatus in Clawthorpe Park last week.

Police estimated the vandals struck between May 10 and May 11, spraying swastikas and misspelled epithets that were speedily removed the next day by Victoria city work crews.

Det. Rhys Wickes of the Victoria Police Department asked for assistance from the public in identifying the culprits and said this kind of hate-filled vandalism is taken very seriously.

"It's just unacceptable and represents a blow to values important in Victoria," he said.

The children of Rabbi Meir Kaplan, who heads Chabad of Vancouver Island, are frequent visitors to Clawthorpe Park, particularly on Shabbat mornings.

On his blog, Rabbi Kaplan said each structure in the playground was covered with graffiti. " 'No Jews' it said on the ladder, and 'Warsaw getto' on the children's crawling space. Nazi swastikas were all over the slides. It was very uncomfortable and extremely saddening to see."

Rabbi Kaplan added that he was confident this graffiti in no way characterizes public opinion of the Jewish community on Vancouver Island.

"I know that this doesn't represent Victoria," he wrote. "We know that the general community here is friendly and tolerant. To those people who may be bothered by the stronger Jewish presence in Victoria, we have some news for them: what they have seen is just the beginning. Jewish life will flourish on the island, more people will be returning from synagogue on Shabbat afternoon... and more Jewish children who are proud of their identity will be playing in the parks."

Rabbi Kaplan said he met with Victoria Police Chief Jamie Graham on May 17 and was assured that the Victoria police were taking the case very seriously.

"Graham said they are putting their best people on the job, and that they were confident they would find those responsible," Kaplan said.

Asked if there were many members of Victoria's Jewish community who used the park regularly, he said it was primarily his family. "The reality is that we use the park regularly on Shabbat morning when we return from shul. It seems to be that this was directed against us."

This is not the first time vandals have struck the Jewish community. Just three weeks ago, the wall facing the parking lot at the Victoria Jewish Community Centre was sprayed with graffiti stating "Zionists are Nazis."

A painter primed and painted the wall, refusing to take any money for his work, and police said they would patrol the area more often. A spokesperson for the JCC said police recognized the graffiti and identified its artist as an agitator who did not target the Jewish community exclusively.

Tim Humphreys, community development officer for Jewish Federation of Victoria and Vancouver Island, said this was the second time in two years the JCC has been spray-painted with anti-Semitic slogans.

"There have been a couple of incidents of anti-Semitism up-island in the past few years, and we've called on the Canadian Jewish Congress to go and do educational sessions in the schools," he said.

"Usually once they do that, the results are very positive, because the incidents are related to a basic lack of knowledge by students."

Graffiti in Victoria Park
[Photo courtesy Victoria Police Department]

'My life's work will continue'

Continued from page 3

He preferred to downplay the charitable arrangements at this time. "I'm not sure how it will work out," he said.

The Azrieli Foundation is registered in Canada and Israel and is headed, respectively, by Azrieli's daughters, Naomi and Danna. It currently supports a variety of projects, mainly educational, from publishing the memoirs of Canadian Holocaust survivors to helping disadvantaged Israeli kids stay in school.

Going even partially public has not been easy for Azrieli, who is proud that he has never had any partners other than his children in either the Azrieli Group or his Canadian company, Canpro Investments Ltd., which is completely separate.

"I'm getting older, my children, since the inception, are my partners. I want the transition to be smooth, without conflict in the family. They can liquidate their share, but my advice is to hold onto it," he said.

The new money will also enable the company to increase its holdings, which are starting to diversify. Last year, the group bought five per cent of Israel's largest bank, Bank Leumi, and a smaller stake in its credit card operations. It also has investments in other sectors, such as energy.

If it's a public company, there would be an assurance of professional management, he added. "I have the satisfaction of knowing that my life's work will continue and the company will be a very important factor in the economy of Israel.

"I'm very proud of our participation in the growth of the country. Now it's time for the public to have a share in this project, and hopefully they will be as proud as I am."

The disposable divorce era

Family Matters
by
John Syrtash
B.A. (Hon.), LL.B.
Counsel
Garfin Zeidenberg LLP
Family Lawyer & Mediator
for 28 years

A certain Rabbi was giving marital counselling in accordance with the most noble of Jewish traditions. He turned to the wife and told her that she was overly emotional, unreasonable and unfair. He then turned to the husband and said: "Do what she says". Perhaps only a married person can understand this advice.

In the era of the disposable diaper, disposable marriages have become trendy. If you don't like something, get rid of it. So, if someone irks you, get rid of her/him. When's the last time you darned your socks? Since the Divorce Act was amended in 1985, divorce is virtually automatic after one year of separation even if the income earning spouse deserts his family.

At the time, many thought these amendments would herald freedom for women chained to their husbands. Unhappy spouses could leave their relationships and remarry after one year of separation, rather than the previous three-year wait (or five years if you deserted your spouse).

Indeed, there is no doubt that the divorce rate has increased dramatically since these changes helped fashion the disposable relationship. Moreover, recent Supreme Court of Canada decisions (such as Moge) have legally confirmed that women after divorce fare far worse than men economically. Indeed, the increase in divorce rates has given us new phrases such as "the feminization of poverty". The number of poor women and children has risen dramatically across Canada since getting divorced was made easier (Sorry, I hate the word "underprivileged": euphemisms cloud reality).

Please don't misunderstand me. No one who is the victim of spousal abuse or who truly needs to be free should have to wait three years just to remarry. (Indeed, in Jewish law, there is usually no waiting period when both parties consent to a divorce). That is not the type of case to which I refer. Rather, I mourn those relationships that ended because they were "boring" and someone didn't bother trying a little harder. Changes in law affect moral behaviour, if only because the perception of moral reality changes. And the liberties we seek can create unforeseen hazards, once obtained. As Shakespeare said in Hamlet "Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind".

Fortunately, many lawyers take Section 9 of the Divorce Act very seriously. A lawyer must urge a spouse to seek marriage counselling, unless the circumstances of the case are of such a nature that it would clearly not be appropriate to do so.

Mr. Syrtash is Counsel to Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Suite 800, 5255 Yonge Street (at Norton) just north of Mel Lastman Square, Civic Centre Subway station, Toronto, ON M5G 1E6. John Syrtash can be reached at (416) 642-5410, Cell (416) 886-0359. Visit www.freemychild.com; www.spousalsupport.com; www.garfinzeidenberg.com.

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On Campus

Physics student's research published

Toronto teen explores world of nanoparticles

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Aaron Yevick has found his talent. And it might change the world.

Sort of.

Yevick, a Toronto-born physics student at Yeshiva University, recently had his research published, for the first time, in *Physical Review B*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal.

While Yevick is in his second year at Yeshiva, he's only 18 years old. Last summer, when he was too young to use some of the equipment, the student worked with Anatoly Frenkel, the chair of the physics department at YU's Stern College for Women, on research about nanoparticles.

Research on nanoparticles, tiny particles made up of 10 to several thousand atoms, is of great interest to the scientific community because of their use in fuel cells, cars, electronic data storage and medicine. Much is still unknown about the properties of nanoparticles, mainly because they're too small to be accurately measured. Which is where Frenkel and Yevick come in.

Yevick and Frenkel's research focused on how to properly measure nanoparticles .

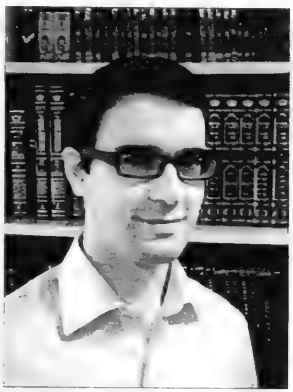
"There's this X-ray measurement technique called EXAFS, which fires X-rays at the nanoparticles," Yevick said.

The machine can estimate the size of the particles, how far apart its atoms are and the elements that its made up of. What Yevick found was that when nanoparticles are distorted or compressed, the measurements are often wrong.

"My goal was to see how well this EXAFS technology responded to surface tension... which is basically when... the clusters [of nanoparticles] are compressed for any reason, which happens in nature," he said.

Yevick did most of his research using a computer program that he wrote, which modelled nanoparticles. Using this program, he suggested a way to find the correct measurements, which could help those studying how nanoparticles can be used in areas like medicine or fuel cells.

"To be honest with you, when I did this research, I didn't think anybody would really care," Yevick said. "It got almost immediately accepted [into *Physical Review B*]. I don't know the scientific community much, but I know they care about this. It's going to help people measure these nanoparticles."



Aaron Yevick, a Yeshiva University student, has had his research published only 24 days after submission to the scientific journal *Physical Review B*.

Apart from being published only 24 days after submitting the article, in which he shared a byline with Frenkel, Yevick was one of five YU students to receive the Henry Kressel Research Scholarship, which will fund further research in his field of study. Because of the scholarship, Yevick will continue to research nanoparticles this summer.

Physics has always been a natural fit for Yevick, whose grandfather and father are both physicists.

"I never had a talent. I don't have one of those really big personalities. [I'm not] really good at English and stuff," he said.

But he is good at physics.

"With physics, you really have to know the stuff. There's no other way of solving a physics problem than to be creative and expand your mind."

The student, who spent his teen years in New York at Yeshiva University High School for Boys, credits his father for his success.

"I really owe my father a lot, a lot, a lot of credit. He's kind of always, always, always ready to help," he said. "Whenever I had a problem with class, I could always call him no matter when and he'd explain it."

Yevick hopes to become a physics professor as well, and is planning to go to graduate school for physics.

Frenkel, who will be working with Yevick again this summer, isn't surprised.

"[When working with him] I felt he was not a student, but a colleague," he said.

"I hope he will be a scientist. He's very systematic, methodical, creative, and most importantly, he's excited about his work... It's huge, his potential."

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PA offers concessions on borders

By BARAK RAVID
© Ha'aretz Daily Newspaper Ltd.

JERUSALEM — The Palestinian Authority has offered surprising concessions to Israel regarding borders for a future state, the *Wall Street Journal* reported on Friday.

In the framework of proximity peace talks now being mediated by the United States' special Middle East envoy George Mitchell, Palestinian negotiators have reportedly offered to match and even double the amount of West Bank land territory that Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas offered to former prime minister Ehud Olmert during their one-on-one 2008 talks.

During those talks, Abbas offered Olmert to exchange 1.9 per cent of West Bank land for an equal amount of Israeli territory. Olmert countered with a much higher demand of his own, which the current reported offer would still not come close to matching.

Palestinian officials told the *Wall Street Journal* that the unexpected proposal was being made due to their assumption that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was not serious about reaching a final status deal within the indirect negotiations.

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said his government was approaching the proximity talks in good faith and "are not going to waste Mitchell's time.

"We want Mr. Mitchell to succeed because his success is our freedom," he said.

Mitchell was in the region this week for talks with Abbas and Netanyahu. A statement from Netanyahu's office said they had discussed during their meetings the possibility of gestures toward the Palestinians. No details were given, but the gestures seemed likely connected to easing movement for Palestinians in the West Bank.

In related developments, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman says in a classified document that despite the indirect talks with the PA, the PA is expected to conduct a diplomatic struggle against Israel abroad. Lieberman makes his case in the document handed out to the forum of seven senior ministers.

The report also states that the Palestinians will seek to use the so-called proximity talks to increase American pressure on Israel to continue the freeze on settlement construction well beyond its September deadline.

However, the document notes that if confidence in Israel's intentions is restored, direct negotiations might be possible.

The report was distributed to the ministers on May 6 and was prepared at the Foreign Ministry's Center for Political Research by the head of the Palestinian affairs team. The department, the ministry's intelligence branch, is responsible for political assessments – first and foremost on the peace process.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu with U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell last week in Jerusalem

[Israel Sun photo]

One of the report's messages is that the main reason the Palestinians agreed to indirect talks is their wish to test the seriousness of Israel's intentions.

"The Palestinians are embarking on talks with no faith in their outcome, virtually with the expectation that they will fail," the report says.

Foreign Ministry analysts say the basic Palestinian positions on the core issues – borders, Jerusalem, security, refugees, water and settlements – haven't changed since the days of past negotiators Ehud Barak, Tzipi Livni and Ehud Olmert.

"In our assessment, the Palestinians will not reveal any area of flexibility, especially not on issues of borders and territory exchanges, because in their view the Israeli government is not genuinely interested in carrying out effective negotiations," the report says.

The document notes that the Palestinians agreed to hold the proximity talks to extend the freeze on settlement construction in the West Bank and possible also in east Jerusalem.

It says the Palestinians agreed to indirect talks because they seek good relations with Washington. In this way, they might receive U.S. guarantees and be in a good position if the Obama administration puts forth its own peace plan.

The possibility is also raised that the Palestinians will turn to the United Nations Security Council to seek backing for a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital. They would concentrate efforts on the United States so it does not veto the initiative.

According to the report, one area where the Palestinians are flexible is the timetable of the proximity talks. They would agree to extend it beyond the four-month limit, possibly moving to covert direct talks if sufficient trust were built, the report says.

Obama, Jewish lawmakers discuss Israel, strategy

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama exchanged views with Jewish members of Congress on his relations with Israel and discussed strategies on how to counter the perception that he is not pro-Israel.

"We discussed Iran, the situation in the Middle East, the efforts of the Republican Party to distort President Obama's positions on Iran and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Congressman Steve Rothman, a Democrat from New Jersey, said afterward.

The 90-minute meeting on May 18 at the White House drew 37 of the more than 40 Jewish members in both Houses of Congress.

"The conversation included an update on proximity talks and administration efforts to strengthen Israel's security, including the administration's recent decision to provide Israel with an additional $205 million in funding for the Iron Dome missile defence system," a White House statement said, referring to Israel's short-range missile defence program.

Also discussed was the announcement earlier the same day that the Obama administration had rallied major power support for a new set of sanctions on Iran.

Congressman Eliot Engel, a Democrat from New York, who had criticized the Obama administration for openly pressuring Israel after tensions intensified in March over Israel's settlement building, said it was a frank discussion, initiated by the White House.

"It was a very frank and good talk," he said. "The president said he'd like to continue this."

Engel called it a "mistake to publicly air grievances against Israel, while at the same time they were silent on things the Palestinians had done to undermine the peace process. We questioned why this had to happen. When allies have disagreements as they usually do, it has to be behind closed doors."

Rothman, an early backer of Obama's presidential candidacy, said the members thanked Obama for such initiatives, describing Obama as "the best president on U.S.-Israel military and intelligence co-operation in American history."

Much of the talk was about how to spread the word about Obama's assistance to Israel to counter claims by Republicans and others that Obama is not pro-Israel, Rothman said.

Engel said he couldn't blame the Republicans for seizing a natural opening.

"You can't blame the Republicans for trying to move in and take advantage of something," he said. "If there hadn't been a chastising of Israel, it wouldn't have given the Republicans an opening."

Going into November midterm elections, Engel said, "we've got to make sure that everyone knows the bond is unbreakable."

Not present at the meeting were two of Congress' three Jewish non-Democrats: Republican Congressmen Eric Cantor, from Virginia, and Bernie Sanders, from Vermont.

Attending, however, were some of Obama's toughest critics in the wake of tensions in March between Israel and the United States over settlement building: Senator Joe Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut, Senator Chuck Schumer, a Democrat from New York, and Congresswoman Shelley Berkley, a Democrat from Nevada, among them.

Berkley told the Associated Press that she emerged believing Obama is on Israel's side, but that he needs a better understanding of the nuances.

"I do want to see the president step up and vocalize his support for Israel far more than he has," Berkley told the AP in an article distributed by her office.

Jewish groups welcome Iran sanctions but want more

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA

WASHINGTON — U.S. Jewish groups welcomed the announcement of the unified front by major world powers on Iran sanctions.

But they want to know the details – and they're still pressing for unilateral sanctions by the U.S. Congress.

Last week, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council had agreed on "strong" Iran sanctions.

The announcement came partly in response to Iran's attempt to defang international efforts to monitor its nuclear development by agreeing to a nuclear exchange with Turkey and Brazil.

"We have been working closely with our P 5+1 partners for several weeks on the draft of a new sanctions resolution on Iran," Clinton said, referring to the five Security Council members and Germany. "Today, I am pleased to announce to this committee we have reached agreement on a strong draft with the co-operation of both Russia and China."

Those two countries have been the most reluctant to expand existing UN sanctions on Iran.

The American Jewish Committee, one of the groups at the forefront of efforts to galvanize international support for multilateral sanctions against Iran, welcomed the announcement.

"Secretary Clinton's announcement is very encouraging," said David Harris, AJC's executive director. "We hope the UN Security Council will accelerate its deliberations and adopt a new resolution to significantly tighten the sanctions regime to thwart Iran's ambitions to obtain nuclear weapons capability."

Clinton did not outline the proposed sanctions, noting that the draft resolution must circulate among all 15 members of the Security Council. Reports in recent months have suggested that the sanctions under consideration would expand the list of individuals and entities already sanctioned in earlier resolutions and also target Iran's financial sector.

Canada "welcomed" the progress being made on this issue. Lawrence Cannon, minister of foreign affairs said in a statement last week, but stressed there was more work to do.

"The government of Iran must address the serious lack of confidence that members of the international community have in its nuclear program," he said. "We remain concerned about the potential military links to Iran's nuclear program, and Iran has made no attempt to comply with UN Security Council resolutions. Canada strongly supports further sanctions through the council. We will work with our allies to encourage effective responses to the threat that Iran poses to international peace and security.

Shimon Fogel, CEO of the Canada-Israel Committee, said while his organization was "glad" the international community seemed finally prepared to recognize the central role played by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard corps, "we can't help but be disappointed that these [resolutions] don't really represent the kind of sanctions that will truly coerce Iran into conforming with its international obligations with respect to their nuclear program."

He added: "There are a lot of things left out that we think would have been critical to include in any new round of sanctions, including the capacity for focus on the gas and energy sector to serve as a real mechanism for forcing that kind of compliance. However, we still remain hopeful that Canada's leadership at the G-8 and G-20 meetings will yield some more tangible and focused efforts with respecting this challenge."

The U.S. Congress is considering its own set of expanded and tougher unilateral sanctions that would target third-party entities – companies, individuals and countries that deal with Iran's energy sector.

The Obama administration is wary of the package, fearing it would drive away partners from multilateral sanctions.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee called on the Obama administration to embrace the congressional package – likely to pass within weeks – as a complement to the multilateral sanctions.

"American and international sanctions on Iran must be overwhelming to change the dynamic within Iran and to alter the policies of Iranian leaders," AIPAC said in an analysis it distributed after Clinton's announcement. "Sanctions should target Iran's finance, insurance, shipping, transportation, natural gas and manufacturing industries in addition to Tehran's dependence on refined petroleum."

Clinton drew a direct link between her announcement and Iran's attempt this week to head off additional sanctions by agreeing to a diluted version of an earlier U.S.-initiated proposal to enrich some uranium to medical research levels in exchange for transparency. Under the agreement, Iran would export half its low-enriched uranium to Turkey and Brazil for enrichment to medical research levels.

The Obama administration has rejected the deal as inadequate. U.S. officials noted that under the original U.S. proposal, Iran would have had to relinquish its entire existing store of uranium and make its program more transparent. Under the Brazil-Turkey deal, Iran would retain enough low-enriched uranium to manufacture a single nuclear bomb should it obtain the means to further enrich it.

AIPAC called the deal a "stalling tactic."

"The Iran-Brazil-Turkey deal fails all counts," AIPAC spokesperson Josh Block said. "It leaves them with enough material to make a bomb. Iran has said it plans to continue enriching nuclear fuel, and there is no indication that Iran is even willing to talk about suspending enrichment as called for by four UN Security Council resolutions."

Clinton said the administration's announcement of an agreement on Security Council sanctions against Iran "is as convincing an answer to the efforts undertaken in Tehran over the last few days as any we could provide."

With files from Andy Levy-Ajzenkopf

What next in Haiti?

By MICHA ODENHEIMER
ISRAEL 21c

The Petionville refugee camp, stretches across what was, before the earthquake on Jan.12, a country club for the Haitian elite.

The camp, which houses some 60,000 people, is the largest refugee camp for the earthquake victims in the country. Thousands of tents, constructed of red, yellow, blue or orange tarp, cover the rolling hills of the camp like strange plastic flowers. In the distance, you can see the sea.

People from all over Port au Prince, and from a cross section of Haitian society, are living in the camp. Some come from crowded slums not much different than the camp, while others are middle class families. All of their former lives, and often some of their closest relatives, are buried in the rubble of their former homes.

Amid the crowded, precariously steep dirt pathways in the camp, there are unexpected sights such as tents that have been converted into fledgling businesses – beauty parlours, tiny shops and bars. A tent with a sign that reads "cyber café" is probably powered by a generator, as there is no electricity in the camp. The most popular image here, appearing even on some of the business signs, is a drawing of Haiti with an eye painted on it, turning the map into a face – a large teardrop rolls down the country's cheek.

There are thousands of children in the camp, but only one school, run by volunteers from the Israeli non-profit Tevel b'Tzedek and funded by IsraAID, an umbrella organization of Israeli groups working in the developing world.

I founded Tevel b'Tzedek, which has been working with poor and marginalized communities in Nepal for the past three years through its service programs that combine volunteering with the study of poverty, Jewish social justice values and globalization.

Nine Israeli and U.S. Jewish volunteers of Tevel have been in Haiti for the past two months. As I walk through the camp with them, they seem to know everyone, from the children to the U.S. Marines providing camp security. There is an amazingly unlikely moment as we climb the steep hill toward the school – we meet a group of Nepali UN soldiers, and the Tevel Nepal graduates chat with them in Nepali. It seems like the harbinger of a new world.

Besides setting up the school in Petionville, which reaches 260 children, Tevel has put up community tents with programming for preschoolers, teenager and adults. The volunteers learned informal education techniques, such as the use of theatre, during previous stints with Tevel in Nepal, and are applying everything they learned to the even more chaotic reality of Haiti. They work using theatre and song, local talent and local translators, and teach leadership techniques ("leadership" means motivating people) as well as health and geography.

Volunteers with Tevel B'Tzedek teach children at a makeshift school in the Petionville refugee camp, in Port au Prince, Haiti. *[Baruch Rafik (IsraAID) photo]*

During an art class, Yonatan, one of the volunteers, tells the kids to paint what is on their minds. One of them draws a picture of people screaming against the background of a collapsed building. This is a scene etched on his memory, right after the earthquake, he says.

My job is to figure out what to do next. With the rains and then typhoons coming, the camp is not safe, especially for those on the bottom of steep hills. The camp will empty out over the next few months. Should we go to work in the next phase of semi-permanent camps? Should we move to one of the villages, where we can also use Israel's agriculture expertise to boost food production, a major priority in Haiti even before the earthquake?

J/P, an organization headed by the actor Sean Penn, is a major support for the camp. Penn himself has been here nearly continuously for the past two months. Last week, after the rains, he worked side by side with the Tevel b'Tzedek volunteers, taking instruction from Israeli army veterans about how to put up the tents.

Whatever one thinks of his radical politics, Penn is for real, working day in and day out in the hot sun, living in a tent himself. His people think we should stay with the refugee camps. "You guys are amazing," Penn tells me.

"You're the hardware, we're just a little piece of software," I answer him.

Israel Briefs

Oz wins inaugural Turin prize

Amos Oz is the first recipient of a new literary prize awarded by the International Book Fair in Turin. The Israeli author was chosen by popular vote over Paul Auster and Carlos Fuentes, the other finalists for the prize of 25,000 euros. More than 6,000 exhibitors, editors, journalists and visitors to the fair – one of Europe's most important annual literary events – took part in the vote. A record 315,000 visitors attended this year's event.

Violence in Gaza

Israeli soldiers killed two armed men on May 21 who had infiltrated Israel from Gaza. Earlier in the night, the Israeli air force struck at two arms-smuggling tunnels in retaliation for the firing on Shavuot of a Qassam rocket into the western Negev. The rocket didn't cause any damage or injuries. The last rocket attack occurred 10 days ago, when a Qassam landed near Ashkelon. Israel's military bombed two targets in Gaza in retaliation for that attack.

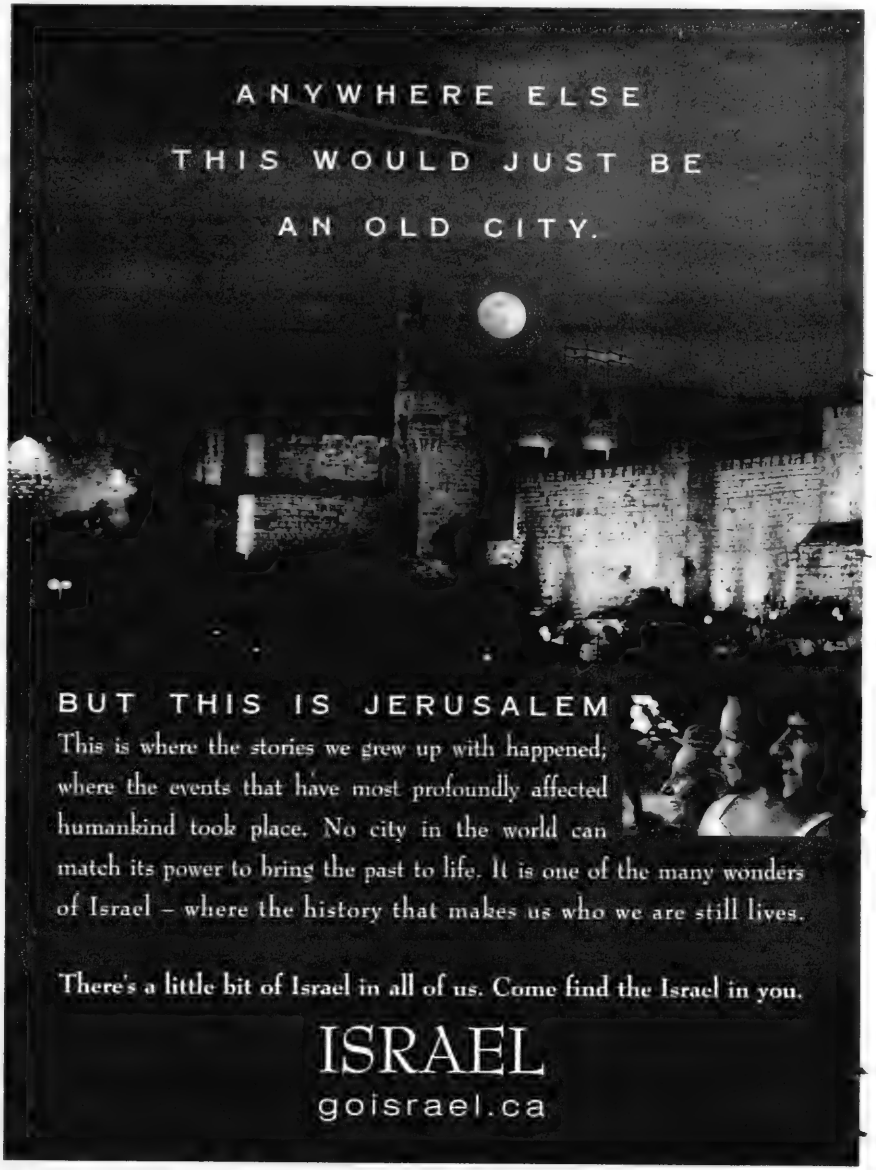
Chomsky barred from Israel

Noam Chomsky was to lecture to Bir Zeit University students via video conference from Amman after he was denied entry into Israel and the West Bank. Chomsky, 81, an American Jewish linguist who is a fierce critic of Israeli and American policies, was detained recently for four hours by Israeli security officials at the Allenby Bridge entry point from Jordan. The professor emeritus from MIT was scheduled to deliver a lecture at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah, in the West Bank. Sabine Hadad, a spokesperson for Israel's Interior Ministry, told the *Jerusalem Post* that the decision to deny Chomsky entry was a "misunderstanding." The Association for Civil Rights in Israel strongly condemned the decision to deny Chomsky entry from Jordan to the West Bank.

PA urges boycott on W. Bank goods

The Palestinian Authority has launched a boycott against products manufactured in West Bank Jewish towns. The official boycott against 500 specific products began May 19. A list of products that the PA has ordered to be boycotted will reportedly be sent to West Bank Palestinian homes in the coming weeks. Any Palestinian merchant caught dealing in the banned products faces fines and jail time. "This is an act of hostility with all intents and purposes on the part of the Palestinian Authority and its leaders, and it must be answered immediately and decisively just like any other act of hostility," the Yesha Council settlers group said in a statement last week. "This is a clear violation of the Paris Protocol which regulates the economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israel must use the Palestinian Authority's funds in its possession to compensate the boycotted factories."

With files from JTA & Ha'aretz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Arts & Travel

Director determined to produce difficult plays

By RITA POLIAKOV
Staff Reporter

Mark Schoenberg has done some acting in his time, but he will always be a director.

"It defines me," said Schoenberg, the director of *Duet for One*, which opens May 27.

"There's nothing like the experience of working through an extensive rehearsal with actors," he said. "The in-depth work is the work I love to do. Directors… it's like we're making worlds. We're actually building worlds."

Schoenberg, 76, worked in New York and Philadelphia before moving to Alberta, where he started Theatre 3, which is considered by some as the most influential theatre company in Western Canada. Then he left to perform in film and television.

"I don't know if it was a mistake, but it derailed me as a director," he said. "In two years, I found myself really missing theatre."

He eventually moved to Toronto, where he served as head of the professional actor training program at Humber College and continues to teach at the Armstrong Acting Studio. This is where he met Faye Lavin, who plays Stephanie, the lead character in *Duet for One*, written by Tom Kempinski.

The play is about a brilliant violist who is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and, with the help of her therapist, must come to terms with the fact that she can never play again.

Back in 2008, Lavin was Schoenberg's student. "She had… very little experience, but she demonstrated astonishing qualities [for a] young actor," he said.

Schoenberg became friends with Lavin and her husband, and they decided to put on a play together.

"I knew *Duet for One*. Faye read the play and loved it. What's not to love?" Schoenberg said.

Mark Schoenberg directs *Duet for One*, the opening production of the new theatre company, STAGE Toronto.

The play was performed at at the Heliconian Club in Toronto, where Linda Heslegrave and Dan McCaughey, two theatre buffs who were in the audience, were blown away. They joined forces with Schoenberg to form a theatre company of their own, called STAGE Toronto.

For Schoenberg, this is a Toronto first.

"In Edmonton, everybody knew me and knew who I was, so my work was front and centre, whether they applauded or booed," he said. "I haven't worked very much as a professional in Toronto… This will kind of reintroduce me as a professional, for better or for worse."

Schoenberg's goal for STAGE Toronto is to produce plays that other companies stay away from, like *Duet for One*, which consists almost entirely of monologues.

"If we are successful, then lives will change. Faye won't be a wannabe actor anymore. She'll be sought after," he said. "It will establish our company as a company to be reckoned with… it's daunting… we're just too stupid to realize it."

Schoenberg chose to produce *Duet for One* because of its connection to a musical symphony.

"[It's creating] theatre as music. Or music as theatre. Each scene is like part of a violin concerto. It has its own allegro, all of the movements are mirrored by the rhythm of the scenes," he said. "[The play] goes from great joy to the abyss and back again, and it's wonderful when it works."

It's Schoenberg's job to make it work.

"Part of what I'm trying to do is make the music come alive. You change the rhythm of the scene, the intensity, you find a variety… so the audience is constantly presented with a moving landscape."

For a play like *Duet for One*, casting is essential. Apart from Lavin, Schoenberg cast Christopher Kelk, who is best known for his role as Rollo the janitor in the film *Billy Madison*, to play the therapist.

"I don't want to leave Chris out of it. He has to be a consummate listener. He has to know exactly when to poke, to prod, to initiate. And he can't just do it with the lines, he has to understand it," Schoenberg said.

As a director, Schoenberg's role is to connect with each character in the world that he's building.

"It's painful with this play. Psychologically, I have to get into the head space and heart space of the characters," he said.

Duet for One will have a special performance on May 27, in co-ordination with the MS Society, and will officially run from May 28 to June 20 at the Tarragon Theatre.

Schoenberg isn't looking forward to watching it with the audience.

"It's really tough [to watch]. It's my child. I made it. If something's wrong, it's my fault."

For tickets to *Duet for One*, visit tickets.tarragontheatre.com or call 416-531-1827.

Israeli movies at Worldwide Short Film Festival are eclectic

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

They're the best of the best in the short film category.

This year's Worldwide Short Film Festival received 4,046 submissions, but is screening only 281.

The movies highlight the talents of filmmakers from 34 countries, including Israel and the United States.

The Israeli films are eclectic, while the American film is rooted in the Holocaust. Screenings of the films under review all take place at the Cumberland Cinema.

A Summer Rain, by Ela Thier and Jodi Midiri, is set in Connecticut in 1982 and charts the mixed emotions of a preteen Israeli girl who's been uprooted from her home by her parents' decision to immigrate to the United States.

Elisheva (Noa Rotstein), having been torn from the comfort of familiar surroundings and the embrace of friends, narrates this plaintive, 17-minute film from the vantage point of her porch.

In letters to a friend, she describes her new life, marvels at America's wealth, raves about shopping, exchanges intimacies, refers to the novelty of rain in August, reports on her progress in learning English and admits she misses Israel.

Elisheva and an Asian girl sitting on the stoop next door glance at each other furtively, but do not make contact. Can they break the ice? Can Elisheva adapt to her new homeland far from the shores of Israel?

David Broza's elegaic musical score blends perfectly with the narrative. ***–Sunday, June 6***

Yasmine Novak's *Bus* focuses on the difficulties experienced by travellers – Palestinian, Israeli and foreign – as they try to cross into the Palestinian territories in the West Bank.

Given the maze of Israeli checkpoints, the journey is time-consuming, always requiring a switch to a Palestinian bus to reach one's destination.

The long delays are frustrating and even humiliating, at least in the case of a pregnant Arab woman who feels she has been mistreated by an Israeli border guard.

"It gets worse every day," says another Palestinian woman. "It's terrible."

The travel restrictions affect Israelis and foreigners, too. An Israeli woman who sets up an appointment with a Palestinian man requires elaborate directions. A French tourist is also in need of precise directions.

Bus empathizes with the inconvenience of travellers whose movements are circumscribed. But in an inexplicable lapse, it completely ignores the fact that the checkpoints, though distasteful and a symbol of occupation, are there solely for security reasons to catch suicide bombers. ***–Wednesday, June 2***

Elisheva (Noa Rotstein) narrates *A Summer Rain*.

To Kill A Bumblebee, by Tal Granit and Sharon Maymon, is an eerie parable.

As two Israeli game hunters drive deeper into a forest, a bumblebee flies into their car, deftly positioning itself on the windshield.

One of the hunters kills the bee, disposing of a nuisance and a possible hazard. Their troubles, however, have just begun. One well-aimed shot at a wild animal descends into a bloody disaster. The moral of the story is that a lousy decision can lead to unintended consequences. ***–Saturday, June 5***

Tamar Shippony's quirky *In Between* is a parable as well, underscoring the fragile relationship between nature and human beings.

Only two minutes long, the film unfolds on a rowboat on a placid stretch of water, as a young woman balances a tree branch in her mouth. ***–Wednesday, June 2***

Daniela Sherer's *Overnight Stay*, an animated film, is narrated by an 83-year-old Holocaust survivor who recalls an awful yet illuminating incident in Krakow, Poland, in 1941 when she was a teenager.

Hunted by the Nazis, she was rescued by a gentle Pole who hid her. This act of kindness is juxtaposed against the terrible times in which she found herself.

The duality of human nature is the theme of this affecting short. ***–Thursday, June 3***

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For screening times, click on www.shorterisbetter.com.

Eye on Arts

By BILL GLADSTONE

A JEW GROWS IN BROOKLYN EXTENDED BY POPULAR DEMAND

A Jew Grows in Brooklyn, the Mirvish-imported hit comedy musical that finished an almost sold-out run in Toronto last week, has been extended by popular demand, demonstrating the power of word-of-mouth in the theatre business. The one-man show starring **Jake Ehrenreich** returns to Toronto for another run in June.

The show is funny, moving, warm-hearted and broad enough to appeal to everyone. You don't have to be Jewish, nor from Brooklyn, to relate to Ehrenreich's story as the child of Holocaust survivors, raised in the New York area and spending summers in the Catskills. In the second half, Ehrenreich satirizes the Catskill comedy schtick so extensively that at moments it seems indistinguishable from the real thing.

Panasonic Theatre, 651 Yonge St. June 3 to 13. Tickets $25 to $60. 416-872-1212, www.mirvish.com

• • •

Playwriting Competition: The submission deadline for the Canadian Jewish Playwriting Competition is June 30. The winning playwright receives $1,000 and a public play reading in the Between Stages reading series. Info and submission guidelines, www.mnjcc.org, esthera@mnjcc.org, 416-924-6211, ext. 606.

• • •

Musical Events

• The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir presents its 84th spring concert in commemoration of former conductor **Emil Gartner** 50 years after his death. Special guest is cellist **Esther Gartner**. $25, $20. Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building, 80 Queen's Park Cres. Sunday, May 30, 2010, 3 p.m. 416-782-7837, tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca

• **Jordan Klapman** presents *The Life and Music of Jerome Kern, Grandfather of Broadway*, an informative and entertaining program about the life and music of the renowned Jewish composer, with live piano, early recordings and a singalong; lyrics and refreshments provided. Active Seniors, Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre, Thursday, June 3, 1:30 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 155.

• The Canada-Israel Cultural Foundation presents Israel Makes Music II, an evening of chamber music performed by the talented young stars of tomorrow: **Michal Beck** on cello, **Yevgeny Yontov** on piano, **Udi Nave** on clarinet. The program features pieces by **Bach**, **Mozart**, **Ben-Haim** and **Brahms**. $25 includes dessert reception. Glenn Gould Studio, 250 Front St. W. Thursday, June 3, 8 p.m. 888-222-6608, www.ticketweb.ca. Or call the CICF, 416-932-2260.

Esther Gartner

• **Miles Nadal Jewish Community Choir and Women's Chorus** perform a concert. $10. Al Green Theatre, MNjcc, June 2 and 3, 8 p.m. 416-924-6211, ext. 0.

• • •

At the Galleries

• Loop Gallery presents two exhibitions, **Libby Hague**'s *Safety Net* and **Rochelle Rubinstein**'s *Shaft*, now until June 13. Loop Gallery, 1273 Dundas St. W. Both artists participate in a Q&A session at Loop, Sunday, June 6, 3 p.m., followed by tea at 402 College St. www.loopgallery.ca

• *Desert Rhythms*, an exhibition of works by **Myriam F. Levy**, is at the Engine Gallery, Distillery District, 37 Mill St. June 3 to 22. Opening reception, Thursday, June 3, 6 to 10 p.m.

CIC urges Elvis Costello to reconsider concert cancellation

Compiled by CJN Staff

The Canada-Israel Committee, through its Buycott Israel initiative, is urging British rocker Elvis Costello to reconsider his decision to cancel two scheduled performances in Israel as a political protest.

The June 30 and July 1 concerts at the Roman Amphitheater in Caesarea was to be Costello's Israeli debut with his new folk/bluegrass band the Sugarcanes.

"Please go to Elvis Costello's Facebook page and leave him a *polite* message asking him to reconsider," Sara Saber-Freedman of Buycott Israel said in a message to the initiative's Facebook friends. "Remind him that such artists as Paul McCartney, Elton John, Leonard Cohen, Rihanna and others have seen past the rhetoric of calls to boycott and blacklist Israel."

Costello – a prominent new wave rocker known for such early hits as *Alison* and *What's So Funny 'Bout Peace, Love and Understanding?* – discussed his decision to cancel his Caesarea concerts in a message posted on his website.

"One lives in hope that music is more than mere noise, filling up idle time, whether intending to elate or lament," Costello wrote.

"Then there are occasions when merely having your name added to a concert schedule may be interpreted as a political act that resonates more than anything that might be sung and it may be assumed that one has no mind for the suffering of the innocent."

The move came just two weeks after the musician told the *Jerusalem Post* that "dialogue and reconciliation" is the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"The people who call for a boycott of Israel own the narrow view that performing there must be about profit and endorsing the hawkish policy of the government," he told the *Post*. "It's like never appearing in the US because you didn't like Bush's policies or boycotting England because of Margaret Thatcher."

Explaining his decision to cancel the gigs, Costello said on his website he believed that some in his audience would "question the policies of their government on settlement and deplore conditions that visit intimidation, humiliation or much worse on Palestinian civilians in the name of national security."

He also acknowledged the Palestinians' "many despicable acts of violence perpetrated in the name of liberation."

"It has been necessary to dial out the falsehoods of propaganda, the double game and hysterical language of politics, the vanity and self-righteousness of public communiqués from cranks in order to eventually sift through my own conflicted thoughts," Costello wrote, concluding that "Sometimes a silence in music is better than adding to the static."

He called the cancellation "a matter of instinct and conscience."

Costello's Israeli promoter, Alive Productions, said it was shocked by the decision.

"In the continuous contact we've had with Costello's management, there was never even a shred of a clue that he was considering cancelling," the company said in a statement.

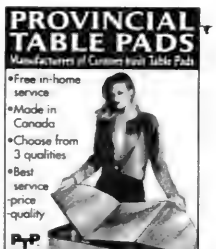
Prominent musicians Santana and Gil Scott-Heron have also cancelled their summer concerts due to pressure from pro-Palestinian organizations.

Costello's wife, Canadian jazz star Diana Krall, is scheduled to perform Aug. 9 at the Ra'anana Amphitheater. Alive is also promoting her show. It said it has received word from her management, which also handles Costello, that she has no plans to cancel.

Costello acknowledged in his message that he likely won't be asked again to perform in Israel, calling it "a matter of regret."

In a statement, Israeli Culture and Sport Minister Limor Livnat strongly criticized Costello. "An artist who boycotts his fans in Israel is not worthy of performing in front of them," she said.

With files from JTA



MAKING A MESS

While Genie Award-winner Marilyn Lightstone is known for her moving performances on stage, screen and television, and as the beloved host of *Nocturne* – heard every evening on The New Classical 96.3FM – she also spends much of her time in her rooftop studio, working with paint and photography, producing several exhibitions a year. Located in a building that is a true workspace at Dupont and Dovercourt streets in Toronto, her 900-square-foot loft is a home away from home and the place where she gets to, as she says, "make a mess." Lightstone has two art shows coming up: the Sunnyside Beach Juried Art Show – May 28 to 30 at Sunnyside Pavilion as part of Doors Open Toronto, and the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition, July 9-11 at Nathan Philips Square.

[Gokche Erkan photo]

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Clients of Eastern Townships spa renew their spirits

Spa Life
By KATHRYN KATES

Former history and geography teacher Jocelyna Dubuc became interested in naturopathic medicine and discovered healthy cuisine, so she ventured off to India to study naturopathy, meditation and yoga. Her passions got the best of her, and by 1977, Dubuc opened Spa Eastman, a destination spa in Quebec's picturesque Eastern Townships, approximately 75 minutes from Montreal.

In addition to owning the multi-award winning destination spa, Dubuc also serves as president and general director. Spa Eastman's accommodations include a main pavilion, an eight-room pavilion and a secluded intimate house on 326 acres with 15 kilometres of trails.

Spa Eastman can administer 35 treatments per hour. There are 130 employees with 70 being therapists. The treatment rooms are decorated in warm and neutral tones with beige walls – most have windows with great views. The spa has a hair salon offering both hairstyling services and health treatments, including in-depth analysis of hair and scalp.

There's a retail space, and guests lounge in comfy robes in the large spa waiting area. Spa Eastman has a gym, two indoor pools, one is used for aqua gym classes and the other is a private pool where treatments such as Watsu are practised. Watsu is a gentle-leg massage, followed by a back massage," says Dubuc.

Other offerings are extensive and informative naturopathic consultations, personalized lifestyle and fitness programs and assessments, life coaching and individual yoga consultations. With your stay and meal package, there are a number of complimentary activities, including conferences on health and well-being, fitness classes and walks.

"We have our own product line with ingredients coming from Canada, like mud, or in our creams. Besides that, we have Decleor from France and Babor from Germany," says Dubuc.

Forty per cent of the visitors to Spa Eastman are men. Dubuc says men are comfortable at the retreat because there is no "feeling of frills," as there is at beauty institutes. Seventy per cent of the guests stay overnight and often spend a week. While others, both local and from the Montreal area, visit for the day and partake in à la carte services.

Dubuc says her mission is to make people feel good by promoting health and well-being. Spa Eastman offers local and international clients an opportunity to shape up and renew their spirits in an eco-friendly property that endorses sustainable development. The spa is committed to encouraging proper life habits and helping clients achieve overall lasting health.

"We really teach the art of living," says Dubuc, who says that Spa Eastman is the only destination spa in Quebec. "To be considered a destination spa, your cuisine must be fully healthy with no compromises. We have a fine wine cellar offering 70 per cent organic wines. Also, we have to offer a mission of education through the kinesiologist, the personal trainer and the naturopath."

Dubuc says that almost 60 per cent of their guests are repeaters. "I feel we offer a European atmosphere with a French flavour that appeals to North Americans. There are no young children, so it is a real break for parents. I want people to leave feeling good, deeply relaxed and connected to themselves and seeing life differently."

Guests often come to the retreat and never leave the property, but if you care to explore the Eastern Townships, there are a number of lakes, towns and villages, including Magog, with its many quaint boutiques, and the neighbouring village of Eastman, where the mayor, Gérard Marinovich, happens to be the Dubuc's spouse and Spa Eastman's vice-president.

To book your Spa Eastman vacation, call 450-297-3009 or 1-800-665-5272, or online at www.spa-eastman.com. For more information on the Eastern Townships online, visit www.easterntownships.org or call 1-800-355-5755.

A duet maple sugar body polish

The Spa Eastman outside Montreal ***[Kathryn Kates photos]***

motion floating massage that promotes deep relaxation. Both the therapist and the client are in bathing suits and immersed in warm water. The spa features a steam room and an outdoor pool with hammocks – perfect for summer relaxing – surrounded by gardens.

Spa Eastman's esthetic and well-being services include a full array of body treatments and body wraps, among them massage, couple's massage, back mineral miracle, hair treatments, facials, and foot and hand care. Signature treatments offered are Grand Bleu – hydrotherapy, Aqua Mineral Back Treatment and Duet Maple Sugar Body Polish with two therapists.

"Our most popular treatments are the Watsu, our mineral wrap which includes a liquid paste with heat. You receive a head and

Comic book wins Yiddish literature award

By JANICE ARNOLD
Staff Reporter

Stingy Buzi and King Solomon, (Der karger Buzi un Shloymeh Hameylekh), a comic book in Yiddish, is this years's winner of a Canadian Jewish Book Award in the Yiddish literature and language category.

The book, with English transliteration and translation, was written and illustrated by Goldie Sigal, a former Judaica librarian at McGill University in Montreal.

It was published with the hope that it will spark an interest in Yiddish among children, and to encourage inter-generational reading, with parents or grandparents.

Stingy Buzi and King Solomon is actually an 82-page booklet with full-colour drawings on each page. The Yiddish text is in the dialogue "balloons" of the characters, and the transliteration and translation are on the same page below the strip.

"The book will be enjoyed by children from about four to 10 years old, their parents and grandparents, and anyone who wants to learn or practise Yiddish while having fun doing so," said Sigal, who published the book with the assistance of a grant from the Aaron and Sonia Fishman Foundation for Yiddish Culture.

King Solomon tries to teach a lesson to the greedy Buzi, while his court jester taunts him with food.

The story is inspired by a school play written by J.J. Grossman, a teacher at the Jewish People's School probably in the 1940s, and is based on folk tales about the biblical king.

Buzi, a greedy rich man who is nasty to his slaves and everyone else beneath him, is taught a lesson in empathy by the wise and, in this case, handsome young Solomon. A riddling Queen of Sheba plays a supporting role in the effort to reform Buzi.

Buzi is invited to the palace, not for the feast he envisions, but to be teased until he sees the error of his ways.

Yiddish alphabet and vocabulary charts are included in the book, and the dialogue is presented in the format of a play, in Yiddish only, at the end of the comic section.

The book has two "front covers," one English and one Yiddish, but the comic section is read from left to right. A supplemental nine-page workbook, *Lomir itster shpiln tsuzamen (Let Us Now Play Together)*, by educator Batia Bettman and illustrated by Sigal, is also available.

It was Bettman who brought to Sigal's attention the surviving mimeographed copy of Grossman's manuscript.

Sigal has used the transliteration standard set by YIVO, the Institute for Jewish Research, in New York.

Sigal is grateful to her late parents, Max and Clara Kaplansky, for making "the wonderful Yiddish language part of the texture of my childhood."

She has master's degrees in English literature and library science from McGill. She edited the catalogue of *A Garment Worker's Legacy: The Joe Fishstein Collection of Yiddish Poetry*, published by McGill University Libraries in 1998.

Now retired from McGill, she is the curator of the website, which is both a virtual catalogue and an exhibition of highlights of the more than 2,300 Yiddish poetry books collected by the late New Yorker. The collection, donated to McGill by his family, is housed in the McLennan Library.

For more information, contact Sigal at jgsigal@videotron.ca.

The Canadian Jewish Book Awards will be presented on May 27 at the Al Green Theatre in Toronto.

And now for something completely different: HEEBONICS

Shoot for the moon, CFL commissioner tells youths

By MICHELLE BITRAN
Special to the CJN

Not many people can say they've worked for three of North America's six major sports leagues, but Mark Cohon, the commissioner of the Canadian Football League, certainly can.

A lucky group of Toronto's Jewish young adults got the opportunity to rub shoulders with Cohon when he gave a talk about his career and his life at Jewish Urban Meeting Place's (JUMP) midtown headquarters on May 13.

"All my friends call me the 'commish,' so all my Jewish friends call me the 'knish,'" Cohon said to the audience with a smile.

About 50 people packed into JUMP to hear Cohon speak. The event was part of the Jewish Employment Toronto (JET) series, aimed at Jewish professionals in their 20s and 30s. JET is a collaborative effort between JUMP and Birthright Israel Alumni Community that includes career workshops and talks by successful professionals.

"Once a month we try to feature a different type of outlet for young professionals to gain new skills in the workplace," said Debbie Osiel, JUMP's director. The JET series kicked off last November and has been a successful part of JUMP's programming since.

First-time JET-attendee Olivia Glauberzon, 26, was happy to hear Cohon's story.

"I think it's good to meet people who are in successful positions and to learn from them," she said

Cohon has worked and lived around the world, frequenting countries such as Japan, Israel and England, an experience that he encouraged everyone in the room to try given the opportunity.

Cohon said that working with professional sports leagues taught him the important lesson of "the power of sport to really give people hope and aspiration, to really get people to think about life and what they want to become."

Former captain of his high school football team and an avid sports fan his whole life, Cohon found himself a bit at odds when, following his career at the NBA, he moved back to Toronto to become president and CEO of AudienceView, a software company that allows venues, entertainment companies and teams to sell tickets online directly to their customers, without using an agent such as Ticketmaster.

Although his hard work at AudienceView earned Cohon the honour of being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40 in 2005, he prefers to work in a capacity that allows him to interact directly with the public, and so he decided it was time to move on.

"My father said, 'Get out if you don't love what you're doing.' That's an important lesson for everyone here," said Cohon. Cohon's father, George, is a prominent philanthropist and businessman in the Toronto community.

Throughout his talk, Cohon repeatedly recognized his family's role in pushing him forward to achieve his own success.

"We have a saying in our family called roots and wings," he said. "You give your kids the foundation to build their life upon and the wings to grow."

Cohon and his wife, Suzanne, are busy providing roots and wings for their four-year-old daughter, Parker.

Mark Cohon, center, with the Calgary Stampeders when the team won the Western Division football championship in November 2008. ***[Photo courtesy of CFL]***

Second from left is Mark Cohon and with him, from left, are JUMP staff members Aaron Glaser, Shlomo Buzaglo, Shira Webber, Debbie Osiel and Shoshana Allen. ***[Photo courtesy of JUMP]***

Before joining the CFL as commissioner in 2007, Cohon, 44, worked as the director of corporate and game development with Major League Baseball and as vice-president of business development with the National Basketball Association.

Mark Cohon, 44, worked with Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association before becoming the Canadian Football League commissioner. ***[Photo courtsey of CFL]***

It's now safe to say that Cohon loves his job as CFL commissioner.

"I enjoy waking up and thinking about the challenges I have with my job," he said.

Coming into the CFL at a time when it was suffering with instability and a poor media image, Cohon worked hard to turn things around. Since he become a CFL commissioner, he has seen skyrocketing television ratings for CFL games and the first Grey Cup game in Toronto in 15 years.

Outside of work, Cohon serves as chair of the Ontario Science Centre and sits on the board of the World Wildlife Fund of Canada.

Cohon also founded Youth Challenge International (YCI) in 1984, a charity devoted to global youth development. Though he no longer sits on the board of YCI, he fondly recalled his first mission with them as one of his greatest learning experiences. The mission was an expedition he led to the Canadian and Russian Arctic, allowing Canadian and Russian youth to work together on environmental and cultural projects.

"It really taught me about two things," said Cohon of his experience organizing the Arctic expedition. "Taking a risk... but also getting the right people on the bus."

Cohon's parting words urged audience members to start making career networks and to work on their interactive skills.

"You have to start young, and you have to meet those people who can get you in the right places," he said.

It was the second time audience member Josh Rosen, 22, saw Cohon speak, and he came away newly enthused. A recent University of Toronto graduate with an interest in the business side of sports, Rosen said that Cohon's speech taught him some important lessons.

"The big things are approach anybody and shoot for the moon," he said.

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Spain drew close to Germany but protected Jews

By SHELDON KIRSHNER
Staff Reporter

Spain was part of a small constellation of nations that hewed to a policy of neutrality during World War II. Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal and Turkey rounded out the rest of the bunch.

But was Spain, given its fascist leanings and the pro-German views of its president, Francisco Franco, really neutral? Spain, after all, tilted toward the Axis powers – Germany, Italy and Japan – and Franco collaborated with Adolf Hitler. In light of these facts and Spain's direct association with the Inquisition, was Spain sincerely committed to assisting Jewish refugees during the Holocaust?

These are intriguing questions, bold footnotes in the war, and they are thoughtfully addressed by Stanley Payne – a leading historian of modern Spain and European fascism – in *Franco and Hitler: Spain, Germany and World War II* (Yale University Press).

In the preface, Payne, a professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, acknowledges that Spain's wartime position is hardly a new topic. How could it be? Yet, as he points out, there has not yet been a study that "deals synthetically with the full range of relations between the Spanish and German regimes." In *Franco and Hitler*, he fills that gap quite thoroughly and admirably.

Franco and Hitler cemented their relations, such as they were, during the Spanish civil war, which broke out in 1936 and ended in 1939 with the victory of the Nationalists over the Republicans. The Nationalist forces, led by Franco – an observant Catholic who espoused traditional values – were assisted by Germany and Italy, while the Republicans were supported by the Soviet Union and foreign volunteers.

Germany and Italy, having recognized the Nationalists as Spain's legitimate government, provided Franco with invaluable political and military help. Democracies such as Britain and the United States adopted a non-interventionist stance. As the civil war wound down, Spain signed a secret friendship treaty with Germany, in which both sides agreed to be neutral in case either was involved in a war with a third party. "In the aftermath of the civil war, Spanish policy was clearly oriented toward Italy and Germany, the two powers that had made Franco's victory possible," writes Payne.

After Britain and France declared war on Germany, Spain officially announced its neutrality and called on the British and the French to negotiate with Berlin. But in a tilt to Germany, Franco informed Hitler that German submarines could be resupplied from Spanish ports and urged Italy to work for Poland's immediate surrender so as to avert an advance by the Soviet Union's Red Army into the European heartland. Interestingly, Spain rejected a French proposal for a non-aggression pact and did not condemn Germany's invasion of France, Holland and Luxemburg.

With an imperial eye on Gibraltar and Morocco, among other territories in Africa, Spain presented Germany with a shopping list of military equipment and economic assistance. In exchange, Spain would enter the war on Germany's side.

According to Payne, the Spanish regime was generally well-disposed toward participating in the war. The single most important government minister who promoted this view was Ramon Serrano Suner, who was named foreign minister in October 1940. No sooner was he appointed than he expressed "moral solidarity" with the Axis powers.

Francisco Franco, left, and Adolf Hitler

Certainly, he was not out of step with the mood in Spain: Spanish news coverage of the war was slanted toward the Axis camp. And no less a person than Luis Carrero Blanco, one of Franco's closest personal aides, characterized the war as a struggle between an "evil" Anglo-Soviet coalition "managed by the Jews" and Catholic Christianity.

Franco met Hitler, for the first and only time, shortly after Serrano Suner's appointment. Their encounter took place in Hendaye, on Spain's border with German-occupied France. Shortly after their meeting, Spain signed a protocol agreeing to "intervene" in the war on the side of the Axis side in return for a number of concessions.

Fulfilling its pledge to become a combatant, Spain contributed some 45,000 troops to the Blue Division, which, Payne says, "marked the height of Spanish collaboration with the German war effort." The Blue Division, supplied by the Germans, fought alongside Germany in the Soviet Union, Franco's ideological enemy, and sustained casualties of 4,954 dead and 8,700 wounded. (Some 800 Spanish Communists served in the Red Army). As well, Franco allowed Germany to station about 2,000 military intelligence agents and collaborators, plus a network of observation and transmission stations, in Spain. He also permitted German ships to transport supplies under cover of the Spanish flag and continued to export tungsten – a strategic metal used in the production of airplane engines and propellers – to Germany.

Beyond helping Germany, Spain lent its assistance to Japan. After Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States declared war on Japan, Spain sent Spanish agents to the U.S. mainland to supply intelligence data to Tokyo.

German diplomats in Madrid noted with dismay that Spain had enacted no anti-Semitic legislation. By 1939, several thousand Jews – Ashkenazim and Sephardim – resided in Spain. In fact, Jews began to return to Spain even before the 15th century edict of expulsion was annulled in 1869.

Still, as Payne observes, the image of Jews in Spain remained negative, partly because 6,000 to 8,000 Jews from abroad fought for the Republicans, while only a handful volunteered to fight for Franco.

Franco, whose ancestors may have been Jewish, shared some anti-Jewish notions about Jews. But in Payne's judgment, he was not a racist and maintained friendships with several Moroccan Jews.

He adds that while the official Spanish newsweekly *Mundo* carried regurgitated Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda, the Spanish-tinged culture of Sephardi Jews in Morocco and the Balkans was praised. *Mundo* was thus "philosophically anti-Semitic and concretely philo-Sephardic," Payne observes.

Officially, Spain could hardly be described as pro-Jewish. Several months before World War II erupted, the Spanish government issued a decree denying entry visas to five categories of undesirables, including those "of a markedly Jewish character" and Jews in general unless they had demonstrated tangible friendship toward Spain.

Spanish Jews, however, were not affected by this draconian edict.

During the war, the Spanish foreign ministry issued a paper saying that "Spain could not tolerate the persecution of its Jews by foreign powers." Acting on this impulse, Spain provided protective passports for Sephardi Jews in Romania, France and Bulgaria, all under the heel of the Nazis. In addition, Spain accepted the repatriation of Spanish Jews from Greece, but only for transit purposes.

Spanish diplomats in Nazi-occupied Hungary were involved in rescue efforts, saving a few thousand Jews, and some 5,000 Jewish refugees crossed into Spain to reach safe haven in Portugal.

With the war going badly for Germany, Spain granted transit and economic rights to the Allies and distanced itself from Berlin.

After the war, 255 second-tier Nazis found refuge in Spain, but some were extradited at the request of the Allies.

Spain, having cozied up to Germany and Italy during the war, was treated like something of a pariah after the Axis powers surrendered. But once the Cold War started, Franco was given more than ample breathing space to consolidate his regime.

The Canadian Jewish news

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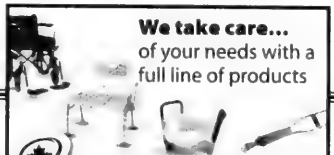
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Group aims to help cope with bladder cancer

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

When David Guttman was diagnosed with bladder cancer 16 years ago, he didn't know where to find someone else who really understood what he was going through.

"I didn't know how long I would last," he said. "You feel your life is going to be snuffed out."

He couldn't find anyone anywhere to help him or answer his questions, he said.

Instead, he had to rely on information from other people who had not personally experienced the disease, he said. However, he didn't want other people to have to face the same situation.

The result was the formation of the Canadian Bladder Cancer Network (CBCAN), a patient support network that he co-founded with fellow bladder cancer survivor Jack Moon.

The goal is to help other people who are just beginning their fight, and to tell others about the symptoms, Guttman said.

"Most patients go for six months without any treatment plan," he said, adding that he had cancer for eight months before he was diagnosed.

He said there is not enough research into the causes and symptoms of bladder cancer.

The Canadian Cancer Society describes smoking as the most common risk factor for bladder cancer. The most common symptom is blood in the urine.

In 2009, about 6,900 Canadians were diagnosed with this form of cancer, and an estimated 1,850 patients died of it, according to the Canadian Cancer Society's website.

CBCAN founders Jack Moon, left, and David Guttman.

Men are much more likely to contract the disease than women, the website says. They also have a much higher mortality rate. One in 95 men and one in 230 women are likely to die from this form of cancer.

Guttman called it the most expensive cancer to treat, explaining that even though he was diagnosed more than 15 years ago, he still requires expensive medical treatment.

Moon agreed. "Once you get bladder cancer, you basically have to have checkups for the rest of your life," he said.

Mendy Sharf, who was diagnosed with the disease just under a year ago, said it was extremely beneficial to be able to speak to Guttman for advice on coping with the surgery.

Guttman's main message, Sharf said, was "life goes on."

Sharf, who is turning 80 in a few weeks, said he still lives a normal life. He is able to play tennis with a brace to hold the bag in place, and even has a "lady friend."

The biggest challenge so far in starting the organization has been fundraising, Moon said, explaining that although this form of cancer is the fifth most common form, it is number 19 in terms of research.

However, he said some organizations have recently offered their support, including pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Canada, which recently gave CBCAN a grant.

The company already supports patient groups for kidney cancer, and bladder cancer is similar in that there is a lack of patient groups in Canada, said Safia Genereux-Khalil, manager of corporate communications for Pfizer Canada.

"We are hoping that this small contribution will help the Canadian Bladder Cancer Network get off the ground and kick-start its efforts toward helping patients," she said.

Although CBCAN has not started to hold meetings, the group runs a discussion forum where people ask questions and help each other, letting them know what they can expect as the disease progresses.

The goal of the forum, Guttman said, is to discuss the various treatment options, as well as to provide places for patients to get help with both the social and the nursing aspects of care.

The next step is to increase membership, he said, adding that volunteers are needed in administration, fundraising, and database and website maintenance, so that they can continue to help the largest number of people.

"I'm not trying to get into the medical aspect of this [disease]," Guttman said. "I'm there to help people cope with it."

For more information, please call 416-571-0016 or e-mail Guttman at davidg@cbcan.org.

Gluten-free baked goods now kosher

Compiled by CJN Staff

What would you do if you could no longer eat bread, bagels, cookies or any of the other wheat-based foods you take for granted?

This was the challenge faced by Pat Libling when she was diagnosed with celiac disease (gluten intolerance) in 1987.

"My first reaction," Libling said, "was, 'There's nothing to eat,' especially after trying many of the gluten-free products available."

When two of her daughters were also diagnosed with the condition, the former school teacher decided it was time to take matters into her own hands.

Begun as a home-based business in 2001 in Libling's Dollard des Ormeaux kitchen, the PatsyPie bakery has long since moved into a larger, gluten-free facility, occupying 3,000 square feet in Montreal.

Not only has it become one of the fastest growing gluten-free brands in Canada, available in both supermarket chains and independent stores, this innovative line has expanded into the U.S. market as well over the past two years.

PatsyPie has now been certified kosher by EarthKosher, a Teaneck, N.J.-based organization, headed by rabbis Zecharyah Tvzi Goldman and Zushe Blech, that specializes in natural and organic foods.

Current offerings include cookies, biscotti, mini-brownies and mini-muffins, whose basis is rice, corn or chick pea flours that, Libling said, all have a paper trail assuring that they were produced on a gluten-free line.

In fact, no wheat is even permitted on the bakery's premises. "If an employee wants to bring a sandwich," Libling said, "we supply the gluten-free bread."

The downfall of many gluten-free baked goods is obvious, she said – the taste and the texture. "My goal was to create baked treats that were every bit as good as or better than regular bakery items – snacks the whole family could enjoy, whether or not they needed to be on gluten-free diets."

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Arrogance can be both boon and bane to athletes

By JERROLD KESSEL
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JERUSALEM — Try to fathom the mystery or the import of this or that sporting incident and two maxims are particularly useful: "Promise less and deliver more, or promise more and deliver less" and "Beware Hubris" – the god of arrogance and overweening confidence whom the ancient Greeks not so much worshipped but advised avoiding at all costs – he's the guy who, just when you are basking in your latest great achievement, lies in wait around the corner to club you back to earth.

In no particular order, some recent sporting episodes to challenge the relevance of the maxims.

• Topping the list, both promising little and delivering more while successfully side-stepping Hubris' club, is surely "Uncle Avram" Grant, as the Israeli coach came to be known at unhappy Portsmouth, the soccer team that plays in the English Premiership. True, Portsmouth had luck on their side but they rode it brilliantly, and but for a squandered penalty, they could well have delivered the FA shock of all times. There's nothing the British respect more than a plucky loser, so even in defeat to Chelsea, when Grant, who resigned last week as Portsmouth's manager, continued to deport himself with great dignity and poise, he continued to earn their love.

• Shahar Peer can definitely not be accused of any kind of hubris, which can't always be said of the two women who repeatedly get in her way for the greater glory to which she's been entitled this season – tennis' Williams sisters. Now back in the top 20, Peer has done wonders in striking a balance between the promising and delivering poles. She deserves plaudits for her hard work both on court and in her head, an effort that has given her intelligent game much more chance of success. She may not able to beat either Venus or Serena, but she's surely now good enough to benefit when they're in the mood to beat themselves. Not to kid ourselves, however, that she'll ever beat Justine Henin. But then, knowing one's limits is an essential ingredient when reaching for the stars.

• Saul Bellow, once here on an extended visit to get a grip on the Israeli psyche, understood things in his usual sparkling fashion: Israelis, he said, are so ambitious that they "want to be able to boast that they have a world champion, or at least one of the best, in every single aspect of life." Who are we then to challenge the idea that the fulfilment of the Zionist dream requires a woman boxer taking the world bantamweight title? What was captivating, though, about our home-grown world's best pugilist, Hagar Finer, was less the power of her punch and more her wisdom in adversity. She grew up as an abused child and now sports a philosophy that "it's a crime if you don't fulfil your potential. Never mind the pain. The body can stand an awful lot. Go for your dream until you reach it – anything short and you should regard yourself as a failure. Failing is simply not on, as far as I'm concerned," she said in a TV interview shortly before dropping her Latvian challenger Agnese Boza recently with a fifth-round TKO.

• There were more questions than answers following the Players Championships when Tiger Woods withdrew mid-round for the first time ever in his professional career. This was going to be a week of quiet rehabilitation for the world No.1. He'd said at the start of the event that he was 100 per cent fit, so everyone was left bemused when he spoke of a "longstanding injury," which he'd denied only three days earlier. Some players naturally like to keep fitness problems to themselves, but Tiger can't afford that luxury. His fall from grace has made him vulnerable as a truth-teller. He just can't afford to be caught straying from the truth on any subject. Now Tiger has simply created for himself another unwanted controversy. Hubris' bunch of elves are clearly hard at work on his case.

• Disgraced U.S. sprinter Marion Jones is back, but with less than a whimper. Jones, 34, once the darling of track-and-field, won three Olympic titles in 2000, and five medals overall, but was later stripped of her medals after admitting she used performance-enhancing drugs. Now, after a six-month prison sentence on top of that, having played college basketball a decade ago, she's looking to get back into the limelight with the Tulsa Shock of the WNBA. In her opening game, however, she finished with no points, rebounds or assists in only four minutes of play. What's more, Tulsa lost. Despite her low-key return to competitive sport, Jones remained positive about her new career. "Thrilled doesn't even touch the surface of how I'm feeling. It's just gratifying to know I made the right decision to attempt this."

• I did say these examples were in no particular order, but for heartening sports stories anywhere, nothing tops the scene on the jetty by the Sydney Opera House. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was among the thousands welcoming Jessica Watson in her yacht Ella's Pink Lady after her seven-month voyage around the world. That was a record time, and all before her 17th birthday. "Jess, welcome back to dry land," Rudd said. "You may feel a little wobbly on your feet, but in the eyes of all Australians you stand tall – you are a hero to all young Australians, a hero to all young Australian women." Jessica's response was what garlands her: "I must disagree with our prime minister," she told the cheering crowd, "I'm no hero, just a girl who had a dream, and was determined to fulfil it. That's my advice, don't be afraid of trying to fulfil your dream."

Promise only yourself and you've half beaten old hubris bent on revenge! A message that endears even if we can't all live our dreams, though we certainly can, like Jessica, cock a snook at authorities who refuse to recognize her historic effort as a record simply because she's been labelled "too young."

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FEEL THE HEAT: Thousands of runners took part recently in the Tel Aviv Marathon, with seven ending up in the hospital. The marathon, held for the second year running after a break of 15 years, was run in blistering heat. More than 400 participated in the full marathon, with others running the half-marathon, 10-k and 4.2-k races.

[Kfir Sivan/Israel Sun photo]

'She's so young and so generous'

By CARA STERN
CJN Intern

After spending months preparing for their bar or bat mitzvahs, children are often rewarded with gifts in the form of money.

Allie Fenwick, who celebrated her bat mitzvah last Nov. 21, chose to use a a portion of her gift money to give less fortunate children the means of experiencing Jewish summer camp.

Her mother, Gail, said she suggested to her daughter that some of the gift money be donated to charity.

Allie, who is returning for her fifth year at Camp Kadimah in Nova Scotia, said she felt a strong connection to the camp and wanted other children to experience the same fun.

"The people there are really nice, and they have so many fun activities during the summer," she said, adding that she particularly loves the water sports, such as wakeboarding, at the camp.

Her parents, grandparents and siblings all attended Camp Kadimah, she said.

Allie said she's excited about the donation because she will get to meet new people who might not otherwise be able to afford to go to the camp.

Camp Kadimah co-chair Michael Pink said that each year, the camp gives out more than $100,000 in scholarships that range in value. Allie's donation, he said, will help around five to 10 children attend the camp.

Camp director Diane Morrison said she had heard that a camper was making a donation, but that she didn't expect it to be such a significant amount.

"She's so young and so generous," Morrison said.

Since the camp introduced this form of tzedakah three or four summers ago, typically one or two families per year choose to support the camp in this manner, Pink said.

Fenwick's donation is the first of its kind for this year, he added.

Kadimah means a lot to many of the camp's alumni, and they have made this significance quite clear through their generosity, Morrison said.

The camp aims to help create a love of Israel among campers and staff, according to its website.

This year, to strengthen the campers' connection to Israel, the camp is bringing in 25 to 30 Israelis to experience the camp. Most of them are from the Sderot region, Pink said.

"[Allie's] gift will go a long way to help in this initiative."

The camp is located near Barss Corner, N.S., on Lake William, and has existed since 1943.

It's affiliated with Canadian Young Judaea, the largest Jewish youth movement in Canada.

The donation is especially important because it allows Allie to become an excellent role model for her fellow campers, said Pink.

"What better example are these kids able to set for their peers than to provide great experiences for kids who would not otherwise be able to afford to go to summer camp?"

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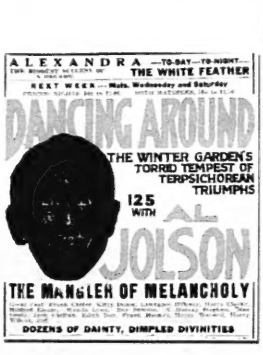
REMEMBERING OUR YESTERDAYS

By BILL GLADSTONE



JOLSON AT THE ROYAL ALEX: Al Jolson (born Asa Joel) is regarded as the first openly Jewish man to become an entertainment star in America. He appeared in his first play at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York City in 1911, and his exuberant energy and singing style made him an instant sensation. He had many sell-out Broadway shows, dozens of hit records and many international tours. These advertisements promote two of his appearances at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre in 1915 and 1920.

Does bar/bat mitzvah mean anything?

By AVRUM ROSENSWEIG

A bar or bat mitzvah is a Jewish rite of passage, as significant as any other on the planet. It is a turning point when a child leaves the magical years of play and life morphs into a more sophisticated time of deeper thought and responsibility.

A bar or bat mitzvah is huge, of utmost importance. Yet, as per my experience, many youths going through this ceremony are not being taught well, don't take it seriously and express little interest in it.

Of course, there are those I meet who are excited and want to know as much as they can about this rite of passage. Generally, these are girls and boys who can learn from anyone or anything.

Then there are the others who don't know the meaning of their Torah portion or the story behind it, and in fact approach this day in a laissez faire sort of way.

Few bar or bat mitzvah celebrants have any idea about the Jewish meaning of this rite of passage, what a tallit represents, or tfillin, let alone trying them on or wearing them prior to the big day and/or afterwards.

The problem lies, I believe, in the commitment to the day. It appears to me that parents of the celebrants are often disinterested themselves and decide to have a party because it's expected. I have heard many times that dad or mom did not work with their daughter or son at all during the studying process

The bar or bat mitzah teachers often teach very little to the youths other than the few lines they need to read in the Torah.

Of course, there are wonderful teachers who care deeply about their craft and work closely with the bar or bat mitzvah celebrant as well as his or her parents. These teachers are often extraordinary and work hard to ensure that their students have a "beyond the call" understanding of the Torah portion and the day itself.

On average however, I fear this is not the case, and students are generally offered a minimal amount of information.

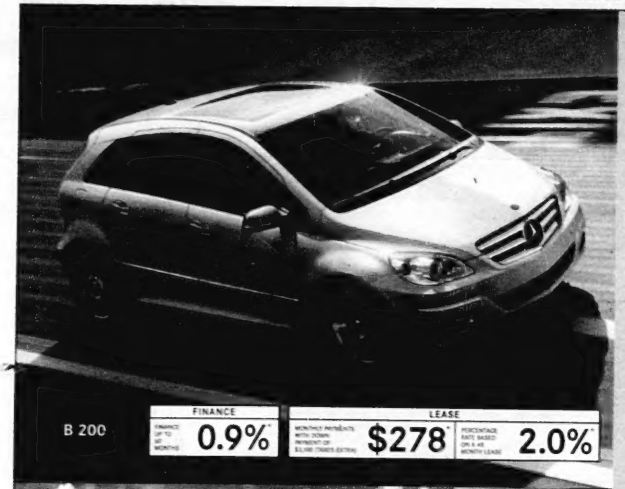
I think it's imperative that shuls, teachers and parents dive into this process with gusto. They could consider going through it with their children so that they, too, know the portion, have read it and embraced it.

I think teachers need to start by putting down the books and just talking for a few hours with their students about the wonderment of the day and what it means to pass from one stage to the next.

One of the problems is that the party has become more important than the bar or bat mitzvah itself – when the youth is called to the Torah and/or asked to stand in front of the congregation and express a Jewish thought. The celebration has become like a theme park, where the visitor can sing with Mick Jagger or party with some rappers. While there is nothing wrong with hanging with Mick, I'm sure, there is much more to this day and time than rock 'n' roll.

An obvious way to enhance young people's delight in their bar or bat mitzvah is by recording songs and the Torah portion for iPod use. A bar mitzvah student I was told about did exactly that, and it was quite exciting.

E-mail me at avrum@veahavta.org with ideas if you are a teacher, shul leader or parent of a bar or bat mitzvah student, and I will post them on my blog – http://avrum.net.



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